

Week's end

Wrap-up

◆ Now the nation knows. Maymont ranks among the country's loveliest spaces. The American Planning Association lists the park among America's 10 Great Public Places for 2011. Maymont offers beauty in diverse forms. It almost commands exploration, and as visitors explore its grounds they restore their souls.

◆ On Sunday the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association (SNPA) opens its News Industry Summit in Williamsburg. The conference and its location seem an ideal fit. The ideals contributing to a free press have roots in the colonial capital. Many of the debates that led to the Revolution and to the Founding had rounds in Williamsburg.

◆ The House of Burgesses symbolizes government that rules with the consent of the governed. The Governor's Palace projects enlightenment as well. The success of representative government depends on an informed citizenry. The late critic and social philosopher Lionel Trilling said humans have a "moral obligation to be intelligent." For the next few days, Williamsburg will see intelligence in action.

◆ The Family Foundation is holding a gala this weekend. Herman Cain — the latest hot property in the 2012 GOP presidential campaign — will address an eager assembly at the Richmond Convention Center. Virginia has established itself as a required stop on the electoral circuit. In two weeks President Barack Obama will return to the commonwealth in a bus tour that will include a swing through North Carolina. On Sept. 9, Obama addressed an enthusiastic crowd at the University of Richmond. Michelle Obama recently went shopping at a Target in Northern Virginia. The Obamas spend so much time in Virginia that the president and first lady probably qualify to vote here.

◆ Wednesday's political websites buzzed with news that a top aide to Eric Cantor was leaving the office of the House majority leader to form a so-called super PAC. The political action committee will promote young guns — that is, Republicans such as Cantor, Paul Ryan and other innovative politicians of the center right. Several sources cited Cantor as a national prospect. The 7th District congressman thus becomes the 532nd Virginian in the past eight months to incite national speculation.

◆ Numerous events will precede Michael Rao's Oct. 14 inauguration as president of Virginia Commonwealth University. The ceremony will be not only festive but overdue. To stroll through the campus with Rao is to share company with an educator who cherishes the students he leads. The sentiments seem to be returned.
