



PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

Posing next to the famous Houdon statue of George Washington, Del. Ed Scott says his appreciation of Virginia history is one of the reasons he's our representative in Richmond today.

30th District Delegate Ed Scott

presence for our Virginia farm wineries...a marketing portal for some of their direct sales business."

This goes hand in hand with Scott's pro-small business stance. He is also a firm supporter of low taxes, traditional family values, and Second Amendment rights. With an "A" rating from the National Rifle Association, Scott has also been named Legislator of the Year by the Virginia Horse Council and the Virginia Hunting Dog Owner's Association.

Something of a sportsman himself, he laments the fact that he can't get out and trout fish on his beloved Hughes River often enough. "You know timing is such that I don't get to spend much time in the woods." And when he comes home weekends, "One of the other distractions that keeps me from hunting and fishing is trying to be a little bit of a help to my wife with her horses." He pauses for effect and adds, "She doesn't depend on me; if she did, she'd be in trouble."

Scott and his wife Pauline and their 15-year-old daughter Danielle live on a small farm, just across the Culpeper line in Madison County. Danielle has made something of a name for herself as an agility dog trainer and competitor. Two years ago, she qualified for the United States Dog Agility Association (USDAA) International Championship in Scottsdale, AZ. The Scott family, with a Sheltie and a Border Collie in tow, drove all the way out there in a van. "It's a great way to see the country," says Scott with a smile. "It was kind of a neat trip."

Closer to home, when he's not being a legislator, Ed Scott tends to his business, EcoSeptix Alliance. It is a company that performs "maintenance and repair work for septic systems, primarily some of the alternative septic systems." It's interesting to note that the business is based in Locust Grove, where the land is not known to perc all that well.

That's also where the Lake of the Woods dam issue is coming to a head. Ever since he was first elected in 2003, Scott says he's been dealing with the regulation that the LOW dam has to withstand 37 inches of rainfall in a 24-hour period. "Having lived in Madison County in 1995, when we saw, depending on where you were, between 20 and 24 inches of rain, and what was clearly the flood of a lifetime, to say that there's an appropriate standard that's one and a half times that, to me, is just not feasible."

The other ongoing issue is this budget crisis. "Long-term we get out of it by growing the economy and by getting folks back to work," says Scott. "In the short-term we've got some brutal decisions to make, and there are some real challenges in front of us. It's not going to be easy... This is something that no legislator looks forward to doing."

Right about then, two Orange County School Board members walk into his office. He knows what they want; the restoration of some 80 positions. But he has to be firm. The Constitution says the state must pass a balanced budget. He's sorry, but there's not much he can do...not this year anyway.



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Although they are both Republicans, the similarities between Ed Scott, right, and Rob Bell, left, end there. Still, both confirm they rely heavily on each other's expertise in making legislative decisions.

58th District Delegate Rob Bell

more than a glass of wine to be over the limit for a 180-pound man. "It's three drinks in an hour with no break, no food, no nothing," he blurts. "It's three beers...Bang! Bang! Bang! In an hour's time, at 180 pounds, I will be right at the line."

He's participated in conferences where prosecutors actually test their reaction time while under the influence. "At these conferences, they would bring in liquor and have a breath test machine, and it was very interesting," observes Bell. "What many of us found is that I feel as if my reaction time is impaired significantly before I hit the legal limit." He smiles and adds that after slamming down three drinks without food, "I like the way I feel. I feel like a million bucks. I'm indestructible and I'm funny and good looking. But," he pauses for effect, "I would not want to drive at .07."

This year Bell has introduced two additions to existing DUI laws. One closes a loophole; the other requires convicted drunk drivers to get "an ignition interlock," where they must blow into a device to start the vehicle. "If there's any alcohol, it shuts the car down." Noting that there are 26,000 repeat DUI offenders every year in Virginia, Bell adds, "The goal is once we have

caught you, we want to make sure we don't have a second offense."

Rob Bell comes to us by way of UVA. A self-described military brat who never lived anywhere permanent for long, this California native finally found his home in Charlottesville when he graduated with a law degree from the university. His district is an odd mix of liberal Democrat Charlottesville, moderate Fluvanna and parts of Albemarle and conservative Republican Greene and neighboring sliver of Orange. Asked what he does for fun, he'll smile and point to a photograph of his family. "I've got a 7-year-old boy and a 1-year-old girl. It's family time. I go home; I play with the kids." Whenever he does find a brief moment to himself, he reads voraciously.

