



THE MOUNT VERNON SIERRAN

<http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg>

Group Meeting
**BACKPACKING
IN UTAH'S GLEN
CANYON**
November 9
See page 6

The Newsletter of the Mount Vernon Group of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club November/December/ 2004

Upcoming Events/Meetings/Actions

GROUP MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Mount Vernon Group membership meetings are held at the National Rural Electrical Cooperation Association (NRECA) building, 4301 Wilson Blvd., at the intersection of Wilson Blvd and North Taylor Street in Arlington. This is about a 5 minute walk from the Ballston Metro stop on North Fairfax Street. Meetings are always on the street level conference rooms in the building. The doors to the building are open. 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 programs, contact Andrew Nicholls, Programs Chair, at 703/536-5047, aknicholls@cox.net.

NOVEMBER 9, 7:30 TO 9:00 PM

TOPIC: Redrock Canyons of the Escalante: Backpacking in Utah's Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

A couple of our local members, Bruce Parker and Leslie Nicholls, spent a glorious week in mid-May of this year backpacking the canyons that water and time have carved into Navajo sandstone. They will narrate a colorful overview of their trip, with pictures of natural arches, natural bridges, domes, spires, filigrees, and narrow slot canyons, not to mention the wild palette of wildflowers everywhere in bloom. They will provide a feel for what a week-long Sierra Club trip in redrock country is like, both in terms of physical demands and mental rewards.

JANUARY 11, 7:30 TO 9:00 PM

TOPIC: What's in Store for Virginia's Environment? An Overview of Conservation Issues Before the General Assembly David Kovacs, Executive Director of the Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) will address what is in store for the environment and conservation interests as the 2005 General Assembly convenes. VCN has work groups that have been addressing clean air, water quality, rural issues, smart growth, adequate public facilities, and transportation issues and armed

continued on page 8

LET'S TALK TRASH!

Waste Collection Controversies in Fairfax and Arlington

by Dean Amel and Ana Prados

Proposed changes to the way trash gets treated in Fairfax and Arlington counties have raised vehement protests by waste haulers. What's the flap about, and why should Mount Vernon Group (MVG) members be concerned?

THE STORY IN ARLINGTON

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that every locality have a solid waste management plan (SWMP), and all jurisdictions were required to update existing plans by July 1, 2004. Arlington used this state mandate as an opportunity to re-examine its solid waste practices and lay out long term goals for the program over the next 20 years. County staff worked with the County residents on the Solid Waste Committee (SWC), a committee under Arlington's Environment and Energy Conservation Commission, to examine twelve policy issues. The SWC held a series of meetings and conducted two public forums.

Last November, at the end of this process, the SWC came up with 50 recommendations on the twelve policy issues, including:

- Increasing the County's recycling goal from 25 percent to 40 percent by 2009, and to 50 percent by 2014.

- Studying the commingling all recyclables, rather than collecting paper and cardboard separately, a process change that has increased recycling rates elsewhere.

- Imposing stricter recycling requirements on multifamily residences.

- Exploring the practice of recycling food wastes by the commercial sector.

- Expanding yard waste collection from the current autumn and spring collec-

tion periods to year-round collection, and banning yard waste from normal trash that is sent to the incinerator shared by Arlington and Alexandria.

- Studying the desirability of unit-based charges for trash. ("Pay as you throw" systems have increased recycling and reduced trash volumes in other localities without leading to problems with illegal dumping.)

- Studying the franchising of trash collection for the County's commercial and mul-

continued on page 5

Holiday Party & Silent Auction Wednesday, December 8, 2004

7:00 – 9:15 p.m.

Fairlington Villages Community Center
3005 S. Abingdon St., Arlington, Va.

Admission: \$10

Children 5-12: \$5; Under 5: free.

Directions: From I-395, exit King Street West. Make an immediate right onto S. 30th Street (approx. 1 block after the I-395 overpass). Follow S. 30th Street to S. Abingdon Steet (3 blocks, second stop sign). Community Center is across street to the right. From King Street going East: Make a left onto S. 28th Street. Go about 100 feet and bear right at the fork. This is S. 29th Street. Turn Right at the stop sign onto S. Abingdon Street. Community Center is the second building on the left. Park in the lot adjacent to the Center or on Abingdon Street.

