



THE MOUNT VERNON

SIERRA CLUB

Our membership is up, and we need more labelling help. Please consider joining us on August 21.

The Newsletter of the Mount Vernon Group of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club April / May / June 2003

Upcoming Events/Meetings/Actions

GROUP MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

MVG membership meetings are held at the National Rural Electrical Cooperation Association (NRECA) building, 4301 Wilson Blvd., in Arlington, within walking distance of the Ballston metro. Free underground parking is available in the building. (Just take a parking ticket when you enter the garage, and when you leave, write "Sierra Club meeting" on back of the ticket and hand it to the attendant.) The meetings run from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. with refreshments provided starting around 7:00 p.m. The meetings are open to the public at no charge, and reservations are not required to attend. Please bring a guest. For more information on these meetings, contact Terri Lamb, Programs Chair, at terri.lamb@cox.net, or 703/538-6065.

April 8, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

TOPIC: ALEXANDRIA SANITATION AUTHORITY.

Join Karen Pallansch of the Alexandria Sanitation Authority as she provides a brief background of the Alexandria Sanitation Authority explaining who they are, how they came into being, and what their mission is. She also will discuss the plant and the current construction project, especially as it relates to meeting the Chesapeake Bay goals. Lastly, she'll talk about the role of the audience in helping the Authority continue to do a great job in cleaning the water we make dirty every day.

May 13, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

TOPIC: GREEN ENERGY.

John Morrill, a certified energy manager, will describe how you can obtain clean, renewable electricity for your home and/or business. John will review the environmental impact of conventional power plants, and highlight the importance of reducing energy use. Then he will describe three different ways people can get electricity from solar, wind, and other renewable sources, including one option that is flexible and affordable, regardless of whether you own or rent your home.

September 9, TOPIC: PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST.

Program details to be provided at a later date. Check our website at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/> for more information.

OTHER GROUP MEETINGS, EVENTS, AND OUTINGS

RIVER CLEAN-UP. April 5, Sat., 9 a.m. to noon.

continued on page 7

What's Next After the Defeat of the Sales Tax Referendum?

Northern Virginia Growth and Transportation Summit Builds A Foundation

by **Jim Wamsley**, Virginia Chapter Transportation Chair, and **Pat Soriano**, Mount Vernon Group Chair

THIS PAST JANUARY 25TH, brainstorming, re-visiting of current thinking, and planning for the future dominated the Northern Virginia (NOVA) Growth and Transportation Summit at the Francis Scott Key Elementary School in Arlington, Virginia. A number of activists from various environmental organizations, including the Coalition for Smarter Growth and the Sierra Club, met to learn about smart growth initiatives and discuss and prioritize local issues for the NOVA region. The activists also gathered to connect with local groups working on a variety of smart growth issues, including loss of open space, traffic, overcrowded schools, air pollution, water pollution, pedestrian safety, the lack of bicycle facilities, and specific road or development projects. In this respect, the summit brought NOVA environmental and livable community activists back together again following our collective success in defeating the sales tax referendum last fall.

As background, on November 5, 2002, NOVA voters sent a clear message to their local and state representatives by rejecting the development-ori-

ented transportation and land-use planning ideas of the past. The measure was overwhelmingly de-

continued on page 5

Thanks to our labeling volunteers for our February/March 2003 issue.

Maggie and Jannie Johnston
Karen Helbrecht
Gordon Johnston
Vivian and Mitchell Helbrecht
Sue McIver

Bill L'Hommedieu
John Koch
Dean Amel
Cheryl Zebrowski
Pat Soriano
George Lamb



Fairfax's "Annual Report on the Environment": Steps to Improve Air Quality

by **Andrew Nicholls**, Conservation Chair
aknicholls@cox.net

If you live in Fairfax County, and want to learn about the quality of your environment, take a trip on EQAC. Especially if the dismal air quality in our metro area concerns you and you want to help clean it up.

EQAC, the Environmental Quality Advisory Council, is an advisory group that has been appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to advise the Board on environmental matters. The Council is comprised of one citizen representative from each Magisterial District, four at-large members, and one student representa-

tive. Each member is appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve a three year term, except the student member. George Lamb, a very active member of our own Mount Vernon Group, is on the EQAC, representing the Providence District. (George described what it is like "on the inside" in our Nov/Dec 2002/Jan 2003 newsletter available on our website at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/>.)

EQAC provides advice to the Board of Supervisors through its Annual Report on the Environment and through resolutions and correspondence resulting from discussions at EQAC's monthly meetings. The 2002 Annual Report, recently completed,

continued on page 4

MOUNT VERNON GROUP Leadership

Pat Soriano
Chair/Treasurer
5405 Barrister Place
Alexandria, VA 22304-1949
(H) 703/671-3129
(W) 202/728-5878
psoriano79@hotmail.com

Andrew Nicholls
Vice-Chair/Conservation/
Alternate Delegate to
the VA Chapter
6914 Farragut Ave
Falls Church, VA 22042
(H) 703/536-5047
aknicholls@cox.net

Rob Swennes
Secretary
6101 N. 22nd Street
Arlington, VA 22205-2103
(H) 703/532-6101
robertswennes@hotmail.com

Pat Eddington
Political Chair
2900 Cameron Mills Road
Alexandria, VA 22302
(H) 703/535-8778
(W) 202/737-6662
eddington@mindspring.com

John Koch
Membership Chair /
Delegate to
the Virginia Chapter/
Volunteer
Coordinator
2905 Farm Road
Alexandria, VA 22022-2411
(H) 703/684-6849
(W) 202/720-4396
jandrko@comcast.net

Terri Lamb
Programs Chair/Socials Chair
2818 Summerfield Rd
Falls Church, VA 22042-2035
(H) 703/538-6065
terri.lamb@cox.net

Bruce Parker
827 Fontaine Street
Alexandria, VA 22302-3610
(H) 703/549-5792
(W) 202/361-3894
(Fax) 703/549-6056
bruce@chesdata.com

