

SIMON AND FORST FOR THE RA BOARD

By William Nicoson

You've just sent your \$370 annual assessment check to Reston Association. Next week you'll receive your ballot for election of RA directors. Since you value RA as the steward of property values and life-style in the community, you'll carefully consider the candidates, mark the ballot and mail it. You figure that's the least you can do to support your own personal interest in the quality of your community.

Who are you? Well, if history is any guide to RA voting this year, all of you will comprise less than 20% of RA's members.

But hopefully the well-publicized challenges RA currently faces will encourage a better election turnout than in the past. Able leadership of the Reston Association has never been more critical to Reston's future than today. This year will witness completion of all residential units in RA's jurisdiction: the free ride on assessment of a growing membership is over. Furthermore the assessment of almost one-third of RA units is capped below the general assessment currently paid by other members.

These restraints on future revenue come at a time when RA faces expensive challenges. As Reston's final development phase continues, storm water run-off resulting in stream erosion and lake siltation is magnified by further conversion of porous earth surfaces to hard surfaces of the built environment. RA must institute a program of storm-water management that is both effective and affordable. RA also faces costly renovation or replacement of aging facilities at some three sites currently, with more to come in the foreseeable future. The explosion of office workers in Reston will burden RA facilities without the slightest compensating revenue from business. Through it all, RA must refuse to compromise plans to improve the efficiency and quality of existing facilities, such as the nature center.

Among candidates in the RA race, the best team to address these issues is Simon & Forst. Incumbent at-large director Robert Simon is running for a second term. In addition to founding Reston, he has owned and managed New York City's Carnegie Hall and other assorted real estate properties from New York to Florida. Simon not only understands community development and management as a business, but has taught the subject at The New School in New York City. His experience as Reston's first developer has been invaluable to RA during his first 3-year term, and Reston residents are fortunate that he's offered to serve a second term.

Interior designer Judith Forst, who has twice served The Greater Reston Arts Center as executive director and also chaired its board of directors, is running for RA's Hunters Woods seat. Most of Forst's design work has been for commercial clients, requiring her to study the demands and operations of a client's business before offering use-of-space solutions. In her second stint as GRACE's executive director, she received high marks for reforming its budget and budget

process, permitting GRACE to gain the financial stability it enjoys today. She has thus had extensive experience both in business and community service, and is especially well qualified to deal with the complex and conflicting challenges which RA now faces.

Forst is running for the RA seat vacated by John Lovaas, who has also served with distinction as RA's vice president. After RA's 3-week election period ends on April 5, the elections for directors of Reston Citizens Association follow on April 24. There are rumors that Lovaas, special assistant for operations of Connection Newspapers, will run for RCA president. March and April are busy political months in Reston.

William Nicoson is a former RA director and a former publisher of Connection Newspapers.