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Today's Date: Friday, April 2, 2004

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Web](#) [Web Directory](#)[Yellow Pages](#)[White Pages](#)[My Page](#)[City Guide](#)[Lottery Results](#)[Weather](#)[Movie Listings](#)[Maps/Directions](#)[Travel Info](#)[Horoscope](#)[Greeting Cards](#)IF YOUR COMPANY IS NOT BARTERING,
YOU'RE THROWING MONEY OUT THE WINDOW

Del. David Albo fights taxes, gangs and gridlock

*By Anthony McBrien,
Capital News Service*

Higher taxes. Gang violence. Highway gridlock.

Those are three things Del. David Albo, R-Fairfax, fought against during the 2004 legislative session.

He had some success: The General Assembly passed several of his bills to crack down on gang violence, a growing problem in Fairfax County. Legislators also approved Albo's proposal to designate high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes.

But the outcome of Albo's fight against higher taxes remains to be seen. The House of Delegates and the Virginia Senate couldn't agree on a state budget for the next two years, and so the legislative session has gone into overtime.

The House has proposed a \$58 billion budget with no general tax increase; the Senate wants a \$62 billion budget that would require raising income, sales, gasoline, cigarette and other taxes.

The Senate's plan would "increase every family of four's taxes by \$1,000 a year," Albo said in an interview as the Assembly's regular session drew to a close. "Anybody who thinks that is good public policy is, I think, not living in reality."

Gov. Mark Warner has proposed a \$59 billion budget that would raise

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some taxes while lowering others. He believes his plan is a good compromise between the House and Senate budgets. Warner has blamed the House Republicans for the budget stalemate, portraying them as stubborn.

"That's what people say who want to raise people's taxes," Albo said of Warner.

"The only reason we don't have a budget is because the Republicans in the House refuse to raise people's income tax and sales tax, and what Governor Warner is trying to say is you can't leave unless you raise taxes -- which is ridiculous."

The General Assembly's regular session ended March 13, but legislators agreed to extend it three days. When the budget impasse continued, Warner formally called a special session devoted to the state budget.

The current budget will expire on June 30, and without a new one, the state government would have to shut down operations, officials say.

Like many other Republicans in the House, Albo sees a possible way out. He says the General Assembly could adopt a budget based on current revenues and hold a referendum so voters could decide whether to raise taxes for additional services such as education or roads.

Aside from the budget, Albo said he was relatively pleased with this year's legislative session.

For example, he proposed and got passed two bills to curb gang violence. Under those bills, it will be a crime to threaten somebody to make that person join a gang or prevent that person from leaving a gang.

Albo also won passage a bill that puts machetes in the category of concealed weapons that cannot be carried without a permit.

Albo also won approval of his HOT lanes bill. Such lanes will be separated from the main highway by barriers much like the HOV (high-occupancy vehicle) lanes but will require a fee for use. The fee will generate money to fund transportation, road preservation and manage traffic overflows.

Albo's bill states that regulation of the HOT lanes will be enforced by electronically-collected and photo-enforced tolls. HOT lanes have been successful in places like San Diego and are being considered in Maryland.

Legislators postponed consideration of Albo's proposed constitutional amendment to protect the Transportation Trust Fund. Gasoline taxes go into the fund, but the General Assembly in the past has diverted the money for other purposes.

"We need to put the trust back into government, and taking people's money for one purpose and spending it on another is wrong," Albo said.

Albo's legislation would limit the use of trust fund money to highway construction, reconstruction, maintenance and improvements.

Albo graduated from Fairfax County Public Schools and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Virginia in 1984.

He started his political career as an intern while attending law school at the University of Richmond. "I got an internship from my predecessor -- a great man named Bob Cunningham. I guess he thought I did a good job, because when he retired, he endorsed me into running."

In 1993, Albo was elected to represent the 42nd District in the House of Delegates -- the seat once held by Revolutionary patriot George Mason. During his decade in the General Assembly, Albo has fought for increasing punishments for violent crimes, cutting taxes and promoting higher standards for public schools.

Albo definitely keeps busy.

A former prosecutor as an assistant Fairfax city attorney, he has a law firm -- Albo & Oblon -- in the Springfield-Arlington area.

In the House, he is vice chair of the Courts of Justice Committee and a member of the committees on General Laws and Privileges and Elections. He chairs the Courts of Justice's Criminal Law Subcommittee and the General Laws' ABC-Gaming Subcommittee.

