



NETWORK

Summer 2006

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF ASSESSING OFFICERS
The Quarterly Newsletter of Virginia's Assessment Professionals

Winchester



Winchester and Frederick County, at the top of the Shenandoah Valley and Virginia, was once Shawnee Indian camping grounds to which Pennsylvania Quakers came to settle in 1732. The town was named Frederick Town after Frederick, father of George III of England. In 1752 the name was changed to Winchester in honor of the ancient English capital.

In the mid-1700's, Frederick County became the military and political training ground for George Washington, who came here at the age of sixteen to survey the lands of Thomas, the Sixth lord Fairfax. Washington built Fort Loudoun during the French and Indian War and, at twenty-six, was elected to his first public office as the county's representative to the House of Burgesses.

During the Revolutionary War, Daniel Morgan's Rifleman from Frederick County were among the first who came to Washington's aid against the British. War prisoners were housed in Winchester and the neighboring countryside.

Winchester was a strategic prize of great importance during the Civil War. In Confederate hands, on excellent roads to the north and east, it was a serious threat to the supply lines of the Union armies trying to reach Richmond - the heart of the Confederacy. In the hands of the Union army, Winchester made Confederate raids and invasion of the north risky and opened a protected avenue for Union troop movements south through a valley from which they could attack on the flanks and rear of Lee's main armies. Thus, Winchester and Frederick County became the scene of six battles during the Civil War, and the city itself changed flags around seventy times during the four year conflict, it is said thirteen times in one day. General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson demonstrated his military leadership in the Valley Campaign. Winchester was familiar to him not only as a military objective, but also as his home during the winter of 1861-1862. Here he enjoyed the companionship of his wife for the last winter. His headquarters is located on North Braddock Street and is open in the spring and summer months.

In Winchester and Frederick County the visitor will see many relics of the area's history: the tomb of Lord Fairfax in the yard of Christ Episcopal Church; the home and grave of General Daniel Morgan, hero of the Revolutionary War; George Washington's headquarters: the headquarters of "Stonewall" Jackson: the headquarters of the Union General Philip Sheridan, from which he started his 12 mile ride on October 19, 1864, to rally his retreating army at Cedar Creek- the ride made famous by Thomas Buchanon Read's poem, "Sheridan's Ride"; the Hollingsworth house, Abram's Delight, built in 1754 and now completely furnished with relics of the 18th century; houses of the Revolutionary era;

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NETWORK

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Possible VAAO Constitution Changes

The VAAO board will be considering Constitution changes at the summer seminar board meeting in July. If the Board approves the changes, the proposed changes will be displayed on the VAAO website.

VAAO Board Meeting Recap

VAAO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING NOVEMBER 29, 2005 OMNI HOTEL, RICHMOND, VA

Secretary's Report: Robert H. Willingham, ASA
 A motion was made and seconded to table approval of the minutes of the October 7, 2005 meeting until the Spring 2006 Board meeting.

Treasurers Report: Susan S. Lower, SRA
 Susan reported the total assets of the Association were \$81,861.70 as of November 15, 2005. Currently revenue exceeds expenditures by \$4,632.35. Still outstanding is the hotel bill from the annual conference that is anticipated to be approximately \$10,000.

Susan presented the 2006 budget with income of \$25,400 and expenditures of \$25,400. After discussion by the Board, the following adjustments to the 2006 budget were approved.

Proposed Income:	\$25,400
<u>Reduce Regional Seminar Income:</u>	<u>(\$ 3,000)</u>
Adjusted Total Income:	\$22,400

Proposed Expenditures:	\$25,400
Increase IAAO Representative:	\$ 200
Increase Publicity:	\$ 500
Increase Regional Seminars:	\$ 1,000
Increase Treasurer:	\$ 400
Delete Campaign Fund:	(\$ 500)
<u>Transfer from Contingency:</u>	<u>(\$ 4,600)</u>
Total Expenditures:	\$22,400

All present voted to approve the Treasurers report and revised budget for 2006.

A Message from the President

Greetings, I hope everyone is starting a good spring season. In the Fairfax area, we have been enjoying March Madness with our own George Mason University Patriot Men's Basketball team. The team made it into the NCAA final Four and made for some great basketball along the way.

The other March Madness has been the annual release of the assessment notices. We have had assessment increases for residential properties ranging from 18 to 28 percent in one year in the region from Arlington and Alexandria through to Prince William and Loudoun Counties. Property owners are appealing assessments to make sure the values are correct, but also participating in the budget process to make sure they have input into the spending for their local governments. I am sure other areas of the state have had significant value increases as well.