John Powers
5903 Mount Eagle Drive #1509
Alexandria, VA 22303-2533
(H) 703/317-9298
(Fax) 703/317-2175
jrpowers@us.net

The Mount Vernon Sierran welcomes articles, news releases, first-person experiences, poetry, photos and artwork. We reserve the right to edit all contributions for clarity, style, and length. Submissions are preferred in electronic format pasted into emails or as attachments. Photos can be scanned and emailed as JPEG files or mailed to the editor. Please contact Bill L'Hommedieu (703/527-4690) at 4013 North 18th Road, Arlington, VA 22207 or any ExCom member for info. Views expressed by contributors are their own and may not necessarily be those of the Sierra Club. To place advertisements or classifieds in this newsletter, please contact Bill L'Hommedieu at 703/527-4690. The national Sierra Club web page can be found at: www.sierraclub.org. The Mount Vernon Group's web page is: <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg>. The Mount Vernon Sierran is a publication of the Mount Vernon Group of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, and Prince William County and is published 4 times a year for all Group members and the local public. Its primary mission is to inform and engage group members in activities for the protection and enjoyment of the local environment.

Faith Teitelbaum
118 Roberts Lane #101
Alexandria, VA 22314
(H) 703/519-4308
Faithtei@aol.com

Other non-ExCom VIPs

George Lamb
Newsletter Mailings
2818 Summerfield Rd
Falls Church, VA 22042-2035
(H) 703/538-6065
gwl@cox.net

Bill L'Hommedieu
Newsletter Editor
4013 N. 18th Road
Arlington, VA 22207-3006
(H) 703/527-4690
lhommed2@comcast.net

Scott Sarratt
Webmaster
4510 Mullen Lane
Annandale, Va. 22003-
(H) 703/425-3276
ssarratt@yahoo.com

Cheryl Zebrowski
Silent Auction Chair
2458 Garnett Drive
Alexandria, VA 22311-4908
(H) 703/824-3676
jpzebrowski@worldnet.att.com

Roger Diedrich
Chair, Great Falls Group
3322 Prince William Dr.
Fairfax VA 22031
(H) 703/352-2410
rdiedrich@netzero.net

Elise Annunziata
Senior Regional
Representative
Sierra Club Mid-Atlantic
Field Office
200 N. Glebe Street, Suite 905
Arlington, Va., 22203
(W) 703/312-0533
elise.annunziata@sierraclub.org

Melanie Mayock
Conservation Organizer/
Metro DC Challenge to
Sprawl Campaign
200 N. Glebe Street, Suite 905
Arlington, Va., 22203
(W) 703/312-0533, ext 110
melanie.mayock@sierraclub.org

Notes from The Chair

by Pat Soriano



WITH THE SNOW FINALLY BEHIND US (with a little luck!), the Mount Vernon Group is gearing up its activities for the year and raising its profile in our community. First, as you will see in our Calendar of Events, we have a number of activities and meetings planned for the Spring. I hope that you can make one of these events from the River Clean-up on April 5 to the Group picnic on June 8 to the kayaking evening trip on July 19, or, of course, one of our general meetings. Andrew Nicholls and Pat Eddington, our Conservation and Political Chairs, respectively, also have planned meetings for members to get involved in defining our conservation agenda and in our local endorsements for the upcoming elections in Alexandria and Arlington. By the time this newsletter is mailed, we, your volunteer Group leaders on the Executive Committee (ExCom) will have made any Alexandria endorsement decisions, which will be posted on our website at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/>. All our members living in Alexandria are encouraged to check this site before you vote on May 6.

As the front page article on the NOVA Summit states, these elections are our best opportunities to get environmentally committed candi-

dates into office. In this respect, the MVG ExCom recently participated with the Coalition for Smarter Growth and other groups to brief candidates in Arlington and Alexandria on our smart growth, transportation, and air quality concerns. The MVG also co-sponsored an Alexandria City Council Candidates Forum with a number of West End civic organizations on March 10. Despite the cold night, the forum was well attended and Pat Eddington and I learned a bit more about these candidates, which is all part of the ExCom's due diligence in making any endorsement decisions.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need information about any MVG activities at psoriano79@hotmail.com.

"Re-Gift" Those White Elephants

Did you receive gifts at Christmas or for your birthday, that weren't quite you? If so, think about "re-gifting" them to the Sierra Club Silent Auction fundraiser. Even though the auction isn't until the end of this year, why not get those "white elephants" out of your house now? Call Cheryl Zebrowski at 703/824-3676 to arrange for pick-up. And while you've got the silent auction on your mind, think about volunteering to help organize the event.

Important Contact Information

SIERRA CLUB HEADQUARTERS: 415-977-5500; Membership info: 415-977-5653; Sierra Club Legislative Hotline 202-675-2394; National Headquarters: 85 2nd Street, 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94105-3441; Sierra Club website: www.sierraclub.org

ADDRESS CHANGES: Sierra Club Member Services, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968

U.S. Congress: Capitol switchboard, 202-225-3121;

SENATOR ALLEN'S OFFICE: 202-224-4024, email:

senator@allen.senate.gov; SENATOR WARNER'S OFFICE:

202-224-2032, email senator@warner.senate.gov;

CONGRESSMAN TOM DAVIS'

OFFICE 202-225-1492, email

tomdavis@hr.house.gov;

CONGRESSMAN MORAN'S

OFFICE: 202-225-4376, email

jimmoran@mail.house.gov;

THE WHITE HOUSE COMMENT line

202-456-6213; FAX line 202-456-

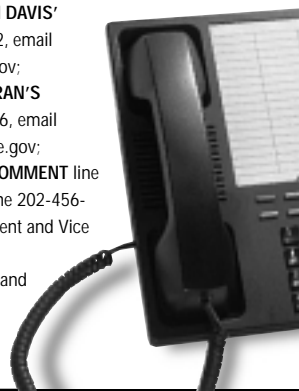
2461, email the President and Vice

President by going to

www.whitehouse.gov and

following the email

prompts.