Of the budget crises, Bell points out that since the Gilmore years, state spending has doubled. Still, he adds, "These are hard times." He points to a stack of letters from constituents, all asking for state funding help. "Thank you for your thoughts," he will reply. "But you have to understand that I cannot tell you what you want to hear which is 'Yes, I'll do it. And here are the reasons why. I wish I had better news.'"



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Asked what he does in his spare time, Rob Bell just points to this photograph, which appeared on his annual Christmas card to his constituents. When he does get a rare moment alone, he can be found with his nose in a good book.



PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

The Virginia House of Delegates in session, as seen from behind Rob Bell's back row seat in the historic chamber. Del. Scott sits at the far side of the room in the "amen corner," underneath a white plaque honoring James Madison's statute for religious freedom.

A day in the life of the General Assembly

It's 7:15 on a Thursday morning, and already delegates, senators, secretaries, and lobbyists are trickling into the General Assembly building.

Those with ID breeze past security; those without, must empty their pockets. Still the procedure is calm, efficient, and friendly; nothing like an airport.

Thirtieth District Delegate Ed Scott has already been in a legislative sportsman's caucus for 15 minutes. He attends this informal meeting every Thursday morning. Seventeenth District Senator Edd Houck, the door to his office wide open already, is perusing an editorial in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* with pursed lips. It has something to do with this "dam bill," the one about the Lake of the Woods impoundment needing to be rebuilt at a cost of \$6 million dollars so it can withstand 37 inches of rain in 24 hours. Both men, although from different political parties, are tackling this issue together.

In our last *Insider*, we introduced you to our State Senator, Edd Houck, and we talked about the state's budget crises. In this final installment, we'll take you on a tour of the General Assembly and chat with our two delegates, Ed Scott and Rob Bell.

There are people waiting to talk to Houck...lobbyists in the lobby. At 8:15, he strides out and gives them his ear as he rides the crowded elevator to the first floor, where he takes his place as chairman of the Senate Education and Health Committee. A look around the room reveals a totally disabled child in a wheelchair parked in the aisle, a mute and effective reminder that if all these budget cuts go through, he may be left out in the healthcare cold.

Juggling sheaves of papers, lobbyists and legislative aides line the walls, huddle, confer, or look bored. Reporters peer into laptops. Delegates who are having their bills heard sit in the front row, waiting for their names to be called. People come and go at will.

At precisely 9 a.m., Houck bangs the gavel, and calls the meeting to order. It's Feb. 18, just two days

past "transition day," the legislative mid-point of the General Assembly. From now on, bills that have passed the Senate go to the House of Delegates and vice versa. But before these bills reach the Senate floor they must pass muster with the appropriate committee, and that's what Sen. Edd Houck and his fellow committeemen are doing today.

This clearinghouse process is surprisingly swift and efficient. Take Delegate Christopher Peace's House Bill 709 as an example: This is a measure that, among other things, allows school boards to purchase printed as well as electronic versions of textbooks. Sen. Houck calls Peace's name. He stands at the podium and gives a brief summary of the bill. Houck asks if anyone is there in opposition to the bill. "Hearing none, it's been moved and seconded that House Bill 709 be reported." And that's it; it's a done deal, basically rubber-stamped to the full Senate, which, by the way, passed the bill 40-0 four days later.

So whoever said lawmaking is a little like grinding sausage (once you see the process; you lose your taste for it) had it all wrong. This is government in action folks, and it's working!

Even the hallways of the General Assembly building, where all the delegates and senators have their offices and staff, seems to run on an informal system of give and take. Artwork from their constituents lines the walls. Secretaries stage a benefit bake sale. People wait in throngs to board crowded dingy elevators. It's busy but not crazy. I overhear one delegate say to a woman, "Whenever they want to talk to you 'just for a second,' it's really 15 minutes."

Well of course it is; people want to bend his ear about something or another: lobbyists, delegations from home, fellow legislators. And although appointments seem to run in 15-minute blocks, everything seems flexible. Although it would be a good idea to call first, you can actually just breeze into this place, and, depending on the time of day, have a fair chance of meeting and talking briefly with your delegate.