Each year this process emphasizes to me how lucky we are in Virginia to have an assessment system that is simple in terms of benchmarking full market value and uniform assessments. Property owners receive their notices and can understand how their assessments compare to recent sales and have the ability to bring discrepancies to the attention of the assessing officials. Often information is on the web as well for owners to do their own research and evaluation of the quality of their assessment. This compares to nationwide where some jurisdictions have not revalued for twenty years!

The VAAO committees have been hard at work this year planning a good seminar in Charlottesville July 12-15 and for the Annual Conference in Fairfax September 19-22. These events will offer good educational opportunities and also opportunities to network with other assessment professionals. The website will be updated with registration information as it becomes available, so check the website at www.vaa.org.

Lastly, if you have not become involved in VAAO committee work, please think about contributing your time to the organization. Volunteering for a committee will increase your knowledge of assessment practice and increase your contacts with other assessors across the state. If you are interested in helping out the remaining of this year or into next year feel free to contact me at janet.coldsmith@fairfaxcounty.gov or any of the Board members listed on the website.

I hope to see you in Charlottesville.

Janet

Congratulations to the VAAO's new Assessors:

Sandy Hughes, City of Hopewell
Richie McKeithen, City of Hampton
Jim Hester, City of Richmond
Todd Kaufman, Loudon County
Rod Compton, Prince George County

Member News:

The VAAO welcomes Angela Parsons as a Real Estate Appraiser with the City of Hopewell. Angela comes to Hopewell from Louisa and Spotsylvania Counties.

(Continued from Page 2)

Education Committee: Larry MacKereth, CAE

Larry reported that the Committee will be meeting at the Charlottesville Doubletree Hotel to plan the 2006 Education Seminar

Arrangements Committee: Sherry Sheth, CAE and Catherine Brincefield. The conference will be held September 20 – 23, 2006 at the Hyatt Fairlakes. Arrangements are ongoing.

Membership Committee: John Nelms, RES, SRA

John reported there were 2 new members

Resolutions Committee: Open

The passing of Paul Smith, former Director of Assessments for Fairfax County and Gerry Whiting, former Commissioner of Revenue for Arlington County were reported to the Board. It was recommended that resolutions be prepared once a Committee Chair was appointed.

Publicity Committee: Will Rice

Willie reported items were needed for the Network by Jan. 17th. The next issue will be out by February 15th.

Nominating Committee: Larry Thurston, ASA Past President

The Board discussed the timing of announcing nominations to the membership. It was decided that nominations will be posted 60 days prior to conference.

Legislative Committee: Wendel Ingram, ASA

Wendel will be monitoring bills in January. A report will be providing at the next Board meeting.

Communications & Technology: A new standing committee was formed by President Coldsmith. Appointed to the Committee were John Yeatman, AAS, Tom Little and Sam Davis, CAE.

Old Business:

After discussion by the Board, it was decided to donate \$500 to the IAAO for the Katrina Relief Fund to help affected assessment jurisdictions in the relief area.

New Business:

2006 calendar items were discussed. Tentative dates for the Hampton Roads Regional Seminar was April 27, 2006 and the next Board meeting for April 28, 2006 at the Williamsburg Marriott.

The Annual Education Seminar is scheduled for July 12 – 15, 2006 at the Doubletree Hotel, Charlottesville, VA.

The Annual Conference is scheduled for September 19 – 22, 2006 at the Fair Lakes Hyatt, Fairfax County, VA.

Respectfully Submitted,
Robert H. Willingham, ASA
Secretary, VAAO

Wayne Trout Retires!

The members of the VAAO would like to take this opportunity to recognize Wayne Trout, A.S.A., on his recent retirement from the City of Norfolk. Wayne worked in Norfolk for 29 years and has served the VAAO in many capacities during his tenure. He is a former president of our organization (2000-2001) and is the current president of the IAAO. Among Wayne's many achievements are: past president of the Hampton Roads Chapter of the A.S.A., Executive Board Member of the I.A.A.O. (2001-2005), member and past president of the Norfolk Sports Club and member of the Virginia Beach Community Chapel.



Wayne has been a driving force behind the success and growth of the V.A.A.O. During his career he has made many, many friends. His talents and contagious positive attitude has been a gift to so many.

Thank you Wayne for all you have given to our organization and for your endearing friendship! Best wishes go to you and Margo for a relaxing, well-deserved retirement.

