

### News of The Church of the Holy Comforter in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia Richmond, December, 2021

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## The First Sunday of Advent Homesick (Hope)

#### Awake to Wonder



by the Rev Lisle Gwynn Garrity Inspired by Luke 21:25-36 – Digital painting with collage Preacher: the Rev Dr Hilary Borbón Smith

# The Second Sunday of Advent Laying the Foundation (Peace)

#### **Berakah**



by Hannah Garrity Inspired by Luke 1:57-80 – Paper lace with graphite and watercolor Preacher: the Rev Deacon Joseph G Klenzmann

## The Third Sunday of Advent A Home for all (Joy)

#### A Closer Walk



by the Rev T Denise Anderson Inspired by Luke 3:1-18 – Oil on canvas

Preacher: the Rev Heather K Baggett

# The Fourth Sunday of Advent Seeking Sanctuary (Love)

### **Dances for Joy**



by Hannah Garrity Inspired by Luke 1:39-45 (Mary goes to Elizabeth) – Paper lace with watercolor

**Preacher: Shawn Sthreshley** 



### A Message from Hilary +

Dear Friends and Companions in Ministry,

Our Advent theme from Sanctified Art is "Close to Home." In a way, our Advent journey is one that brings us home. We feel the pull of Christmas throughout this short season of preparation and anticipation. We are close, but not



yet there as we move through the weeks of Advent. The First Sunday of Advent, on November 28, offered the suggestion that we may feel "homesick" when it comes to God and faith and life. This makes me think of Saint Augustine who writes in his

Confessions "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." We can feel close but not there. Or you may feel completely there, at home, in God. Often, our feelings change, or our sense of things changes, back and forth. Advent is a season to journey to the heart of our spirituality and our faith. As we



light a new candle on our Advent wreath each week, the light increases, inviting us to come closer to the greatest light of all.

This Christmas we will worship in person as we did two years ago. We were away from our church building for just one Christmas but it feels like many more. Our Christian story from the first followers of Jesus to now is one of seeking to know God in and through each other. While we can do that to some degree on Zoom, it is not the same. We are able to come home to HoCo for Christmas this year, gathering at 4:00 pm on December 24. We will celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Christ; we will celebrate that God chooses to make a home with us, once long ago, and every day. In love and vulnerability, Jesus is born to us, inviting us to be a warm place of welcome. God chooses this life of flesh and blood to be close to us and show us how to welcome all. Welcome home, God says, be the blessing that you seek, strengthened by my life with you.

Blessings for Advent and wishing you a very Merry Christmas,

Hílary+

# Christmas Eve Invited Home Ordinary Glory



by the Rev Lauren Wright Pittman Inspired by Luke 2:1-20 – Digital painting

Preacher: the Rev Dr Hilary Borbón Smith



### Another view of Food Pantry needs

### From a Facebook entry by a food bank volunteer sent to the editor

"So, I spoke to people getting food at a food bank and here are some things I learned from those in need:

- 1. Everyone donates Kraft Mac and Cheese in the box. They can rarely use it because it needs milk and butter which is hard to get from regular food banks.
- 2. Boxed milk is a treasure, as kids need it for cereal which they also get a lot of.
- 3. Everyone donates pasta sauce and spaghetti noodles.
- 4. They cannot eat all the awesome canned veggies and soup unless you put a can opener in too or buy pop tops.



- 5. Oil is a luxury but needed for Rice a-Roni which they also get a lot of.
- 6. Spices or salt and pepper would be a real Christmas gift.
- 7. Tea bags and coffee make them feel like you care.
  - 8. Sugar and flour are treats.
- 9. They fawn over fresh produce donated by farmers and grocery stores.
- 10. Seeds are cool in Spring and Summer because growing can be easy for some.
  - 11. They rarely get fresh meat.
  - 12. Tuna and crackers make a good lunch.
- 13. Hamburger Helper goes nowhere without ground beef.

- 14. They get lots of peanut butter and jelly but usually not sandwich bread.
- 15. Butter or margarine is nice too.
- 16. Eggs are a real commodity.
- 17. Cake mix and frosting makes it possible to make a child's birthday cake.
- 18. Dishwashing detergent is very expensive and is always appreciated.