As for the future, Albo said that he has had chances to run for the state Senate but that he enjoys serving in the House.

"When you are a delegate on a smaller scale like me, you can pay more attention to your constituents -- because I only have 70,000 constituents. If I was a senator, I would have 210,000 constituents, and I couldn't give people the individual attention like I do now."

[Earth Day celebrates its 34th birthday](#)

More than three decades have passed since former Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson organized the first national recognition of the declining health of the Earth. During the 1960s, he observed that air and water quality around the country were appalling, but the politicians were oblivious. Nelson brought the situation to the attention of the country by holding a massive grassroots rally on April 22, 1970-20 million demonstrators strong in cities across the country. Since then, Earth Day has been celebrated all over the world on this date.

[Del. David Albo fights taxes, gangs and gridlock](#)

Higher taxes. Gang violence. Highway gridlock.

[South County Secondary School Gets A Principal](#)

After an exhaustive selection process, Dale Rumberger, currently the principal at Westfield High School, has been appointed as the first principal of the new school being constructed near the former Lorton prison site. Until a permanent name is chosen, the school will be known as the "South County Secondary School." It is designated a secondary school, not a high school, because, when it is fully enrolled it will house grades seven through twelve. The other secondary schools in Fairfax County, Hayfield, Lake Braddock, and Robinson, opened in the early 1970s, so South County will be the first secondary school built in more than three decades. As Rumberger explains, it will probably be a long time before a middle school is built in the south county area, so it was felt that the new school should be configured to contain both middle and high schools.

[Legislators OK barrage of bills for military](#)

The General Assembly has approved a barrage of bills aimed at keeping Virginia a military-friendly state.

[Town of Clifton prepares for election](#)

The town of Clifton will hold its mayoral and town council race on May 4, 2004. Two people are running for mayor, seven for five town council seats. Three candidates, James Chesley, Deborah Dillard, and William Watts, will be write in candidates.

[Cicadas Ready For Their 17-Year Fling](#)

Rising out of the night darkness, they will emerge from their hiding places like invaders to take control of the trees, the forests, and our neighborhoods. Millions of tiny visitors will alarm people, disrupting routine activities. Red eyes gleaming they will leave tiny armor-like remains on the ground, trees and fence posts. A unique deafening sound will resonate from the trees like a hundred buzz saws. The 17-year cicadas are coming back!

[Go south for an afternoon getaway](#)

Take a cup of history, add a dash of nostalgia, and you have a recipe for an afternoon getaway that's less than an hour's drive south- Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Foolish History

Ah, 'tis the season for falling in love, cleaning your house, and coming up with or recovering from a new and exciting April Fool's joke. Did someone play an April Fool's joke on you this year, or were you the perpetrator? How did such a "foolish" practice become a worldwide custom? Just for kicks, as you read this article, there are 10 very obvious typographical errors. Can you find them all.

Follow Me to Tuolumne for California Gold

In the Sierra Nevada foothills, men and women squatted along the creek panning for gold. Prospector Bryant Shock, dressed as a forty-niner in canvas pants and slouch hat, taught the swish and swirl method of finding flecks of gold sparkling in the mud.

Historic Fishery Once Declined but Now in Good Shape

"When the dogwoods bloom the shad are running hard in local rivers," the old timers will tell anyone who will listen.

Shaped note singers come to Lorton

The fifteenth annual Potomac River Sacred Harp Singing Convention, sponsored by the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, will take place April 2 and 3 in the Parish House at Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway in Lorton and on April 4 at the Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike (Rt. 193) in Great Falls, Virginia.

Local dancer to appear in prestigious Spoleto Festival

The prospect of a south county arts center is creating a lot of interest and excitement among area residents. Lorton resident Suzie Celentano read in The South County Chronicle about the Lorton Arts Foundation's efforts to establish such a center on the grounds of the former D.C. Prison Workhouse. Further inquiries led to her joining the board of LAF as a member of the Performing Arts Committee. Her qualifications are in the areas of theatre and dance.

Edwin Lynch-Changed the face of Fairfax County

One of Fairfax County's most distinguished citizens, Edwin Williams Lynch, died at the age of 91 on March 17 at his home on Mason Neck. A lifelong resident of the County, he became very successful as a real estate developer, but equally important were his achievements as a family man, political leader, advocate of human rights and peace and

philanthropist.