**Can't get to the
mountains this
weekend?**

Take a hike at Meadowlark
Botanical Gardens, home of the
Potomac Valley Native Plant
Collection.

A Property of the Northern Virginia
Regional Park Authority

**Bring this ad and get one free
admission.**

**Meadowlark Botanical Gardens is located a
1/2 mile west of
Wolf Trap in Vienna.
703-255-3631 Open 10 a.m. Daily**

www.washacadsci.org/meadowlark-gardens/

Northern Virginia's Political Scene Heats Up

by **Patrick G. Eddington**, Political Chair, MVG

It came as no surprise to me when the Group's Membership Chair, John Koch, informed his fellow ExCom members that our Group's membership had surged from just under 4000 before the November 2002 elections to over 4300 as of January 31, 2003. Environmentally-conscious Virginians were outraged that anti-environmental candidates had won at the local, state, and federal levels. Based on what happened – or more accurately – what did not at the recently concluded General Assembly session, there is plenty of reason for anger. Bills that would have protected the environment, expanded mass transit, and brought sanity to our development process were killed. Democratic Party officials have told Club leaders to expect no better during the veto session.

Where does that leave us? With a lot to do at the local level

By the time you read this newsletter, Arlington voters will have chosen either Democrat Walter Tejada (<http://www.waltertejada.com>) or Mike Clancy (<http://www.mikeclancy.org/>) in a March 11 Special Election to replace deceased Arlington County Board member Charles Monroe. Neither candidate was endorsed by the Sierra Club due in part to their limited public records on environmental issues.

Currently, the Group is gearing up for Alexandria's May 6 City Council and Mayoral contests. Democratic candidates include incumbents Del Pepper (www.delpepper.com) and Joyce Woodson (www.joycewoodson.net), along with previous Council candidates Paul Smedberg (www.paulsmedberg.org) and Andrew MacDonald (www.andrewhmacdonald.com). New comers Ludwig Gaines (www.gainwithgaines.com), currently Alexandria's planning commissioner, and businessman Rob Krupicka (www.krupicka.com) round out the Democrat's City Council slate. Current Councilman Bill Euille (www.euilleformayor.com) is the party's mayoral candidate.

The Republican field also sports both old and new faces. Vice mayor Bill Cleveland (www.clevelandformayor.org) and Councilwoman Claire Eberwein (www.vote4eberwein.org) are the only two Republican incumbents, with Cleveland seeking the mayor's seat. Previous candidates Judy McVay (www.judymcvay.org) and Matthew Natale (<http://voteformatthew.org/templates/10/tplHome.asp?key=RFP-239W>) are making another run for Council seats. Newcomers include Allison Cryor (cryorforcouncil.com), Keith Burner (www.keithburner.com), and John Reardon (email: xreardon@earthlink.net).

Separately, Townsend A. "Van" Van Fleet is running as an independent candidate for mayor, and Pat Troy is an independent candidate for city council.

As part of its candidate evaluation and endorsement process, the Group mailed detailed questionnaires to each of the 16 candidates, with responses requested no later than March 21st. On March 27, the MVG ExCom will meet to decide which candidates, if any, to endorse in the upcoming election.

Your participation in this process is VITAL! We want to hear from you about your views and experiences with any of these candidates. Should the Club endorse any candidates, we also will need Club members to help out with phone banking and literature drops on behalf of Club-endorsed office seekers.

Remember, democracy is NOT a spectator sport... and neither is protecting the environment. Club members' political participation was critical in defeating last year's ill-conceived Northern Virginia sales tax referendum. Your vote counted then, and it will count even more as we launch a renewed political effort to protect the environment and reverse damaging urban sprawl. To get involved with the Group's rapidly expanding political operation, contact me at eddington@mindspring.com or at 703/535-8778. ☺

Controlling Our Energy

by **John Morrill**, MVG Member

DO YOU REALLY WANT TO IMPROVE local air quality? Do you wish you could keep more of your hard-earned dollars, and send less to large energy corporations? You can accomplish these goals by following the lead of your local government, which is using energy management to save tax dollars, cut energy costs, and spur the use of renewable energy sources.

Fairfax County, Arlington County, and the City of Alexandria all have professional energy managers on their staff to oversee energy improvements in government facilities. Fairfax County has been improving the energy efficiency of their government facilities throughout the County's rapid growth. Arlington hired an energy manager in 2000, producing significant energy savings already. Alexandria hired an energy manager in January 2003. You can apply a few of their basic strategies to help yourself, your neighbors, and the environment.

For example, in Arlington, by replacing hundreds of incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), we are saving thousands of dollars each year in electricity costs. In one building, we replaced dozens of 200-watt incandescent bulbs with 27-watt compact fluorescent bulbs, and no one noticed a difference—except on the utility bill! Elsewhere, we replaced 100-watt incandescents with 25-watt CFLs, and 75-watt bulbs with 20-watt CFLs. Staff time spent changing light bulbs has been cut dramatically, since CFLs last ten times longer than old-fashioned bulbs, so we saved even more through reduced maintenance costs. You can enjoy these savings too. CFLs can be purchased in most supermar-

kets and hardware stores, and they are available in a variety of sizes.

Of course, good energy management involves more than light bulbs. Proper insulation, choosing energy-efficient appliances and equipment, and energy-smart maintenance are key in every workplace as well as your home. What is energy-smart maintenance? After insulating hot water pipes in one medium-size building, we are saving enough natural gas each year to heat a typical home.

There are good reasons to reduce energy use beyond direct financial savings. Burning fossil fuels – in buildings, vehicles, and at power plants that make electricity – produces air pollution that directly affects our health. Fossil fuels also are the main source of carbon dioxide, the primary cause of global climate change. Reducing energy use through efficiency and conservation, and the use of alternate fuels, is the way to reduce these pollutants.