I learn this first hand on my way up to find just where Ed Scott's office is. My appointment isn't until 3:30 this afternoon, so I'm just scoping it out this morning. But there he is, sitting at a conference table at a standing-room-only caucus about tourism. Local heavyhitters—Montpelier's Mike Quinn and Barboursville Vineyards' Luca Paschina—are there too. Scott arises from the conference table and wanders out into the hall. I introduce myself. He looks at his watch and says now is just as good a time as any to do an interview. I am amazed that this schedule-shuffling doesn't faze his legislative aide; it's all part of being accessible. We sit and chat for almost a half hour in his office. When I leave, who's waiting to see him but Orange



PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

Part of a delegate's day is to meet with constituents. On this particular day, Orange County School Board members, Donna Waugh-Robinson, left, and Judy Carter, right, came to Scott's office hoping to save public school jobs.

County School Board members, Donna Waugh-Robinson and Judy Carter? I don't know if they have an appointment or not, but he agrees to see them immediately.

There's little doubt Donna and Judy are here to plead for as many as 80 public school positions that may fall victim to this budget mess. Although sympathetic, Scott has to be firm. He cannot promise extra money, and he will not vote to raise taxes. He and 58th District Delegate Rob Bell made that position abundantly clear on a 97-0 vote to shoot down Governor Kaine's proposal to raise the Virginia state income tax by 1 percent earlier this year.

It's time to head over to the Capitol building and sit in on

the noon session of the House of Delegates. Speaking of Del. Bell, as I stroll across the spacious grounds to the gleaming white Greek temple that is our seat of government, his instantly recognizable, tall and lanky form blows by me. Papers erupt from his briefcase; his long dark overcoat flaps; he cradles a cell phone under his chin. 'No time to talk now, but after the session, sure, we'll take as much time as you need,' he seems to say.

As I go in the west entrance, which is pretty much "members only," the state policeman at the door barely looks up as I flash my *Orange Review* credentials. I am directed to the House Gallery by a patient woman who sits at a circular desk like a traffic cop at the very center of the building. If the ceiling collapsed, she would be crushed by the famous Houdon sculpture of George Washington one story above.

She points me to the stairs. They are awash in school children on a field trip to see their government in action. I yield my place in line and descend. "Phil," I hear someone say. It's Del. Scott. He's arranged with the doorkeeper to let me in on the floor of the House of Delegates.

I go in wide-eyed and stunned; sit primly in a chair hugging the

back wall. The doorkeeper encourages me to take photographs (just no flash), shows me where Delegates Scott and Bell sit. They both occupy back row seats, on opposite sides of this awe-inspiring and recently refurbished burgundy and gold room.

It is vaguely reminiscent of a gentlemen's club. Delegates sit at wood-paneled desks in high-backed swivel leather chairs. Their laptops illuminate their faces. Some of them visit each other and whisper; others summon middle-school-aged pages in blue blazers and khakis, sending them out for everything from legal documents to a barbecue sandwich. The whole place reminds you faintly of Hogwarts, except all the kids in this exclusive boarding school are adults.

There's not much going on today. Being as it's just two days since the transition, Senate bills have not yet made their way to the House floor. A legislator acknowledges the school children jammed into the gallery above, to a smattering of applause. A resolution recognizing the Patowomeck Indian tribe passes 95-0.

After about an hour of this, the delegates, some of them sniggering like schoolboys, vote to reconvene on Friday at 10, not noon, so they can steal away for an early weekend home. It will be their last in a while, especially for those delegates who hail from out Bristol way. Except for a few who live within commuter distance, most of our representatives stay in temporary quarters in Richmond during the week when the General Assembly is in session. Almost all of them have real jobs and families they must juggle at home.

Delegates Scott and Bell usher me out the door and down into the cloakroom, where, contrary to popular belief, the only deals being made are between the coats on the rack. "You develop an expertise down here," says Bell. "Nobody's an expert at everything so you can either specialize and get things done or not specialize and be sort of a generalist." Concerning his relationship with Scott, Bell continues, "We certainly defer to each other's expertise." Delegate Scott confirms, "I think that's one of the neat things about the House of Delegates is that we do have people from different walks of life."

These two men are an interesting contrast in background, body type and style: Scott is powerful, stocky and laid back with a soft and easy country drawl. Bell is tall, cerebral and hyper; he rattles in agitated run-on sentences. Scott comes from a farming background; Bell is a military-brat-turned-lawyer. Guess which one is a graduate of Virginia Tech, and which one

went to UVa. Although both are Republicans, the similarities end there. Yet, despite these differences, they are the perfect complement to each other.



PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

Del. Rob Bell makes his way over to the Capitol building for a noon session of the House of Delegates. Citing his experience as an assistant commonwealth's attorney in Orange County, Bell has built a reputation for being tough on drunk drivers and sexual predators.