- 19. Feminine hygiene products are a luxury and women will cry over that.
  - 20. Everyone loves Stove Top Stuffing.

"In all the years I have donated food at the Holidays, I bought what I thought they wanted, but have never asked. I am glad I did. If you are helping a Family this Christmas, maybe this can help you tailor it more. It does for me!"

# Happy All Brackets' Day! By Supreme Executive Committee

Following the heady days of Nominationtide, and the submission of hundreds of saintly nominations from the Lent Madness faithful, the Supreme Executive Committee is pleased to release the highly anticipated 2022 Lent Madness bracket. Following their Spring Retreat,



held in a socially-distanced, secure, undisclosed Zoom room, amid the consumption of massive amounts of single origin black coffee, Tim and Scott whittled the field to 32 saints, who will compete for the coveted Golden Halo.

This year's bracket is broken up into four themed quadrants -- Martyrs & Mystics, Theologians & Thinkers, Healers & Helpers, and the ever popular Confusion Corner, which debuted last year. While you may have many favorites among the contestants, there does not appear to be a runaway favorite in this year's contest. Which means it's anybody's bracket to win! Well, you have to be in the bracket. And dead. And a saint...

But enough of this yakking. Let's get to the 2022 bracket!

www.lentmadness.org/2021/11/ happy-all-brackets-day-2/#more-11001



### Nan Ottenritter and everyday heroes

Interview by Bruce MacAlister, Editor

Parishioner Nan Ottenritter held a book launch gathering at Holy Comforter November 6th. Her reaction: "I appreciate all the HoCo and other



readers being there and really listening. It's a real pleasure for me to read out loud, both my work and the works of other writers."

Now retired, Nan is a life-long educator and

was a teacher and administrator in community colleges.

"I have written poetry off and on for years, to get something out, to noodle around with something, to work it out. Writing mostly poetry



and some prose lets me get around, behind the scenes, and know how the craft itself works. it's magic."

"What I love about my book *Eleanor*, *Speak* (http://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/eleanor-speak-by-nan-ottenritter) are the poetic stories about everyday fascinating heroes, especially women heroes. Examples in the book are Eleanor Roosevelt, Camille Claudel, Agatha Christie, Queen Elizabeth, and my Mom.

"I'm passionate about everyday heroes. They never get Nobel or Pulitzer Prizes, but they create goodness with whatever they have, wherever they are planted."

## Hoco Birthdays For the month of December:

Samuel Gage, 3rd; Bruce MacAlister, 5th;
Barbara Rose, 8th; Ian Sthreshley, 9th;
Patrick Warren, 9th; Leslie Smith, 11th;
Stephanie Roberts-Turner, 14th;
Arthur Raymond, 15th; Barbara Crowder, 16th;
Gerald Scholder, 17th;
Patty Fleming Sheldon, 18th;
Arden Griffin, 23rd; Lindsey Smith, 25th;
Deborah Westin, 27th; Joy Bressler, 30th;
Terry Long, 30th; Tyler Nichols, 31st



### Love is the Message at December Men at the Movies

#### By Steven Van Voorhees

At Christmas time, really from Advent to Epiphany, **love** is the message. Our December Men at the Movies selection, *Love Actually*, is a Christmas favorite and is watched at home, in theaters, and at gatherings by hundreds of thousands of people each year. The story begins five weeks before Christmas and includes an epilogue. which occurs about a month later.

In the book, Love Is the Way, by our Presiding

Bishop, Michael Curry, he quotes Howard Thurman, an American author and theologian, who summarized God's Dream for us: "A friendly world of friendly folk beneath a friendly sky.." This is what Bishop Curry says is God's dream when He said, "Let there be...." anything. Still another way of saying this is that God is Love: God's message is: You are loved, you are a gift, you are mine, you are a blessing."

If we are seeking a way to celebrate Christmas this year, there

is one simple but fulfilling way to do it, as Bishop Curry says, "When God, who is love, becomes our spiritual center of gravity, and love our moral compass, we live differently, regardless of what the world around us does. The world changes for the better, one life at a time.