Over half of the vehicles owned and operated by the Arlington County government use some type of alternate fuel – biodiesel, ethanol, or compressed natural gas. The County also has over two dozen hybrid-electric sedans in its fleet, and intends to purchase more each year. EPA classifies these hybrids as "super-ultra-low-emission vehicles," and they produce 90% less air pollution than typical new cars.

Thus far, our energy programs have focused on government facilities. If funding is available, we hope to bring energy efficiency programs to residents and businesses in the years ahead. Perhaps Sierra Club members will be among the first and most enthusiastic to participate. ☺

John Morrill is the energy manager for Arlington County government, and a Sierra Club member. You can reach him at jmorrill@ix.netcom.com.

Fairfax, *continued from page 1*

is the best single overview of the environmental issues facing Fairfax County, home to many of the over 4300 members of our group. If you live in Fairfax, and want to learn more, surf the www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/eqac/report/main.htm website.

But the report's relevance extends beyond Fairfax. In its general discussion of air quality and the water quality of streams, it also serves as a relevant introduction for those of us in Arlington, Alexandria, Prince William, and Falls Church. The quality of the air we breathe does not respect lines drawn on maps. What matters to Fairfax, matters to Alexandria.

The 2002 Annual Report systematically covers eight aspects of the environment, including water and air quality, wildlife, noise and light pollution, land use and transportation planning. But EQAC also admirably does something else: it submits top priority recommendations. It does not pretend that all issues are equally important, a mistake many comprehensive reports make. And what is EQAC's top priority area in the 2002 annual report? The answer is, take a large breath... air quality.

That answer is of relevance to the 4000 plus members of the Mount Vernon Group because our two top priorities for 2003 and beyond are improving our air quality and promoting integrated transportation/land use planning.

By air quality in the metro area, we mean serious to severe violations of the Federal standards for ground level ozone; in EPA parlance, this is called being in "nonattainment." Ozone forms when volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides, largely from our cars and trucks, combine on a hot sunny day. Nitrogen oxides also are emitted from fossil power plants, especially old coal plants, and the emissions drift over to our DC metro region from elsewhere. (Melanie Mayock provided an excellent overview of our air quality woes in our February/March 2003 newsletter.)

If the woes are visible, what does EQAC recommend Fairfax County do to improve air quality?

First, carpe diem. EQAC urges the County to take a pro-active approach: exercise its leadership capabilities to develop a stronger air quality control program that will ensure compliance with a reasonable margin of safety, and work through the Council of Governments to persuade other jurisdictions in the Region to do their fair share as well. EQAC notes that "Fairfax County can no longer leave the fundamental policy issues to the COG and simply attempt to concentrate on ensuring that our County is treated equitably compared to other jurisdictions in the Region. Fairfax County has too much to lose from a failure to resolve the Region's air quality issues

in a manner that has positive results for the County."

Second, set a firm deadline for action. Specifically, EQAC recommends that the County set a deadline of June 30, 2003, for the adoption of a new air quality attainment strategy by the Board of Supervisors. This action would set out the policies and priorities the County would pursue, within the County, and within the metro area's Council of Governments, to ensure compliance with the Clean Air Act. The target date is selected, deliberately, to instill a sense of urgency, before another hot summer descends upon us and more elderly residents and kids end up in emergency rooms.

Third, get smarter. EQAC recommends the hiring of at least one staff person with the technical expertise to advise the County. Understanding air quality issues, and the possible policies and options for improving it, requires knowledge and skill. Lacking a thorough understanding of any issue makes it much harder to make good choices. Yes, we all know that the State and County have budget challenges, but having clean air to breathe should be a top priority, and priorities require resources.

Fourth, make air a focus. Additional staff matter, but EQAC also recommends that the Board of Supervisors devote more of its own energies to understanding and addressing the difficult issues raised by the Region's air quality problems, both in its own decisions and in the guidance it provides to the County's land use and transportation boards and staffs.

TAKE ACTION: EQAC's recommendations are sound. Let us actively support them. Write to Kate Hanley, Chairman, Fairfax Board of Supervisors, and let her know that you support cleaner air, and the EQAC recommendations, especially recommendation #2. A short letter or even postcard will do, but be sure to ask for a written response.

Chairwoman Hanley's address is: 12000 Government Center Parkway Suite 530, Fairfax, Virginia 22035-0079. Her email is chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Volunteers Needed for Sierra Club Arlington Office

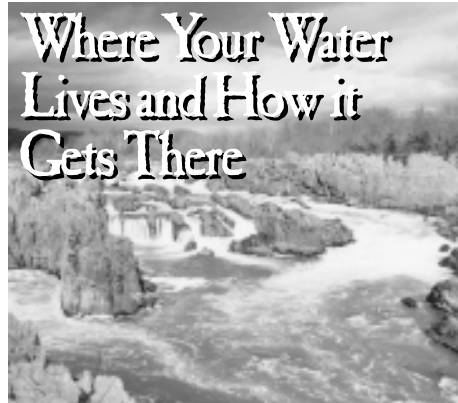
Would you like to see how Sierra Club works from the inside? Are you interested in helping fight sprawl in Metro DC? Do you have free time during the day?

If you answered yes, consider volunteering at Sierra Club's Mid-Atlantic Office in Arlington. We're looking for volunteers to help with administrative tasks such as filing, clipping newspaper articles, data entry, phone-banking, and help with mailings.

If you have one hour a week, or twenty hours a week, we want you!

Our office is located at 200 N Glebe Rd, Suite 905, in Arlington (about one mile from the Ballston Metro and a few blocks off Route 50), and is open Monday-Friday, roughly 9am-5pm.

If you're interested or would like more information, please contact **Melanie Mayock, at (703) 312-0533x110; Melanie.mayock@sierra-club.org.**



by **George Lamb**, MVG member

IN 1950, THE ALEXANDRIA WATER COMPANY built a dam on the Occoquan for 55 million gallons of water. In 1957, realizing that our area would need more water, the company constructed a larger dam upstream to hold an estimated 9.2 billion gallons. These two dams, together with the Potomac River are the primary water sources for 1.2 million people in Northern Virginia.

