



## Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship

*"Northumberland is going to grow. Let's help it grow with order and beauty."*

# NAPS News

Fall 2007

Volume 16, Issue 4

## Stables Chosen 2007 NAPS Distinguished Citizen

By SUE LINDSAY

Northumberland Schools Superintendent Clint Stables has been chosen NAPS Distinguished Citizen for 2007. He has demonstrated outstanding leadership for Northumberland County Schools during the 6 years he has held the office of Superintendent. Not only has he encouraged a number of innovative programs within the schools, targeting at-risk students, but he has lead the movement to replace totally two aging structures and provide the children of our county with state-of-the-art facilities, appropriate to the educational needs of the twenty-first century. The award will be presented during the NAPS Fall Social, September 22nd (see article in this issue for more information on the NAPS Fall Social).

Stables has served the county since 1983, starting as Assistant Principal at the Middle School and subsequently holding positions of Middle School Principal, General Supervisor, Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent. This year he has been honored by his peers with the award of Regional Superintendent of the Year.

Under Stables' leadership, the schools have implemented a number of successful and nationally recognized programs: Reading Partners, Read Aloud Virginia, Peer Mediation and the Northumberland High School Teacher Advisor Program. Each of these programs aims at targeting groups of students who are, in some way, falling behind, and assisting them to realize their potential through early intervention. Standards of Learning (SOL) scores throughout the school system have shown marked improvement during Stables' term of office, as have graduation rates and the number of high school seniors continuing to further education.

However, Stables' most memorable achievement will be the construction of a new academic campus for Northumberland County. Recognizing that renovating ancient, crumbling and inefficient buildings could, at best, represent a short-term economy, Stables pushed

for the construction of a combined high school/middle school building to serve the community for many decades to come. Persuading all parties and the community at large of the wisdom of this move was a major undertaking. Leading county officials through the process of financing the undertaking and then selecting all elements of the new buildings was an even greater challenge. As the walls of the new schools take shape, Stables' vision is becoming reality, and Northumberland County can look forward to a day – not so far away – when our children can attend classes in a building that demonstrates the value we place on education. In addition, the county's citizens can anticipate enjoying those facilities which the new schools will make available to the community at large.

The NAPS Distinguished Citizen Award is given annually to a member of our community who has made a significant contribution to the goals of NAPS. One of these goals is to encourage economic growth (See "Stables" on page 4)

## Ailanthus Invades Northern Neck



*Ailanthus is becoming common on roadsides and vacant lots, choking out desirable plants.*

By LYNTON LAND

Ailanthus (tree-of-heaven, Chinese sumac, or stinking sumac) is beginning to infest our highway rights-of-way and adjacent properties. It is a rapidly growing, invasive, deciduous tree that, once established, can quickly form an impenetrable thicket, displacing other vegetation. It is a prolific seed producer, grows rapidly, and also reproduces by vegetative sprouting, so it usually occurs in patches rather than as single trees. The trees also produce toxins that prevent the establishment of other plant species. The root system is aggressive enough to cause damage to sewers and foundations.

Ailanthus has smooth stems with pale gray bark, and large compound leaves, 1 to 4 feet in length, composed of 11-25 smaller leaflets. All parts of the tree, especially the small, yellow-green flowers, have a strong, offensive odor, and crushing some leaves between your fingers is a sure way to differentiate it from shrubs like su- (See "Ailanthus" on page 2)

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***PRESIDENT'S CORNER*****A Mission of "Respect"**

By STEVE TALLENT

I started working this, my first "President's Corner" piece, much earlier. It has taken many forms. What I have finally resolved to try is to set forth my thoughts on what NAPS is and what it is not.

I do this starting with its name – the Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship. This is not the name of a single-minded advocacy group. If I had to describe NAPS' approach in one word, it would be "respect" – respect for environment, education, public interest, private rights and hard science.

NAPS does not "respect" bad science or the influence of special interest views, whether based on ideology or economic interest.

As individuals, our members do not agree with all positions or issues; however, the organization is devoted to the sharing of data, views and ideas that can contribute to the most thoughtful and informed decisions affecting our county and the Northern Neck.

For that, NAPS needs the help of all its members. I have dedicated myself to increasing member participation in the important work in which NAPS is involved.

If you think that we can be more effective by trying other methods or that NAPS should be dealing with other issues, please WRITE me (P.O. box 512, Reedville, 22539). E-mail is not my long suit! I'd really like to get your letters!

Meanwhile, I look forward to seeing you all at the NAPS Fall Social September 22nd when we honor Clint Stables, our 2007 honoree, and the faculty and staff of our county schools. \*

***Get Ready to Party!***

By SANDY HENBEST

Saturday, September 22, 2007 is the date for the NAPS annual Fall Social. From 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. we plan to eat, drink, and converse with other NAPS members and our extra special guests, the superintendent, teachers, principals, and School Board members of our Northumberland County School District. What a great opportunity for us to "teach" them what NAPS is all about, while presenting our 2007 NAPS Distinguished Citizen award to superintendent, Clint Stables. Our location is the same as last year – the Transportation Museum Building at Rice's Hotel/Hughlett's Tavern in Heathsville. Watch for your invitation in the mail, the first week of September. It will cover all the pertinent information. We look forward to your positive response!