- So don't give up on love.
- Listen to it.
- Trust it.
- Give into it.
- Obey it."

We can do this by watching *Love Actually* on Tuesday, December 14th. There are 10-12 characters portrayed in the film—many of them related by family, work, or social contact. They are a mixed lot—loving, falling into and out of, suffering through and triumphing over, and simply enjoying each other in love's grip. This film shows **love** in almost all its manifestations - parental, sibling, filial, romantic, long-term, unrequited, familial, and platonic.

Film critics had mixed reactions, but the movie made box office profits five times greater than production costs. Audiences generally love this Christmas classic. Rotten Tomatoes audience

TO MF YOU ARE

PERFECT

rating is 74%, IMDb gives it a 7.6 out of 10, Roger Ebert 3.5 stars out of 4. Five 38 says, "There is a lot to love actually," and that the axis of the movie is the scene with the guy flipping cue cards. There is a Nativity scene in the movie in which one parent asks, "There was more than one lobster present at the birth of Jesus?"

My favorite scene in this, my family's second favorite Christmas movie, (the favorite is *The Princess Bride*) is at the end in Heathrow Airport.

This scene shows real people in real holiday reunions. The film crew was there on location for a week and just shot all these people greeting each

other, and then got permission to show them.

The soundtrack hit #1 in the UK, platinum



in Australia, and the top40 in the US. You may want to download it for this Christmas season.

This is an 'ensemble,' maybe even an 'anthology,' movie loaded with both well-known stars and young and debuting actors. The youngest actors were 11, 13, and 17 years old when the movie was shot. It's a raucous, flighty, roller coaster ride of a movie, much like our experiences at holidays. It will make us ready to love as God loves us.

We will gather in the Parlor, masked and socially distanced, at 6:00pm, Tuesday, December 14th. Contact: me.



### Transition Committee for the new bishop

By Bruce MacAlister, Editor

Holy Comforter, not an especially large congregation in the diocese has two (2) parishioners on the new bishop transition committee.

From Diocese of Virginia Communications:

"The Standing Committee is pleased to announce the members of the Transition Committee for the 14th Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia.

- Cindi Bartol, Christ Church, Alexandria
- Ellyn Crawford, St. George's, Arlington
- The Rev. David Curtis, St. John's, Richmond
- The Rev. Marlene Forrest, St. Phillip's, Richmond
- Sherrard Gardner, St. Phillip's, Richmond
- Stephanie Hanchey, St. Paul's, Owens
- The Rev. Joseph Klenzmann, Holy Comforter, Richmond
- Glen Koontz, Grace, Berryville
- · Terry Long, Holy Comforter, Richmond
- The Rev. Barbara Marques, St. John's, West Point
- Kathleen Turner, Church of the Resurrection, Alexandria
- Carlo Uchello, St. Luke's, Alexandria
- Chairperson

The Standing Committee extends its gratitude to all applicants for the Transition Committee. Through prayer, discernment, and the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit, we called a committee of clergy and lay that represents the fullness and diversity of the Diocese of Virginia.

The Standing Committee is committed to building the necessary foundation for a successful Search and Transition process. The Transition Committee will shepherd the process of choosing our next spiritual leader from the time of the selection of the candidates by the Search Committee through the consecration of our new Bishop Diocesan.

Though the Transition Committee will lead this work, all members of the Diocese of Virginia must engage in the process to be successful. Please keep our Transition Committee, the Standing Committee, and our Diocese in your prayers during this time of discernment.

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and further us with your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy Name, and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



### Diocesan Profile is available for review

By the Search Committee for the XIV Bishop of Virginia

"The Bishop Search Committee of the Diocese of Virginia is pleased to announce that the Diocesan Profile, as well as forms for nomination and application can be found at <a href="https://www.virginiabishopsearch.org/walk-with-us/">https://www.virginiabishopsearch.org/walk-with-us/</a>."