State Park Celebrates Elizabeth Hartwell Environmental Education Day

The Forth Annual Elizabeth Hartwell Environmental Education Day will be celebrated at Mason Neck State Park on Saturday, April 24, 2004. Festivities begin with the 7:30 a.m. check in for the Liz Hartwell 5-K Run Walk and will continue throughout the day concluding with a 9:00 p.m. Astronomy Presentation. In between will be hayrides, canoe trips, music, a children's magic show and a nature hike. There will also be various interpretive displays, an Under the Seas Interpretive Sea Creature Program and the popular Raptor Conservancy of Virginia program of owls and hawks. From 9-11:00 a.m. there will be a Canoe and Kayak Egg Hunt for which there will be a \$10 per person charge. This charge includes not only admission to the hunt but a commemorative tee shirt as well.

The Topsy-Turvy World of Autistic People

I enjoyed the movie Rain Man starring Dustin Hoffman as Raymond, an autistic savant with photographic memory and an inability to empathize or relate emotionally to others. I personally could relate to Raymond because I, too, am autistic. I write this to offer a general explanation of what autism is and is not. I know firsthand how frustrating it feels when others misunderstand my autistic behaviors. With better understanding, there can be friendship, and with it, opportunity for great personal and professional growth.

For some college students, the Capitol is their classroom

Most college students spend the semester attending boring class lectures, poring over stacks of textbooks and dreaming of a sunny spring break.

Gary Lloyd tells it like it is and then some

Once upon a time, Gary Lloyd, a Centreville resident, began to tell stories to people of all ages and has not stopped. I recently had the pleasure of talking with Lloyd. This is how our interview went.

A piece of Americana at Kings Dominion brings back childhood memories

Roller coaster thrills, splashing water rides, miniature trains, and big stuffed animals; popcorn, hotdogs, and cotton candy-you can enjoy all this at Paramount's Kings Dominion Amusement Park, be sure to visit the carousel as

well. Built in 1917, it's a genuine piece of Americana.

Local Health Analyst Finds Pharmacies less than Helpful in Getting the Best Price--Buyer Beware He Says

Tom Yerg of Annandale has 30 years experience as a statistician and health analyst. His work with the Pan American Health Organization, where he was a technical reviewer of Health in the Americas, has sensitized Mr. Yerg to the adverse effects of high health costs, particularly for those least able to pay. He says, "The price of drugs becomes even more important when we consider that 44 million U.S. citizens and 30% of citizens living in poverty have no health insurance, and millions more have no coverage for medications."

Stars Over Virginia

A while back, I lived in rural, upstate New York, far from city lights, where I took the stars for granted. I'd go to my back yard, and there was the Milky Way, a band of gently glowing starlight sweeping across the sky from the eastern horizon to the setting sun. But the winters were awful, and the summers were short. So I moved to Virginia to get away from the cold and find a job that I might be able to retire from. The dark sky was gone-replaced by the glow of Washington and the glare of the shopping malls. Sometimes, though, at sunset, I'd see a bright blue jewel hovering above the horizon and realize, "Oh, that's Venus!" Or I'd go out, see shadows pouring through the tree branches and realize, "We have a full moon tonight!" But I really didn't miss the dark sky and all those stars.

SYA Umpires Prepare for Spring Season

Lee Stanton, chief umpire for the Southwestern Youth Association (SYA) baseball league, and Chris Reamy, SYA umpire, have been working very hard to get umps ready for play this year.

The Domain Name Game

Lets face it: No matter who you are, in one way or another, you are linked to a Universal Resource Locator (URL). While the term "URL" is new techno-speak that has entered our vocabulary via the information age, not everyone is clear on its definition. Simply put, a URL is the internet address used to locate given web sites. It is also known as a domain name.

Entertaining with Elegance -- Romantic Dinner

What better way to make someone feel loved than to prepare a romantic dinner for him or her? Even if you can't cook, pulling off a romantic dinner for two at home is both easy, simple and manageable, as long as you have a strategy. The first order of business is to decide what to do with the kids for the evening. See if Grandma or another relative is free. If there's no way to get the kids off-site for the evening, another option is to hire a babysitter to keep the kids in the playroom or in the den for three hours.

[A Spring Drive Down I-81 to](#)

The East Coast Championship Show

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