We are still seeking volunteers to help set-up, break-down, and serve food for this event. If you are willing to help or have questions, please contact Sandy Henbest at 580-4975 or sahenbest@kaballero.com. \*

***NAPS Calendar***

The NAPS Board meets at the Northern Neck State Bank in Burgess at 9 a.m. each month on the Wednesday immediately preceding Northumberland Board of Supervisors meetings (second Thursday). NAPS members and prospective members are always welcome. Join the group and find out about all that NAPS accomplishes.

**September 12 .....NAPS Board Meeting****September 22 .....NAPS Fall Social****October 10.....NAPS Board Meeting****October 18.....Election Forum****October 22.....Adopt-A-Highway Clean-up****November 7 .....NAPS Board Meeting*****Ailanthus*** (continued from page 1)

macs, and trees like mimosa, ash, black walnut and pecan. The leaflets are not toothed, except for a pair of gland-tipped teeth at the base of each leaflet.

NAPS and the Northern Neck Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society are planning



*Ailanthus has smooth stems, pale gray bark, compound leaf structure, and offensive odor when leaf is crushed.*

to wage war on Ailanthus. We apply a herbicide "brew" selectively to the trunks of the trees, from the ground up about 24 inches, being sure to completely encircle the trunk. We do not spray the foliage, so there is no danger to nearby plants. We need your help in locating patches for treatment. If you believe your property or a right-of-way harbors a stand of this invasive plant, please provide the location to Lynton Land at JandL@rivnet.net, 453-6605, or P. O. Box 539, Ophelia 22530. We will confirm your identification and begin to try and eliminate it before mid-September, when the herbicides are most effective. If you see trees with red trunks (we add a dye to the herbicide brew), we've been there, and the dead tree can be cut down the following spring. \*

**NAPS to Host Election Forum**

By SUE LINDSAY

On Thursday, October 18, NAPS will host an election forum in the Northumberland High School Auditorium at 7 p.m. The purpose of the forum is to allow those seeking office to introduce themselves to the audience and to present their views on key issues to the citizens of the county. All the local candidates who are standing for election have been invited to participate, including those who are running unopposed.

Each speaker will have an agreed number of minutes to speak without interruption. Written questions posed by the general public and Northumberland High School students will be read out by a moderator, and candidates may respond, within a given time period. At the conclusion of the session, candidates will have the opportunity to mingle with the audience in an informal setting.

We hope this event will allow us all to become more closely acquainted with our elected officials and to understand how they perceive their roles in the governance of our county. Where there are choices to be made between candidates, members of the audience will be able to base their decisions in November on first-hand information rather than hearsay and assumptions. Where no choices are involved, we will at least have learned more of the challenges that face local government officials, and know the views of those responsible for the county's administration.

NAPS encourages everyone to take advantage of this opportunity and to come and meet the candidates, question them on issues of interest to us all, and to be active participants Northumberland County's future. \*

# The Need for Planned Growth

By LYNTON LAND

In 1926, a decision by the Supreme Court (City of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.) legitimized zoning as a way to protect the public health, safety and welfare. The finding that there was valid government interest in maintaining the character of neighborhoods and in regulating where certain land uses should occur caused a subsequent explosion in zoning ordinances across the country. If wise zoning exists, individuals and developers can buy property with confidence that they know what can be built nearby so as to be able to protect their investment. In the absence of an effective zoning code, property owners live under the constant threat that neighbors may adopt land uses that result in a loss of the value of their property.

What goals should zoning ordinances achieve in Northumberland County? Do existing ordinances suffice? Ordinances are available online at [www.co.northumberland.va.us](http://www.co.northumberland.va.us), at the library, or from the county. We often hear phrases like “the need to preserve our rural heritage” and “prevent highway sprawl.” How can these goals be achieved to everyone’s satisfaction, if, indeed, these sentiments express the majority of citizen’s wishes? What kind of county do the citizens want a decade or more from now?

Consider a property owner who currently owns land zoned Agricultural (A-1). Under the existing ordinance (§148-18) a property owner is permitted 67 land-uses by right, and 17 additional land-uses conditionally. Some of the uses permitted “by right” include automotive/truck sales/service/reconditioning/repairing/re-treading, contractor’s equipment storage yards, light industry, manufacturing, processing and assembly, mobile home sales yards, motels and hotels, retail food stores, truck and motor freight terminals, and wholesale businesses and storage warehouses. Does the existing ordinance “preserve our rural heritage” and prevent “highway sprawl?” Should all the 67 uses continue to be permitted, or should land zoned A-1 be restricted only for agricultural and low-density single-family residential purposes? Do the 67 kinds of uses currently permitted “by right” enhance or detract from the value of adjacent property? A change in the ordinance to permit only agricultural and low-density residential development between the eight villages could come at a possible financial cost to some property owners, but benefit other property owners by protecting the value of their land from undesirable kinds of development.