"We encourage all members of the Diocese to explore the search website, read the profile, and take an active part in the search process." See <a href="http://www.virginiabishopsearch.org/">http://www.virginiabishopsearch.org/</a>

# Advent and Christmas at Holy Comforter By Ellen Johnston

Advent comes to us as the Church's gift -

- Four weeks of something quieter, more solemn, more hopeful than the glitter of the commercial holiday
- Four weeks to let God enter anxious souls and psyches
- Four weeks of Scripture and prayer and music that hold up for us a sense of the immensity of God as well as the nearness of God
- Four weeks to ponder an Advent wreath, to watch the lights grow slowly and steadily brighter as the days of December grow shorter and darkness comes quicker

In our regal blues and purples, we are cloaked for this season in a sober beauty as pointers to mystery, dread, awe and the sovereignty of God.

Advent always seems to put folk like us at odds with the surrounding culture - yet we have something to offer our world in anxious times and a frenetic season It is this world, with its hurts and hopes, its faults and sins, its joys and sorrows, that God enters.

**Advent** makes our longings and our fears into something holy and holds us in greater promises and equips us for God's purposes

Advent's scriptures,

Advent's music, speak to us of dread and awe, of judgment and mercy, of expectation and hope. And God calls the likes of us to incarnate God's promises and purposes for our time and place.

Join in this **Advent** exploration - as we open

our imaginations to Advent's larger themes - to history's end and a vision of humanity restored and the creation renewed; to the nearness of God and coming of Christ --- more than a baby in a manger, but also a message, a ministry and a man on a cross. *The Very Rev. Joy Rogers* 

#### The Christmas Season

#### **Christmas Eve**

On Christmas Eve we will gather at 4:00pm to hear once more the story of the birth of Jesus Through scripture, hymns, and anthems we celebrate not only the birth of the baby Jesus, but also the God who has entered our reality to heal and redeem. Weather permitting, we will move outside to gather around a fire to hear Luke's nativity gospel and to sing some carols. This reminds us that in just a few months we will gather around another fire to hear the stories of our salvation at the Great Vigil of Easter.

#### **Christmas Day**

There will be no services at Holy Comforter on Christmas Day; however, you are invited to worship at 10:30am at St. Mark's Episcopal Church that day.

#### The First Sunday after Christmas

On the <u>First Sunday after Christmas</u>, <u>December 26</u>, we will "hear once more the message of the angels" through the <u>Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols</u>. This beloved service, which originated at King's College, Cambridge, gives us a chance to hear the lessons of prophecy and fulfillment and to sing Christmas carols.

#### The Second Sunday after Christmas

We don't often have two Sundays after Christmas and before the Feast of the Epiphany. On this day, <u>January 2</u>, we will gather to hear

"the rest of the story." Most years we go from Jesus as a newborn to Jesus as a thirty year old about to be baptized This year we will hear some of the mid-week readings about Jesus receiving his name, the visit of the Magi, the slaughter of the innocents and the Holy Family's flight

into Egypt. With scripture and hymns we will mark the childhood of Jesus.

We invite you to enter the seasons of Advent and Christmas as we contemplate the birth, childhood, as well as the second coming of Christ O come, O come, Emmanuel!



# Stewardship Update By Lisa Lettau, Senior Warden

As of November 23rd, we have received 56 pledges for 2022 totaling \$173,055. There are around 25 folks who pledged in 2021 that haven't turned in a pledge card for 2022, and Vestry members will be reaching out to those parishioners. It has been a challenging year to say the least, and it's not surprising we have had



8 pledges decrease for the coming year. Between job changes, retirement, and just uncertainty, this is quite understandable. There is good news though, as we have had 19 pledges

increase for 2022 so far and 26 remain the same as last year. We have also received three new pledges. Our HoCo community has been challenged and has risen to the occasion, but there is always more to do. We need to remember Stewardship consists of not just treasure, but time and talents also. Consider being an usher, joining the altar guild, being a reader, or preparing a meal for those in need – there are numerous ways to serve that don't require a huge time commitment. Please ask yourself what else you can do to assist our church family in the coming year.



## Side by Side gets Christmas offering

By Bruce MacAlister

It started as ROSMY housed at Holy Comforter. It was led by a parishioner concerned that many young people didn't have anyone that could talk to about their emerging sexuality, especially of that sexuality might not be "straight." You might guess it wasn't easy to find a place to meet and the HoCo vestry was wondering how our parishioners would deal with this but the parish did it anyway. Now named "Side by Side" it has its own space on Westwood Ave just north

of west Broad St.

