



"...I neglected to mention that a friend's daughter was once asked to bring toilet paper to school. Is this in the budget this year?"

OPINIONS

Some parents balk at buying all school supplies

Dear Editor,
As the school year approaches, like many other parents, I like to start buying school supplies early. Having relocated from a big city to Chesterfield County, I cannot say that I am used to these long supply lists. For the past four years I bought every item on the list times three. I cannot deny that [I am] always questioning the reason for so many supplies. In a county like Chesterfield where every school is over populated, one wonders what are our tax dollars paying for? But that is another issue.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This year I have one sixth-grader, one fifth-grader and a fourth-grader. After going online to the schools' Web site and pulling the list of supplies, I almost had a heart attack. The fifth-grade list requires 48 #2 pencils. With my other daughter having just completed the same grade in a class of 26 students, I cannot help but wonder how would 26 students use 1,248 pencils in one year? The list goes on: four dry-erase markers, 200 index cards, four packages of loose-leaf paper, 10 spiral notebooks and so on. That amounts to 104 dry-erase markers, 104 packages of loose-leaf paper, 5,200 index cards and 260 spiral notebooks per average classroom. Am I the only one that makes a fuss about how 104

dry-erase markers are used in one year? Tax dollars continue to be misspent in all government levels. I work very hard to support my family. I cannot afford to send someone else's child to school as well. Is there a news reporter, or a government agency, or a concerned politician that questions this type of spending? What are my tax dollars paying for?

By the way, I neglected to mention that a friend's daughter was once asked to bring toilet paper to school. Is this in the budget this year? Someone please respond! Concerned parents would like to know.

Jesus M. Ortiz
Chesterfield

Pets should be sterilized

Dear Editor,

[Last spring], a momma cat along with her kittens had taken up residence in my friend's backyard. We tried with some success (and some failed attempts) to humanely "trap" them so we could get them off the street. My son and I have spent our summer taking care of these babies with the help of an animal rescue group.

My son and I are hoping it may do some good to continue spreading the word that if

someone wants to be a pet owner, they should be responsible. This means, please spay or neuter your pet. If all of us did, there'd be a lot less need for all these shelters and rescue groups.

Dumping an animal that has been a pet is cruel and inhumane. That animal becomes scared, confused and sadly has a really tough time finding comfort. Please don't think "someone" will take care of them. If you

decided to become a pet owner, that someone should be you.

Mary Dreyer
Midlothian

Letters to the editor can be e-mailed to letters@chesterfieldobserver.com, mailed to P.O. Box 1616, Midlothian, VA 23113, or faxed to 744-3269. Letters should include the writer's phone number and home address, but neither will be printed.

Openness: Chesterfield is far ahead of Henrico

When it comes to open government, Henrico County is tepidly entering the yesteryear of radio while Chesterfield has blown through the cable television age and is eyeing the Internet. And the editorial page of the Richmond Times-Dispatch (RTD) has its eyes shut.

In a July 14 editorial, the RTD "cheered" the Henrico Board of Supervisors for a "trial run of audio recordings of the board's official sessions." Chesterfield has audio recordings of county board meetings going back to 1983, the same year it made audio recordings of the Planning Commission available. Chesterfield's School Board started audio recordings in 1991.

MEDIA WATCH

Greg Pearson

Henrico doesn't broadcast its meetings live on cable because it lacks the capability. That includes the Planning Commission and School Board, too.

About 18 months ago, Henrico gained the capability to audiotape its board meetings and last week began an indefinite trial period, though that county's Planning Commission has been audio taping its meetings for some time.

Chesterfield broadcasts its board meetings live on cable and rebroadcasts them a week later. In fact, you can go to Chesterfield's Central Library and watch archived board meetings all the way back to 1983. Chesterfield also broadcasts its Planning Commission meetings (video archived back to 1992) and School Board meetings (video archived to 1991).

Next year, you may be able to watch board and commission meetings in real time on

your computer. It's being done elsewhere in Virginia, and Chesterfield is investigating the potential and the cost (under \$100,000). Better yet, the archive capability will allow you to click on an agenda item and go directly to the video you want, skipping the rest of the meeting.

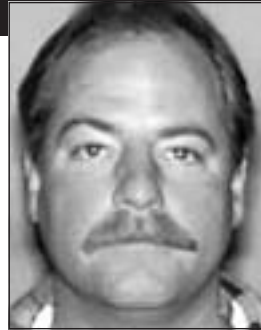
Since no one is asking for video streaming, we asked Public Affairs Director Don Kappel why Chesterfield was looking into it. "Better customer service," he replied simply.

Almost 17 months ago, the RTD eagerly trotted over to the Chester campus of John Tyler Community College to hold one of its town meetings. The topic was open government, and Chesterfield was in the spotlight. The RTD helped create that pressure, but now it appears the RTD pursues a different tact with Henrico. Nudging, not criticizing. Very gentle nudging at that.

Leaders in Chesterfield have long complained that the Henrico board gets favorable news coverage by the daily paper while Chesterfield is judged harshly. It's hard not to believe those complaints on the open government issue. (To view a comparison of the counties of Chesterfield, Henrico and Hanover and the city of Richmond developed by the county's Public Affairs Department, visit www.chesterfieldobserver.com and click on "special.")

Clearly, Chesterfield has a better model of open government. And isn't it the job of the RTD's editorial page to push Henrico to open up its government process so the citizens can more fully participate? It starts with information, and that's the newspaper's business. Will someone please wake up the people who write editorials for the Richmond Times-Dispatch?

MOST WANTED



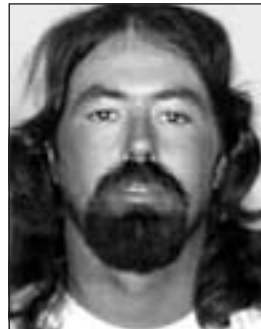
William Cauthorn
White Male
Date of Birth: 04/29/1964
5'11" - 225 lbs.
Blue eyes - Brown hair

Wanted for: Threaten to Bomb a Building



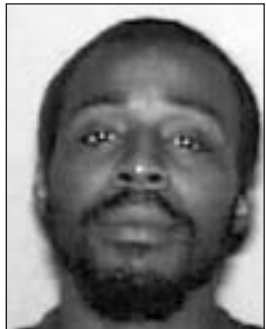
John Anthony Fortune
White Male
Date of Birth: 03/14/1966
5'11" - 195 lbs.
Brown eyes - Brown hair

Wanted for: Possession Controlled Substance



Kenneth Lee Miller
White Male
Date of Birth: 06/17/1967
5'7" - 170 lbs.
Brown eyes - Brown hair

Wanted for: Abduction and Felony Assault



Rasheed Maurice Lewis
Black Male
Date of Birth: 10/29/1972
5'11" - 180 lbs.
Brown eyes - Black hair

Wanted for: Felony Weapons Violations

These fugitives should be considered ARMED AND DANGEROUS. NEVER attempt to approach, apprehend, or arrest these fugitives yourself. If you see any of these subjects, or you have information regarding any of these subjects, call Crime Solvers at 804-748-0660. You will not be asked for your name, and no one will try to identify you. If your information leads to the arrest of one of these subjects, you can receive up to \$1,000 reward.

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