What kinds of restrictions, if any, should be placed on residential density? We cannot escape from the fact that sewage disposal must be accomplished with as little impact as possible on our local waterways and Chesapeake Bay. Low Impact Development (LID) and “Clustering” are tools to permit higher density residential development, including multi-family dwellings, both adjacent to and removed from the water. Clustering residences and requiring that land be set aside as open space (which can be farmed or timbered) is one option. An alternative is to mandate large lots; but at what point does a lot become too big to mow, but too small to farm? Should LID and/or cluster requirements be incorporated into existing or new ordinances? How can we ensure that residential development can proceed for low- and moderate-income families?

Some citizens believe we must look long and hard at existing zoning ordinances, which date (with a few revisions) from 1974. We must, collectively, decide what kind of place Northumberland County should become decades from now. Existing zoning ordinances do not prevent highway sprawl or large, dense “cookie-cutter” residential developments, nor do existing ordinances guarantee that the rural appearance of the county and the 55 mph speed limit between villages will be retained.

In the spirit of encouraging the public to discuss these issues among themselves, a group of citizens proposes to publish a series of articles, of which this is first. In subsequent articles we will address subjects like the history of zoning, projected demographic changes, protecting agricultural and forested land, land conservation, residential development inland and on the water, multi-family residences, affordable housing, village development, a highway overlay, the role of the new “campus” in the county, as well as other subjects that may concern citizens.

We intend these articles to be informational. In a final article we will present a position in accord with the NAPS’ mandate of “Growth with Order and Beauty.” We encourage all citizens of the county to understand existing ordinances and seriously consider the issues that will face Northumberland County in the future. The appendix of the Comprehensive Plan contains demographic data from federal censuses and state and local data banks. All citizens are encouraged to make their positions known to the general public, and to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in public hearings, in writing (P. O. Box 129, Heathsville VA 22473) or by email ([keades@co.northumberland.va.us](mailto:keades@co.northumberland.va.us)). \*



## NAPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please fill out application, cut page at dotted lines, place into No. 10 envelope with a check made out to “NAPS,” and mail to:

NAPS  
P.O. Box 567  
Heathsville, VA 22473

(Please pass this application along to interested parties.)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Category\* (check one):

- Individual \$15     Sustaining \$100
- Family \$25         Patron \$250
- Student \$1          Business \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (min. \$50)

\* The Internal Revenue Service has determined that NAPS qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under section 501 (c) (3) of the code. As such, dues and contributions to NAPS may be deductible by donor for tax purposes.

**I would like to participate in:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Adopt-A-Highway
- \_\_\_\_\_ Environmental Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fund Raising
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grass Planting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Monitoring County Boards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Membership
- \_\_\_\_\_ NAPS Exhibits
- \_\_\_\_\_ Phragmites Problems
- \_\_\_\_\_ Publicity and Newsletter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Special Events Coordination
- \_\_\_\_\_ Any Project Assignments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

# Adopt-A-Highway Fall Clean-up

By ANNE BÉLANGER

Fall is just around the corner and it's time to schedule our next trash pick-up on Route 200. Please mark your calendars for a trash pick-up on Monday, October 22nd with a rain date of Friday, October 26th. Details to follow mid-September ... but really, other than the date, the details are the same ... at least this time.

Now for something new. I have booked the Northumberland Public Library meeting room for Friday, September 28th at 9:30 a.m. for a meeting of our Adopt-A-Highway group. I feel like I've been calling the shots all by myself for the past year and a half, and while that works for me, I want the chance to talk with you all about:

- what our group is doing,
- where we are doing it,
- how we are doing it,
- what else we could/should be doing,
- any ideas you may have for all of the above.

Please RSVP about attending the meeting. Can I encourage you to attend with the offer of coffee/tea and home-made muffins?

I am heading up to Canada for a couple of weeks and my computer is taking advantage of my absence to go to "computer camp" (as a reward for bad behavior), so you won't hear from me until mid-September, but send your RSVP's along now so they'll all be waiting for me on my return.

If you can't make it for the meeting, please send me your ideas and I'll bring them up in the meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you in September ... and October. \*

## Stables *(continued from page 1)*

that will promote jobs. The product of our schools is the future manpower of our county – jobs become available in response to the presence of potential qualified employees. Without quality educational facilities, producing graduates with the skills to function efficiently and productively in today's world, a region can only anticipate stagnation or decline. The NAPS Education Committee believes that Northumberland County will benefit from the impact of Stables' leadership for many years to come. \*



Northumberland  
Association for  
Progressive  
Stewardship

P.O. Box 567 • Heathsville, VA 22473

## Officers & Board Members

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## NAPS Board News

The NAPS Board of Directors has one current vacancy. If you are interested in becoming a NAPS Board member, or would like to recommend a candidate, contact any Board member (see list on this page).

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