When the dams were first constructed, water drained into the reservoirs from a 560 square mile rural watershed. As Fairfax County developed in the 1970s and early 1980s, the water quality became a serious issue. In 1982, the county enacted historic legislation to downzone 41,000 acres of the Occoquan watershed. In 1985, the courts upheld this legislation in a landmark decision, which has withstood numerous challenges since that time.

With the 20th anniversary of that legislation, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors designated 2002 as Occoquan Watershed Year. A special citizens task force was established to report on the state of the watershed and provide recommendations to continue to protect the watershed. The final report is available on the web at <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/DPWES/Watersheds/default.htm#occoquan>.

The report represents a substantial review of the threats and issues surrounding a resource upon which we all are dependent. To understand more about where our water lives, how it gets there, and what risks it faces, this report is the place to start. ¶

The Mount Vernon Sierran invites members to participate by submitting articles, photos and first person experiences for publication. Also, if you're willing to attend and report on relevant area events and political meetings, contact the Group Chair for assignments.

**Next issue:
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2003
Submission Deadline is August 5th.**

NoVa Growth, *continued from page 1*

feated in the outer-suburbs while barely passing in the inner jurisdictions where support for transit was stronger. Summit organizers noted that overwhelming voter support for smarter growth was confirmed by a recent Mason-Dixon Poll where 81% of voters across Virginia ranked a candidate's position on growth, land use, and curbing sprawl as important considerations in voting. (For more information on poll results, go to <http://www.pecva.org/landuse/2003vapoll/2003vapoll.asp>.) Yet even before the referendum, we have seen smart growth candidates in county, city, and town elections drawing winning margins over the past few years.

In opening the summit, organizers noted that we still face major obstacles in the General Assembly where, for example, the homebuilder's lobby helped defeat the Adequate Public Facilities ordinances (APFOs). During the General Assembly, the Sierra Club's Virginia Action Alert asked members to contact their representatives to support these bills that would help our local governments manage related growth and budget issues. In sending this alert, the Sierra Club noted that with cash-strapped local governments in trouble and so much land already zoned for development, local governments have their hands tied when they are approached by developers. Consequently, localities must approve subdivision plans even when they cannot afford to build the streets, sewers, and schools needed to support such rapid growth. More importantly to all of us, the localities pass these infrastructure costs on to us, the taxpayers. APFOs would have given localities the ability to manage such growth within their budgets.

Summit organizers also noted that since the sales tax referendum, the Governor has supported some affordable alternative transportation solutions and linking land use and transportation at the same time that he has supported bad highways. We still need the Governor's leadership to promote more smart growth alternatives.

In view of these lost opportunities during the General Assembly, summit participants recognized that this year's elections (for all city, county, and General Assembly seats) are our best opportunities to continue promoting our environmental agenda. The Coalition for Smarter Growth provided participants with an overview of the main regional issues with respect to smart growth, transit, and transit-oriented development as follows.

SMART GROWTH ISSUES

- Smart growth issues involve a long-term effort with a 15-20 year timeline.
- There is a lack of comprehensive regional planning.
- The region needs to reprioritize transportation by putting pedestrian projects first, bicycling projects second, transit third, and driving last.
- We need a defined vision of smart growth objectives to implement over the next several years.

• We must reach out to a broad spectrum of people and better harness the interest and concern around development issues.

TRANSIT ISSUES

- Metro capacity should be increased, and attention must be given to non-commuter/off-peak travel and reverse commutes.
- Bus rapid transit (BRT) needs to be considered as a quick, affordable transportation solution in locations where it can provide sufficient capacity at one-twentieth the cost.
- The need for transit instead of HOV across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) ISSUES

- The Rosslyn-Ballston Metro Corridor in Arlington should be used as a TOD model for Fairfax and Springfield. (For more information, please see the article on page 2 of our Feb/Mar 2003 newsletter, *EPA Recognizes Arlington's Smart Growth.*)
- The need to link planning outside transit corridors to planning around transit areas in order to preserve open space and make better use of transit areas.
- Developers need help with TOD financing so that they can meet their commitments to the communities.
- The Columbia Pike revitalization project is a prime example of the issues surrounding transit and TOD projects in Northern Virginia. At issue are questions about how to protect existing communities and affordable housing while revitalizing an area and providing the most appropriate type of transit.
- Planning for Dulles Rail should include affordable housing and walkable communities as important considerations. In this respect, the Rosslyn-Ballston Metro Corridor is an excellent model of closely grouped Metro stations with both business

and residential uses nearby.

Following this overview, the summit participants divided into geographic groups to better identify and prioritize local issues. The three groups of most interest to the Mount Vernon Group were the Alexandria, Arlington, and Eastern Fairfax ones.

The Alexandria group identified the local issues as citizen participation in transportation choices and the new comprehensive plan. Transit and transportation issues included better busses and transit connections to the region, less parking, and improved bike/pedestrian access. Broader issues discussed included open space, streams and water quality, and air pollution. Other activists raised issues concerning affordable housing for middle income families, preserving community character, and promoting diversity. The overall goal of changing local policy to encourage green building and smart growth through zoning was identified by the participant activists. The May and November elections were seen as essential opportunities in all these respects, and the Alexandria participants have continued to meet. (Contact Jim Walmsley at 703/751-6086 for updated information on the activities of the Alexandria group.)

The Arlington group identified the local issues as the needs to provide disincentives to drive, reduce our dependence on internal combustion engines, and better parking policies and new transit corridors. For areas under development, the group identified the need to preserve neighborhood character during in-fill, increasing open space, and providing easements to allow homeowners to dedicate their undeveloped property for open space. Group participants decided to conduct community outreach to increase citizen sensitivity to the range of interests and needs for smart growth planning and to increase affordable housing, especially in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor.

continued on page 8

YES!