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Mr. Scott goes to Richmond

Ed Scott is a man who, when he can, answers his own phone. Over the Christmas holidays, he did exactly that when the mayor of Gordonsville called with a concern about VDOT and snow removal. The mayor expected to leave a voice mail. He got the real thing instead. "I was in the office, and of course I'm a part-time legislator. So I'm in and out of that office," shrugs Scott. "The phone rang and I answered it." He arches his eyebrows in query. "Why not answer your phone?"

Ed Scott has represented all but one precinct in Orange County since 2003, when he first won election as the 30th District Delegate to Richmond. He has never faced Democratic opposition, which in itself, is a compliment. He came to this position with some experience in legislative matters, when he was director of government affairs for the Virginia Agribusiness Council. Translation: He was a lobbyist. "And I got a feel for the process and the pace and enjoyed that work," he says from his comfortable but modest office in the General Assembly Building.

"I do think one of the reasons I'm here today is I've long had an interest in Virginia history and Virginia government. I've had family members instill in me a sense of pride in Virginia's history, and its role in the formation of the country."



PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

Born and raised in Culpeper County, Ed Scott comes to Richmond with strong small business, agriculture and tourism ties.

Born and raised in Culpeper County and a graduate of Culpeper County High School, Ed Scott spent most of his free time as a kid hanging out and working with his first cousin at Graves Mountain Lodge. After graduating from Virginia Tech with a degree in animal science, Ed Scott came home to work for the Culpeper Farmer's Co-op. And except for that interlude with the Virginia Agribusiness Council, he stuck with them for 18 years. And so he comes to agriculture and tourism with some dirt under his fingernails; he's seen how they work on the local level.

Speaking of agriculture, Scott has a bill this session that limits what kinds of vehicles you can drive on Virginia's roads using "Farm Use" tags. He listens to a story about a beat-up four-door sedan spied in a Charlottesville parking lot and obviously taking advantage of those license plates. "Bingo!" he exclaims. "There's a valid reason for that farm use exemption for the seasonal grain truck and the vehicle that might cross the highway, but I have consistently over the years had folks bring to my attention what you just described."

Another bill introduced by Scott creates a fulfillment warehouse license for Virginia wineries. "If you own a winery you're in the business of growing the grapes and turning them into wine," he explains. "You're not a shipper, but there's somebody who understands shipping and the logistics, and so you would outsource that piece of your direct sales to the fulfillment warehouse." In other words, he's creating a sort of mini Amazon.com for Virginia wineries, "an on-line

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PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

Rob Bell confers with a fellow delegate during a floor session of the Virginia House of Delegates.

Of Rob Bell's 26 voting precincts, only one is in Orange County. It's District 1, West. If you vote at the Barboursville Fire House, Bell is your man.

But Rob Bell comes to that lone Orange County precinct with strong Orange County ties, because he served as assistant commonwealth's attorney, under Tim Sanner. For five years he toiled in the trenches of our local judicial system, prosecuting the less glamorous cases: the shoplifters, the drunks, the child support evaders, the forgers and utterers. And so it is here, that he has built himself something of a reputation as the 'law 'n order' delegate in the General Assembly, particularly in regards to drunk drivers, sexual predators, and, in the wake of the Virginia Tech shootings, the mentally unstable.

Mr. Bell goes to Richmond

"Many of the milestones do come from the work and experience I had in the Orange County Commonwealth's Attorney's office working with the prosecutor and Judge Sullenberger and three different sheriffs," confirms Bell. "The drunk driving laws come right out of that... The sex offense stuff comes out of all those cases we did."

First elected in 2001, Bell remembers campaigning door-to-door in the Barboursville area. "The first guy said 'You helped me when somebody stole a bike off my porch. You were the guy who prosecuted the juvenile.' The next guy said, 'I remember you from a speeding ticket.'" Bell smiles ruefully and adds, "The next guy actually got mad at me and told me to get off his property."

Drunk driving laws are Bell's signature legislation. "The reason I'm all excited about it is that I did over 200 DUIs in Orange. I know the moving parts." He taps his fingers on his briefcase. "Here's the problem. Here's the fix. Here're the unintended consequences of the fix." As a result, according to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Virginia has the toughest DUI laws in the nation.

To those of us who furtively look in our rear view mirror on our way home from an innocent wine tasting or an Arts Center opening, Bell smiles understandingly and explains that it takes

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