The Christmas designated offerings at all the services goes to Side by Side, so be generous.

Beside a check or cash in the plate at church, you can go to http://hoco.org/, click the Donate button at the bottom, and use the pulldown menu to pick SidebySide.



Quoting from the website www. sidebysideva.org:

"We base every decision on what's best for LGBTQ+ youth, working to meet their needs and support their dreams.

- "By meeting LGBTQ+ youth where they are, we are side by side with all LGBTQ+ youth in central Virginia and beyond.
- "By being open to learning from LGBTQ+ youth, we provide important programming and services.
- "By remaining youth centered, we prioritize our work to support LGBTQ+ youth survive and thrive."



In late October a group of members did a major piece of horticulture. Here are the pictures, by Angie Palmer.



More than 390 lay and clerical delegates from across the Diocese gathered online for the 227th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia.

In her pastoral address, the Rt. Rev. Susan Goff illuminated our experience of the last year saying, "We recognize how we have been broken open by the power of the Holy Spirit that moves in us." There is "hope in this brokenness...We are no longer the Church we were before the pandemic. The Church has been changed. Each worship community is changed. We can't go back to the way things were before, because we're already different. Even if we could, we shouldn't go back to when we were comfortable, because God is always calling us to go deeper and wider, to go beyond our comfort zones and into the world that is so in need of God's love."

Bishop Goff described some of the ways in which the churches of the Diocese have gone deeper, wider and even made their ministries stronger in the past year. She noted that, through their virtual worship, some congregations are reaching more people. Two new worship spaces were consecrated this year, the first new consecrations since 2004. In December, the Bishops will have ordained 26 priests and seven deacons since the pandemic began. The Diocese also called our first Missioner for Racial Justice and Healing, the Rev. Dr. J. Lee Hill, Jr.

Bishop Goff reminded us that God is powerfully at work, breaking down old ways and breaking us open. "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" she quoted from St. Paul's letter to the Romans. "Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

The centerpiece of the 227th Convention is Resolution R-10a, which commits the Diocese to create a \$10,000,000 fund for reparations to benefit Black, Indigenous, and peoples of color communities.

The resolution cites that "the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Virginia have a long history of support for and complicity with chattel slavery, violence against Indigenous peoples and land, segregation and other racist systems." It further acknowledges that the Diocese "is home to numerous church buildings constructed by enslaved people, and many parishes within the Diocese of Virginia are grappling with their history of support for slavery and white supremacy, and their ongoing complicity in racial injustice."

R-10a directs the Bishop to create a Reparations Task Force "to identify and propose means by which repair may begin for those areas of our structures, patterns, and common life by which Black, Indigenous, People of Color ....still carry the burden of injustices, exclusions, and biases born out of white supremacy and the legacy of slavery."

The objective of these reparation grants and loans is to provide direct benefits to BIPOC communities, people, and institutions, with preference for any which may have been specifically harmed by past unjust actions by the Diocese of Virginia, its institutions, or churches.

#### **Other Resolutions Adopted**

R1 establishes a Virginia Plan for Covenantal Giving through which all congregations will, by the year 2025, pledge 10% of their plate offerings, pledge payments and regular support to the shared ministries of the Diocese.

R2, R3 and R5 establish best practices for digital and hybrid meetings of congregational and diocesan governing bodies including vestries.

R4a establishes an Impact Fund for Racial Justice and Healing. This investment fund will be used to prioritize opportunities within the Diocese to support racial justice and healing.

R6 calls on the Diocese, in acknowledgement of a Climate Emergency, to commit to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

R8 requires parishes to provide deacons with access to benefits with Church Pension Group.

R9a requests the appointment of an information gathering and discernment team to explore

pathways for discernment and formation in Spanish for LatinX/Hispanic communities of the Diocese.