I want to join the Sierra Club and help safeguard our nation's precious environmental heritage!

New member's name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ If this is a gift, giver's name _____

Membership category _____ Check enclosed Charge my VISA Mastercard

Exp. date ____/____/____ Cardholder name _____

Card number _____ Signature _____

Membership Categories	Indvid	Joint	
Introductory	\$25	-	
Regular	39	\$47	
Supporting	75	100	
Contributing	150	175	
Life	1000	1250	
Senior	24	32	
Student	24	32	
Limited	24	32	

Annual dues include subscriptions to SIERRA (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1). dues are not tax deductible. enclose your check and mail to: Sierra Club, P.O.Box 52968, Boulder, Colorado 80322-2968

F94Q W5011 1

Progress Update on Green Measures at TC Williams High School

by **David Peabody**, *Alexandrians for a Green TC*, www.GreenTC.org

Recently, one of our members, Gordon Johnston, alerted the Mount Vernon Group of the work by a group of local activists to promote a Green T.C. Williams High School. This article provides an update on the progress of that group with the Alexandria School Board, and is an example of how activists can work together for environmental action.



THE ALEXANDRIA SCHOOL BOARD met on February 25 to review green design elements for the new T.C. Williams High School. Moseley Architects, architects for the new school, presented a range of options and their associated costs. The options fell into the categories listed below.

Options that will automatically be incorporated into the design

1. Encouragement of bicycle use through special storage areas, showers, and changing rooms for bicyclists.
2. Reduction in auto use through smaller parking lots and preferential parking for carpooling students.
3. Trees in parking lots to reduce heat build-up on paved surfaces.
4. Light-colored roofs to reflect solar energy.
5. High efficiency landscape lighting.
6. Special cisterns and run-off control for stormwater management in full compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Act.
7. Minimum 30% reduction in water use through waterless urinals and other measures.
8. Minimum 20% reduction in energy usage.
9. Minimum 25% of materials with recycled content.
10. Minimum 20% of materials produced in a 500-mile radius.
11. Toxin-free pest management.

•PAID ADVERTISEMENTS•

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

T.A. Reese

**Timothy A. Reese
Buck & Associates**

Specializing in:
Arlington • Alexandria
Falls Church • District of Columbia

703/528-2288 x13
timothyareese@aol.com

SALES AND LEASING

12. Arsenic-free pressure treated wood.
13. Design of the building as a teaching tool for environmental issues.
14. Natural daylight in a majority of classrooms.¹

Options that can be incorporated into the design at some modest extra cost

1. Using only captured run-off stormwater for site landscaping.
2. Using only captured run-off stormwater for toilets.
3. Minimum 40% reduction in energy usage.
4. Elimination of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons in the heating and cooling system.
5. Recycling demolition and construction waste.
6. Minimum 5% of materials from natural products that replenish themselves within 10 years.
7. Increased fresh air in ventilation system through advanced controls, better filtration, and CO2 monitoring systems.
8. Use of low-emitting materials, with particular attention to paints, glues, carpeting and composite woods.
9. Green roofs over part of the building.

Options that are under consideration, some of which may involve significant extra cost

1. Greater than 50% energy efficiency increases. Architects will run computerized energy modeling to determine feasibility.
2. Use of on-site renewable energy (photovoltaic solar panels). Not likely, unless grants can be obtained.
3. Use of ground-source (geothermal) heat pumps for heating and cooling.
4. On-site composting of all cafeteria waste. A number of Board members are interested in this because of the combination of conservation, income, and educational benefits.
5. Daylighting the existing stream than now runs in a culvert along King Street. Not likely unless it can be done as a joint venture with the Parks and Recreation Department's Chinquapin Recreation Center expansion project and grants can be obtained to offset costs.
6. Daylighting 100% of the classrooms. Architects project 6-10 classrooms will not get natural light. LEED-Gold certification is clearly achievable.² The discussion was generally positive and

a consensus was definitely forming around measures that would equate to a LEED silver or gold rating. The architects estimate the cost of all these additional items at approximately \$4.7 million. The annual savings in operation costs would be approximately \$300,000.

While considering the information thus far, the Board is awaiting more specific information from the architects on daylighting, energy systems, and water conservation. At their March 27 meeting, the Board will vote on which green measures to incorporate in the initial design.

The one issue that concerns Alexandrians for a Green TC is that of daylighting. School Board members seem concerned as well. Of all the green measures, those affecting health and learning are by far the most important for children. Daylighting affects both. It will take creativity by the architects and a firm commitment by the School Board to achieve 100% natural lighting of all the classrooms. Aside from this issue, GreenTC is pleased with the anticipated green measures and commends the School Board for embracing green design.

If you are interested in becoming a supporter of Alexandrians for a Green TC, please contact the organization at peabody_dp@earthlink.net or GreenTC-2006@aol.com. ☺

¹ Daylighting is the practice of using daylight as the primary daytime illuminant in a room or building, and includes the built-in ability to turn-off electric lighting when not needed in the daytime. Until the introduction of fluorescent lighting, air conditioning, and relatively cheap electricity about the mid-twentieth century, daylighting was common to building design throughout recorded history.

² The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System™ is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. For more information, see: http://www.usgbc.org/LEED/LEED_main.asp.

Big and Green

by **Ben Axleroad**, *Virginia Chapter, International Issues Chair*

While most of us are probably turned off by the predominance of unsightly and barren high rise architecture in northern Virginia, we can be somewhat encouraged by the growing interest of Arlington County's planning staff in green architecture. An opportunity to develop our understanding and appreciation of what is being done worldwide – including not only the United States, but in Europe and Africa – is right at our doorstep.