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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.

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Notes from The Chair

by Pat Soriano



FOR THIS LAST NEWSLETTER OF 2004, I'd like to start by reminding those of you who have yet to take us up on our invitation to join our Mount Vernon Group listserv to consider doing so. We launched the listserv last year as a means of informing members of events and issues of local interest. For example, we have used the listserv to send reminders of our group membership meetings this year that covered a variety of topics; from Alaska to Virginia forests, to global energy issues. We've also used the listserv to send reminders of our monthly Conservation Committee meetings on the third Thursday of every month. While the meetings have been well-attended, there are always more tasks than activists to complete them, so we continue sending reminders in an effort to attract more members to join us in our efforts.

As you know from previous newsletters, closing the Mirant Potomac River Powerplant in Alexandria has been a high priority for MVG. The latest development on the subject is a recent announcement by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) that a consent agreement with Mirant is now subject to a public hearing on October 28. We expect to submit comments on the agreement, and will send a reminder via the listserv asking concerned members to attend the hearing and make our voices heard for cleaner air in northern Virginia.

Mirant and air quality, Beltway widening and Metro funding are some of the key local environmental issues in our area targeted by MVG. If you'd like to stay informed about what you can do to get involved, please subscribe to the MVG listserv in one of two ways:

1. Send an e-mail to LISTSERV@LIS.TS.SIERRACLUB.ORG and type as the body of the message: `subscribe virginia-mvg-news`, or
 2. Go on line to <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/VIRGINIA-MVG-NEWS.html> and click on "Join or leave the list".
- From there, just follow the instructions.

Pat Soriano



Join the MVG Group Announcement Listserv

DID YOU REMEMBER TO ATTEND the Mount Vernon Group Holiday Party and Silent Auction in December? Do you fail to schedule other Sierra Club functions that you really want to attend? If so, sign up for the new Group announcement listserv. You'll get automatic reminders of key upcoming events a few days before they take place. On occasion you'll also receive timely notices of breaking environmental issues and action opportunities. You will receive only one to four messages a month (we promise!), and your e-mail address will not be disclosed to others.

To subscribe, simply send an e-mail (with no subject line) to listserv@lists.sierraclub.org and put in as the message (without quotation marks) "subscribe virginia-mvg-news." You'll get a message back asking you to confirm your subscription request. Do so. You are then fully subscribed. If you want to unsubscribe at some future date, simply follow the same procedure but send the message "unsubscribe virginia-mvg-news". It's that simple.

Join the growing ranks of those local Sierra Club members who are taking more advantage of all the local Mount Vernon Group has to offer! ☺

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

SENATOR ALLEN'S OFFICE: 202-224-4024, email: senator@allen.senate.gov;

SENATOR WARNER'S OFFICE: 202-224-2023, email: senator@warner.senate.gov; **CONGRESSMAN DAVIS'S**

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THE WHITE HOUSE CON

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2461, email the President

President by going to www.whitehouse.gov and following the email prompts.



It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

SAVE THE DATE! - MT. VERNON GROUP HOLIDAY PARTY AND SILENT AUCTION DECEMBER 8, 2004

Fairlington Villages Community Center, 7:00 p.m. • Volunteers and Donations Needed To Help Continue Sierra Club's Conservation Work In Northern Virginia

The Holidays are just around the corner and its time to start making plans to attend the Sierra Club's Mount Vernon Group's annual party and silent auction on December 8th, 2004. While the date may seem far away, you can help the Sierra Club now to help make this annual celebration and fundraiser a success.

The Silent Auction raises much-needed funds for the Sierra Club's important local conservation work. It's the Mount Vernon Group's single largest fundraiser of the year, and your help can make 2004 our most successful year ever. What can you do to help out, you ask?

The Mount Vernon Group needs volunteers to help collect auction donations and organize the Holiday party.

We need volunteers to ask businesses in their neighborhood and those they frequent to donate items and services to the event.

Own your own business? Have a special talent? Perform services? A donation of your special skills will help the Mount Vernon Group to reach its fundraising goals and continue its conservation work in your community.