“Wayne has been a good friend and comrade in arms in our sometimes difficult profession for many years. His professionalism and leadership in Norfolk, the VAAO and the IAAO has made us all proud to be associated with him. I look forward to visiting him and Margo in Blacksburg for years to come. I hope he can afford his real estate taxes on a fixed income!”

Jerry Banagan, Assessor
City of Virginia Beach

“Welcome to the club, Wayne!” I’m sure you’re going to love retirement. It’s been a real pleasure having you as a friend and assessment colleague all these years. I wish you and Margo a great life in “Hokie” country. Hampton Roads will miss you! I hope to see you from time to time in years to come. Happy Retirement!”

Larry Thurston, Retired Assistant Assessor
City of Virginia Beach

“Wayne, congratulations on your recent announcement of retirement! I hope you will enjoy your restful years with family, friends and Hokie football! It will good to have you and Margo back home in the mountains again. Best of luck.”

Susan Lower, Assessor
City of Roanoke

“Congratulations Wayne on your retirement. Thank you for your many contributions to the VAAO and IAAO, and for making them better organizations. Not bad for an ole’ Hokie. It’s been a pleasure working with your for these many years. I wish you and Margo many happy years of retirement together here in the mountains of Southwest Virginia. Don’t forget to look us up when you get here.”

Wendel Ingram, Assessor
City of Salem

See “Poem” on page 8

Education Committee Meeting

The 51st VAAO Education Seminar will be held July 12-14 at the Doubletree Hotel in Charlottesville. The Seminar provides cost-effective continuing education to VAAO members every year. Topics for 2006 include the seven-hour USPAP update, two professional seminars, waterfront property valuation, land use topics, and a roundtable session on affordable housing. Registration materials for the seminar will be posted on the VAAO website in May. See you there!

VAAO Featured Member Profile

Elizabeth O'Conner

Full Name: Elizabeth O'Connor Hancock
Hometown: Lackawanna, NY
Job Title: Commercial Appraisal Supervisor
Jurisdiction: City of Chesapeake
Marital status: Divorced
Children: 2 sons, Adam 18, Colin 13
Pets: None presently
Place of birth: Buffalo, NY
Education: B.S. Business Administration, concentration in Real Estate Finance



Work history: City of Chesapeake for the past 12 years, prior to that - Lewis Hutchins & Associates, Houston Texas, Commercial Real Estate Appraisers

Professional Designations/ Affiliations: Licensed Residential Real Estate Appraiser

Organizations: Board Member - Old Dominion University Center for Real Estate and Economic Development

VAAO Participation (Committees, etc.): None

What is your idea of a perfect day off? Day trip to the Outer Banks, Carova or Oregon Inlet

If you could invite three famous people to dinner, who would they be? George Clooney, Condoleezza Rice, Bill Gates

Favorite Books: 'The Fountainhead' by Ayn Rand and 'The Secret Garden' by Frances Hodges Burnett

Hobbies: Not much time for hobbies with a son in AAU Baseball

Dream vacation: New Zealand

Favorite sport/team: Boston Red Socks

Guilty pleasure: Good wine and seafood

Favorite restaurant: Any of the great eateries along Granby Street in Norfolk

Favorite night on the town? See above question, it would have to include dinner at one of those restaurants and a Norfolk Tides game

Favorite television show? I usually end up watching sports on TV with 2 sons at home!

What song describes your life? Different songs at different stages

Who is your hero? Dr. Martin Luther King and his enduring message of nonviolence and brilliant speeches and sayings

Of what achievements are you most proud? Family, friends and career

Retirement plans? Right now, I'd like to spend a year in Europe seeing all parts, however, too far down the road to make any firm plans.

Favorite part of being in the assessment world? Being able to remain in the commercial real estate field without worrying about the demands of scheduling or a slow market in the fee world.

A Brief History of Taxation and Assessments in James City County

Written by Brian Gordineer
Assistant Assessor, James City County

The area that forms present-day James City County was first inhabited by the Indians and re-settled by the English beginning in 1607. From 1607 until 1619 all of the Virginia Colony was administered through three successive charters issued by King James to the Virginia Company of London. In 1619 the colony was divided into four corporations: James City, Charles City, Henrico City and Kecoughtan. In 1634 the corporations were dissolved and eight counties were formed: James City County was one of Virginia's original eight local government units. The creation of new counties out of the area of James City County and shifting of boundaries with adjacent jurisdictions continued until 1769.