This opportunity is the "Big & Green" exhibit at the National Building Museum where I

continued on page 8

Upcoming Events/Meetings/Actions *continued from page 1*

Come out and join the Potomac Conservancy and dozens of other local organizations participating in the Potomac Watershed Clean Up for this event. You will be "doing good" and visiting one of the most beautiful natural sites in the Washington, D.C., metro area. The Mount Vernon Group will once again take responsibility for Windy Run Park in Arlington and the adjacent Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail on the south shore of the Potomac River just above Spout Run. The Potomac Watershed Clean-Up is the region's largest one-day mobilization of volunteers to keep our Nation's River trash free. Volunteers of all ages, especially those with boats, are needed to help out with the effort. All necessary supplies including gloves and trash bags will be provided. Volunteers should meet at the Windy Run Park parking lot a few minutes before 9 a.m. on the 4/5/03. Non-Sierra Club members are welcome to help out. (Windy Run Park is just off of Lorcum Lane at 2420 North Kenmore Street in Arlington.) Please contact **John Koch at 703/684-6849** or jandrko@comcast.net if you need directions or for additional information.

POLITICAL MEETING. April 12, Saturday, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

You are invited to attend this meeting to share your views about the local political scene and get involved with the MVG's political and advocacy operations by joining MVG Political Chair Pat Eddington at his home, 2900 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria, VA 22302. To RSVP, please call Pat at 703-535-8778 by April 11th.

CONSERVATION MEETING. April 15, Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

We will be meeting at a watering hole in Ballston to meet and greet, and discuss specific actions we can take to improve our region's air quality. For the meeting location and to RSVP, please contact **Andrew Nicholls, Conservation Chair, at aknicholls@cox.net, 703/536-5047, or Melanie Mayock, Conservation Organizer, at melanie.mayock@sierraclub.org.**

EXCOM MEETING. May 1, 2003, Thursday 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

All MVG members are invited to attend this meeting where your elected group leaders (the Executive Committee or ExCom) discuss group business and decide group activities and actions. The agenda typically includes discussing our conservation and political activities, planning our newsletter, and setting our upcoming meetings and events. Andrew Nicholls is the host for this meeting. If you wish to attend, please call Andrew to RSVP and for directions at 703/536-5047, or by email at aknicholls@cox.net. For more information on ExCom business, contact Pat Soriano at 703/671-3129 or by email at psoriano79@hotmail.com.

POTOMAC VALLEY NATIVE PLANT COLLECTION Open House, April 27, 10 am to 5 pm

Tour Northern Virginia's only native plant

collection devoted to conservation of regional plant diversity. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, Vienna 703-255-3631. **Sierra Club Members receive a \$1 discount on admission**

BACK DECK SOCIAL. May 15, 2003. Thursday 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The trees will be in bloom and the air warm and fragrant when Andrew and Leslie Nicholls host this after-work social on their back deck. First person to spot a bat in the bat wins a special dessert. Food and spirits are provided by the Group, although any 4-star chefs are encouraged to bring samplings. New members or newly active members are especially encouraged to show up. This event will be a social, but we will plan to write one or two short, that is S-H-O-R-T, letters and postcards on green issues, because our environment needs our help. Kindly RSVP to Andrew at aknicholls@cox.net or at 703/536-5047.

MVG SPRING PICNIC AT FORT WARD PARK, AREA #6. June 8, 2003, Sunday noon to 4 p.m.

You are invited to join fellow group members at our annual spring picnic. This year we are moving back to Ft. Ward Park in Alexandria. We'll supply beverages, burgers (beef and veggie) and dogs with all the fixins. Please bring a dish to share such as a salad, munchies, or dessert.

STAR GAZING AT C.M. CROCKETT PARK. June 21, Saturday evening.

Spend a peaceful evening at C.M. Crockett Park gazing skyward with members of the Northern Virginia Astronomy Club at one of their monthly public viewing events. These volunteers will help identify celestial bodies and answer questions. They will also have a few telescopes for viewing the heavens. For directions to the park and guidelines for the event go to <http://www.novac.com/crockett/crockett.htm>. Please RSVP to Terri Lamb, 703/538-6065 or terri.lamb@cox.net. If you are interested in car-pooling, please let Terri know if you wish to drive or ride, and if a driver, how many passengers you can take and where you are located.

SUNSET KAYAKING ON PISCATAWAY CREEK. July 19, 2003, Saturday, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Join fellow club members and friends for a sunset kayaking trip on Piscataway Creek lead by Atlantic Kayak Company. We begin at the Piscataway Creek Marina and go on one of two routes, depending on river conditions. One route takes us out to the mouth of Piscataway Creek, former tribal grounds of the Piscataway Indian Nation. Paddle under the looming ramparts of Fort Washington for views across the wide Potomac to George Washington's Mount Vernon estate. The other route takes you upstream towards the headwaters, meandering

through marsh plants into a narrow creek overhung by trees. This trip is on calm waters and no experience is required. The cost is \$52 per person. To register, contact Atlantic Kayak at 703/838-9072 and reference the "Mount Vernon Group of the Sierra Club group trip." Non-members are welcome.

NEWSLETTER LABELING PARTY. August 21, 2003, Thursday, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Location: Home of Gordon Johnston and Karen Helbrecht in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria. Join us for some pizza, refreshments, and over 4000 labels! If you have the evening free, this is your opportunity for some easy volunteering on behalf of the group while also enjoying some friendly discussions on wide-ranging topics with your fellow members. For more information, contact John Koch, Volunteer Coordinator, 703/684-6849, jandrko@comcast.net, or George Lamb, Newsletter Labeling Coordinator, at 703/538-6065, or gwl@cox.net. To RSVP and for directions, you may also call Gordon at 703/548-5784.

Please also mark your calendar for the final labeling party of the year on:

October 23, 2003, Thursday, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. also hosted by Gordon and Karen.

THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGIONAL OUTINGS PROGRAM (MWRP)

at <http://mwrop.org/index.html> provides a wide range of mostly day hikes in our area led by experienced hike leaders. Instead of these traditional hikes, the Mount Vernon Group Sierra Club offers various alternative outings and social events. For information on any additional offerings, please see our website at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/> or contact Terri Lamb, Socials Chair, at terri.lamb@cox.net or 703/538-6065. ☺

The Sierran is printed by
GLOBAL PRINTING, INC.
3670 Wheeler Avenue,
Alexandria, Virginia 22304
703 / 751-3611

DESIGNSENSE

Print and Electronic Marketing Solutions

4013 North 18th Road
Arlington, Virginia 22207-3005
Voice: 703.527.4690 • Fax: 703.807.0512
eMail: lhomme@comcast.com
Design and layout of The Sierran

ADDRESS CHANGES

Member address changes: Sierra Club Member Services, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80328-2968; send old and new addresses and a Sierra label; phone (415)977-5653; e-mail address.changes@sierraclub.org

For non-member subscription inquiries and address changes: call 1-800-765-7904 or write to Sierra, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80328.

NoVa Growth, *continued from page 5*

The Eastern Fairfax group identified the principal local issue as the inability of the County to control growth. The other Fairfax groups also recognized this issue as well as the problem of determining the relevant community for each issue given the size of the County. In addition, many issues affect multiple localities; for example, Occoquan River matters affect Fairfax and Prince William Counties. In addition, group participants saw a need to promote transit and halt road projects that would adversely affect the quality of life, such as the proposed Beltway widening. Other issues included the need to increase affordable housing and implement stormwater management. The elections again were seen as important opportunities in all these respects. Participants agreed to work on land-use planning issues and educate the public and local leaders on land-use rules relating to the Dillon Rule.¹ Metro opportunities were identified regarding plans for the Vienna Metro, the West Falls Church Metro parking garage hearing, and the Falls Church redevelopment and pedestrian plans. ☺

¹ As noted in the Sierra Club's report, **Land-Use Planning in Virginia: the Truth about the Dillon Rule**, the Dillon Rule (named for a 19th-century Iowa Supreme Court judge) in Virginia requires all local planning and zoning authority to be granted by the state legislature. Therefore, the Dillon Rule is frequently cited as a major reason for ineffective local planning. However, local officials *do* have sufficient authority to effectively control suburban sprawl and plan desirable futures for their communities because Virginia law in fact requires localities to adopt comprehensive plans. The report found that the real contributors to the lack of effective planning included (a) lack of political will, (b) legal myths, (c) lack of information, (d) over-zoning, and (e) transportation (primarily the lack of local input with VDOT). Activists have found that local governments use the Dillon Rule as a shield when they ignore the citizens' desire for proper land planning. When counties have properly exercised the land use authority granted by the General Assembly, developers have been required to follow the zoning specified by the counties. When counties have intentionally engaged in spot zoning, developers are given free rein to the detriment of comprehensive land-use planning.

MVG Web site address:
<http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/>

One-Minute Activist:

Air Quality Action Alert: Don't Roll Back Clean Air Standards with Bad Accounting!

THE ISSUE:

The Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) recently determined that pollution from cars and trucks is far worse than previously thought. Yet rather than taking action to reduce this pollution (through enhancing transit, bicycle and pedestrian options, or putting more development near transit), MWAQC may simply roll back the clean air standard with accounting games that allow more pollution.

MWAQC needs to hear from you! Please write or email Chairman Phil Mendelson, urging him NOT to roll back the clean air standard. Also tell him to include transportation and land-use measures in the plan, such as bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements and more widespread adoption of employer-provided transit benefits.

If you have questions, please contact **Melanie Mayock at 703/312-0533, x110, or Melanie.mayock@sierraclub.org.**

Write a letter using this text or create your own!

PHIL MENDELSON, Chair
Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee
777 N Capitol St. NW, Suite 300 • Washington, D.C.
20002

E-mail: jrohlf@mwcog.org

"Dear Chairman Mendelson:

New air quality models show cars and trucks are polluting much more than previously believed.m

Please pass a strong clean air plan with new measures to reduce this excess pollution, rather than loosening standards with questionable accounting to allow more pollution. With nine Code Red days in 2002, we clearly need to do more to clean up our air – including improving our Metrobus and Metrorail systems, making our communities walkable and bikeable, winning wider adoption of employer-provided Metrochek benefits, and cleaning up dirty diesel engines.

Sincerely"

Don't forget to include your name and address! ☺

Big and Green, *continued from page 6*

am a volunteer. Subtitled "Toward Sustainable Architecture in the 21st Century," it offers 50 contemporary building projects, models and architects' plans, as well as photographic views of creatively designed buildings, both existing and proposed in Europe, the United States, and Africa. The explanations are highly informative, and there are ample suggested resources for further researching of anything that particularly interests you. The structures are large, and include skyscrapers, factories, stadia, apartment complexes, convention and shopping centers, and other "megastructures."

Many of the projects incorporate an emphasis on some form of clean energy – be it solar, wind, or fuel cells. Others especially focus on air and water circulation for temperature regulation and waste disposal. Trees and other plantings are very prominent and often strikingly attractive. A common purpose is not only to avoid pollution but actually to cleanse the neighboring outside environment. Featured is adaptation to local needs, as in the case of an African building which cools the air without artificial conditioning.

I believe Curator David Gissen is correct when he says that three types of visitors may benefit from seeing the exhibition. In-a-hurry "streakers" may come to realize how inclusive the concept of "green architecture" is. "Strollers" who take a little time to try to grasp the concepts will understand the profound depth and applicability of what is seen, while "studiers" who read and take notes in more depth will come away with the message that Green Architecture is the door to a healthier and hopefully happier world. The exhibit is free to the public.

Two special early evening lectures are being offered in connection with this exhibit on Mondays in April and May. The lectures, which concern Green Architecture and its Engineering Aspects, are offered at a small charge, and advance reservations must be made by calling 202/272-2448, ext. 3459. ☺

NON-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Merrifield, Virginia
22116
Permit 316

5405 Barrister Place • Alexandria, Virginia 22304

THE MOUNT VERNON GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB OF VIRGINIA