Have extra tickets to a game or performance? Please think about donating them to the silent auction.

Received a gift that's not quite you? Consider a Re-gift it to the Silent Auction (new items only, please).

Like to cook? We always need help planning, preparing, and cooking the dinner.

All donations will help the Sierra Club continue its effective conservation work in Northern Virginia. To donate, ask any questions about donations or join the Silent Auction Committee and volunteer to organize this special event please contact Silent Auction Chair Alexia Bailey at alexiabailey@cox.net or by phone at 703-660-1236. ©

Metro D.C. "Challenge to Sprawl" Update

by Chris Carney

The Metro D.C. "Challenge to Sprawl" campaign is a joint project of the Washington Area Sierra Club chapters and groups--including the Mount Vernon Group (MVG). As news of Metro's funding crisis peppers the papers and local newscasts, it's a good time to learn more about the elements of this campaign, and the ways that MVG members can get involved.

METRO FUNDING

As many members of the MVG can attest, the Sierra Club has fought to make Metro's funding problems a priority for our local leaders this year. Much of this past summer, Sierra Club volunteers took action to educate Metro riders. Riders urged our public officials to commit to funding \$1.5 billion in badly needed system improvements to keep the system's rail and bus systems from sinking into a quagmire of chronic delays and dangerous overcrowding. (See the Metro article in the last issue of the MVG newsletter.)

At the time this article is being written, it appears the volunteers' efforts are paying off; local jurisdictions (including Arlington County, Falls Church and Alexandria) are stepping forward to commit their share of the needed emergency funds. For 2005, Sierra Club will be looking at the next steps to avoid such crises, including pushing for the establishment of a regional source of dedicated revenue for Washington Metro Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Metro is unique as the only transit system of its size in the U.S. without such a reliable source of funds.

RAIL ON THE WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE

Sierra Club and community activists in Maryland and Virginia see the coming year as a crucial window to get rail on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The new bridge is designed to carry two lines of rail, although some officials say rail shouldn't be added for several years. Sierra Club will work to get rail put in the plans now, and will continue advocating for construction of the full Purple Line (a circumferential rail around the Washington area, linking the spokes of existing Metro lines).

CAPITAL BELTWAY WIDENING

With much uncertainty about funding and little transparency on the planning process, the Virginia Department of Transportation is going forward with plans for a private company's proposal to widen the I-495 Capital Beltway in Northern Virginia by four High Occupancy Toll lanes. Adding lanes will not solve the region's traffic problems and will worsen our area's air quality. Sierra Club will continue to oppose widening our region's highways, including I-66, and will push for more sensible alternatives, such as transit.

AIR QUALITY

The Washington area is in continued violation of federal health standards for smog. In addition to pushing directly for cleaner transportation alternatives, Sierra Club will keep pressure on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to enforce clean area laws for the Washington regions. (See article in this issue on the Sierra Club's litigation against EPA.)

continued on page 8



Mount Vernon Group Sierra Club members gather at a "Fishless" Fish Fry to educate the public on how the Bush Administration's mercury proposal is a health risk to women and children.

Sierra Club Set to Sue EPA Over D.C. Area's Air Quality

by Mary Kadera

On September 16, counsel for the Sierra Club notified EPA Administrator Michael Levitt of the Club's intent to sue the agency over failure to enforce Clean Air Act provisions in the D.C. area. For decades metropolitan Washington has been in violation of federal health standards for ground-level ozone (smog), according to guidelines set forth in the Clean Air Act, and D.C. did not meet its 1999 deadline to reduce ground-level ozone within acceptable limits.

Earthjustice attorney David Baron, acting on behalf of the Sierra Club, informed Levitt that the Sierra Club will commence a civil suit against the EPA unless the agency fulfills its obligations under section 304 of the Clean Air Act within 60 days.

THE CLEAN AIR ACT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The Clean Air Act legislation of the 1970s and its amendment in 1990 were designed to improve air quality and protect against public health hazards associated with air pollution. The American Lung Association estimates that 159 million Americans live in areas with unhealthy levels of ground-level ozone and/or particulates. Smog and particle pollution have been linked to increased risk for asthma, heart attack, stroke, and lung cancer. Over 10,000 children in the District of Columbia are living with asthma; the elderly are also particularly susceptible to the effects of air pollution.