During the 1640s local court justices were responsible for collecting taxes among their other duties. In 1661 a revision in Virginia's legal code resulted in tax rates being established by law. A list of quitrents compiled in 1704 and sent to England, indicates that 114,780 acres of James City County land was held by at least 284 persons. The quitrent roll included the name of the property owner and leaseholder. Local tax rolls for 1768 and 1769 reveal that free whites were assessed for real property, as well as personal property, such as slaves and wheeled vehicles. Other locally administered taxes included a poll tax and church levies.

In June 1776 the Virginia Convention adopted a constitution for the new Commonwealth of Virginia that retained the structure of county government and preserved the taxing authority of the appointive bodies of county courts and parish vestries that had existed under English rule. In 1782 locally-appointed tax commissioners began compiling assessments of real and personal property, and filing these records with the County Clerk of Court and the Virginia Auditor's Office. Tax commissioners periodically visited properties to estimate their value. In 1815 tax assessors began listing the distance of each tract from the county courthouse, and when and by what means properties were transferred. In 1820 tax assessments began being listed in dollars and assessments included the listing of improvement values.

In 1887 Virginia's boards of supervisors were authorized to divide their counties into precincts to allow for the orderly procession of land: This custom was originally used by parish vestries in colonial Virginia, although it was revived as a means to create legal basis for land ownership and boundary lines given the loss of official records during the Civil War. The records of James City County processioners indicate that property owners described their property boundaries under oath in the presence of their neighbors and local officials.

A referendum in 1970 led to the adoption by the James City County Board of Supervisors of the county manager form of government, where a county administrator could hire staff to meet the needs of a growing community, as well as standardize procedures in the offices of the Sheriff, Commonwealth's Attorney, and Commissioner of the Revenue. The establishment of the Real Estate Assessments Division was enabled in 1974 by the Virginia Code with the passage of Section 58.1-3274. Real Estate Assessments is one of four divisions of the Department of Financial Management and Services, and the offices, including the GIS/Mapping Section, are located at the James City County Government Center.

Wayne Trout's Dream

Last night as I lay sleeping, I died or so it seemed
Then I went up to Heaven, but only in my Dream.
Up there St. Peter met me, standing at the Pearly Gates
He said "I must check your record, so please stand right here and wait".
He looked at me and stated "Wayne, your record is covered with flaws
On Earth I see you rallied for every losing cause.
I see you drank alcohol, lusted after women and you cussed a lot too
Fact is you've done everything, a good person should never do.
We can't have people like you up, here your life was full of sin!
But then he read the last of my record, he took my hand and said "my son come on in"
He led me up to the big Boss and said "Take him in God and treat him well
He used to be a City Appraiser so he's served his time in Hell!

Wayne - Godspeed my Friend.

Bruce

Featured Jurisdiction – Continued from page 1

the National Cemetery and the Confederate Cemetery with thousands of heroes graves; the ruins of an old church used as barracks during the Revolutionary War; the Hopewell Meeting House, established in 1734; Belle Grove Plantation, 1794; and many others.

Each spring Winchester plays host for four days to over 250,000 visitors who converge upon the town to witness the famous Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival, usually held the first few days in May. Winchester also hosts the world's largest Fireman's parade the Friday before the main event.

Winchester has long been known as the "Apple Capital" surrounded as it is by vast orchards and constituting one of the largest apple export markets of the nation and the largest producing area in Virginia.

Winchester is also home to the Campus of Shenandoah University. This relatively small university is located within the Winchester city limits. Each year the school and the community play host to roughly 3,000 students between August and May.

Winchester is a city located in the heart of Frederick County yet it is an independent entity. As of the 2000 census, the city had a total population of 23,585, 10,001 households, and 5,650 families residing in the city. There were 10,587 housing units.

The Assessor's office has 3 devoted employees- the assessor-Robert Mongold, the administrative Assistant – Billie Elsea and the account clerk – D. Keith Shifflett. This office handles a multitude of jobs: transfers of property, inspecting new properties & assessing them, change of addressing for any real estate, tax relief for the elderly or disabled, mailing of all meals, motel, admissions, and short-term rentals returns monthly, handling of all land use tax application, historic rehab and tax exempt applications. Along with all customer questions-whether by phone or walk-ins, this office stays very busy. The mortgage companies and realtors around this growing city have our number on speed dial. With going hi-tech a lot of the information can be gotten on line, but the phones stay busy.