

Saving the Carnival

By Delegate Albert C. Pollard, Jr.

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The drawback of serving in the General Assembly is that you have to serve with 139 politicians and, sometimes, job performance is measured not by what gets done but by preventing bad things from happening.

Usually this provides very little satisfaction, except for recently when my office helped save the Kilmarnock Firemen's Carnival...okay, that's over the top. But we did help save the raffle.

Just a couple of weeks ago my office received a two page, single spaced memo outlining an encounter carnival volunteers had with an enforcement officer from the Department of Charitable Gaming. This particular officer basically threatened to shut down all gaming at the carnival that was scheduled to begin less than four weeks away. This was because the enforcement officer assumed KVFD would sell all 5,000 tickets it printed for this year's car raffle. At \$10 a ticket, this would put KVFD over the \$40,000 threshold for volunteer organizations and therefore require KVFD to receive a gaming permit.

Ironically, earlier this past year I had put in a bill which would have stripped the Department of Charitable Gaming of their enforcement powers over volunteer organizations. I did this precisely because of previous such run-ins with the Charitable Gaming department.

This bill caused my aide Carmen and I to meet with the Director of Consumer Services, who had just recently been given oversight of the Department of Charitable Gaming. At that February meeting, he promised us that he was working to change the culture within Charitable Gaming, with a focus on improving the attitude of the enforcement officers when they come to inspect volunteer organizations.

Clearly, this particular enforcement officer didn't get the memo.

Thus, we knew just who to call with the carnival fiasco. Unable to reach the Director, we called his boss and my former colleague, Matt Lohr, Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Matt got it.

Within minutes, we received a call from the Director and by the end of the day, the problem was fixed.

The only problem is I feel a conflict of interest if I buy a raffle ticket now.

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