#### Additional resolutions include:

R-11: Creation of Additional Assistant Bishop

R-12: Trial Use of the "Expanded Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings"

R-13a: Resolution in Support of Shrine Mont Camps

To read the full text of all resolutions, click here

### Amendments to the Constitution and Canons

Convention approved several Amendments to the Constitution and Canons. The full list of amendments and full text of each can be found here

#### **Elections to Standing Committee**

In elections for Standing Committee, delegates voted to elect:

#### Lay Order

Thomas M. "Tom" Baker, St. James's, Richmond

Tyson Gilpin, Christ Church Millwood Clergy Order

The Rev. Christine Love Mendoza, Good Shepherd, Burke

The Rev. Kristin P. R. Wickersham, St. Thomas, Richmond

#### **Budget**

Convention adopted a budget balanced at \$5,292,300. Including funds identified by the Executive Board that had not been drawn on in the recent past, the income forecast enabled the Working Group on Budget to recommend a budget meeting all submitted budget requests without cuts.

The budget features new and expanded funding of our ministry priorities in 2022. Among other ministries, the budget funds a Root, Thrive, Soar Cohort and participation in the College for Congregational Development, each in support of training lay and clergy leaders in our mission

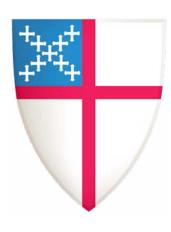
congregations. Additionally, the budget fully funds the requests for our Grants for Episcopal College Ministries.

Two key personnel notes are that we now fully fund the position of Missioner for Racial Justice and Healing in support of this important work and, in anticipation of the election of a bishop diocesan next year, the budget includes compensation for that position. The budget also includes our scholarship and grant programs. The final budget and narrative budget will be posted here by November 15.

#### The Search for the 14th Bishop of Virginia

The Rev. Dr. Rosemari Sullivan, Search Committee Chair, provided the latest update on the search process for the 14th Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia. The Committee has completed diocesan-wide listening sessions and a survey. The report from the survey and listening sessions informed the Diocesan Profile, which is scheduled to be posted online by the end of November. The Committee will screen applicants in January and February, then host a four-day retreat in March with a final group of applicants. She asked all members of the Diocese to continue to pray for their work.

The Convention business proceedings were punctuated by moments of celebration, worship, and stories of the Diocese. To see all the highlights, you can watch the recorded Convention, which available in both English and Spanish.



### Church of the Holy Comforter, Richmond

a parish in the Diocese of Virginia under the Episcopal Church in the USA which is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion

Monument Avenue at Staples Mill Road

web - www.hoco.org; e-mail - office@hoco.org;

phone 804-355-3251; fax 804-355-0049

Coming Events at the Church of the Holy Comforter
See the *Hoco web site calendar page* for detailed calendar and rota

### Schedule of church events following the Covid-19 period (still evolving)

- Sundays, 10:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II, in person with nursery available; the sermon can be found on Facebook and YouTube
- Sundays, 4:30pm Story Time, a service for children, their families, and friends of all ages, on Facebook
- Monday, 8:00pm Compline for the BCP or the New Zealand BCP or from the Northumbia Community, Facebook
- Tuesday, 7:30am Morning Prayer, Facebook
- Wednesday, 11:30am Centering Prayer, in person in the Parlor and via Zoom
- Wednesday, Noon Holy Communion, in person in the Parlor and via Zoom, so that you can join in the prayers

- Thursday, 7:30am Morning Prayer, Facebook
- Friday, 8:00pm Compline for the BCP or the New Zealand BCP or from the Northumbia Community, Facebook
- Saturday, 7:00am Morning Prayer, Facebook
- **Saturday**, 8:00pm Prayers and a Reflection that preview readings and themes for Sunday, Facebook

#### **Food Pantry Hours:**

- First and third Saturdays, 11:00am to noon
- First and third Tuesdays, 5:30 to 6:30pm

#### **Veterans' Shelter Dinner**

- Prep between 5 and 6pm 4th Thursdays
- Drop off at shelter between 6 and 7pm

Editing of the Messenger is done by Bruce MacAlister, the layout by George Collier.

The January Messenger will be available, Sunday, January 2nd, 2022. The deadline for that edition is Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24th, so you might want to do it earlier in the week!

If you feel that you have something you'd like to contribute, please contact Bruce MacAlister at editor@hoco.org