In its county-by-county "report card" for air pollution, State of the Air: 2004, the American Lung Association ranked the D.C. metro region as the 11th worst area in the nation

for ground-level ozone pollution. Cities in California and Texas dominated the top ten; New York City/Newark, by comparison, ranked 13th.

AIR QUALITY IN OUR AREA: OVERSIGHT AND LOTS OF ACRONYMS

The Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) is the organization certified by the D.C. mayor and the governors of Maryland and Virginia to oversee air quality in our area. Affiliated with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MwCOG), the Air Quality Committee is comprised of elected officials from MwCOG member jurisdictions, with additional members from surrounding counties. The Air Quality Committee also receives input from the Air Quality Public Advisory Committee (AQPAC); for a membership roster of both organizations, visit <http://www.mwcog.org/environment/air/>.

According to the Clean Air Act, any region that fails to meet federal limits for air pollution must submit a State Implementation Plan (SIP). The SIP must have an inventory of all man-made emissions in the region and a plan for reducing these emissions to meet the federal air quality standards. Additionally, a SIP must have a built-in "contingency plan" of secondary, more drastic measures that the region will take if it fails to meet its deadline a second time.

Since 1999, the EPA has twice attempted

to approve the SIP submitted by the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee. Both times, the Sierra Club has taken the EPA to court, claiming that the SIP is insufficient and that the EPA should require stronger measures in the D.C. region. Both times, the federal courts ruled in favor of the Sierra Club and vacated the EPA's approval actions.

MWACQ submitted its latest revised SIP on February 19, 2004. The EPA has not acted on this latest SIP submission.

The Current Plan to Improve Our Air

In its current State Improvement Plan, the Air Quality Committee claims that D.C.'s failure to meet its 1999 deadline was due to "transported pollution" blown in from the Midwest. The Committee further claims that smog generated by our midwestern neighbors accounts for 70% of the region's ozone during our worst air quality days each summer.

Yet the Committee also acknowledges that high growth in the area—27% over the past 15 years—has led to an increased number of cars on the road, and it acknowledges that vehicle emissions are the single highest source of ground-level ozone. The authors of the current SIP note that the Plan must "especially consider mobile sources" of pollution, but claim that mobile source improvement depends on the adoption of cleaner-

continued on page 6

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SALES AND LEASING

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 Indiv Joint

Introductory	\$25	—
Regular	39	\$47
Supporting	75	100
Contributing	150	175
Life	1000	1250
Senior	24	32
Student	24	32
Limited	24	32

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Solid Waste, continued from page 1
multifamily sectors. (Single-family trash collection is already franchised.)

This spring the county manager made his recommendation to the Arlington County Board on the updated SWMP. His recommendations reduced the SWC goals for recycling to 37 percent by 2014 and 47 percent by 2024. He chose four of the SWC's 50 recommendations to promote during the first five years of the plan. His chosen recommendations were:

- Enhancing the multifamily and commercial recycling program by increasing staff to aid education, outreach and enforcement.
- Adding a solid waste planner to County staff to conduct the feasibility studies called for under the plan.
- Studying the desirability of creating a countywide fee to cover things like litter control, street sweeping and waste stream assessments; services currently paid for largely by single-family households.
- Studying the desirability of franchising waste collection for the commercial and multifamily sectors in Arlington.

The only item in the county manager's plan that created controversy was the franchising provision. Under a franchising system, the County would establish a competitive bidding process for waste collection and/or recycling for a designated part of the County. For example, one auction might ask for bids for all waste collection and recycling for all businesses in Rosslyn. The County would then accept the best bid, based on a combination of low cost and quality of service. The plan contrasts with the current solid waste system for Arlington businesses, apartments and condos, where each owner contracts independently with a waste hauler.

Under state law, jurisdictions must give waste haulers a five-year notice before they can institute a franchising system. The SWC recommended giving the five-year notice now, so that if a study of franchising proved the proposed plan to be beneficial, the process could start without waiting five more years. However, waste haulers argued that franchising would be disastrous for their business and their customers. They opposed even the preliminary step of the five-year notice.

Most waste haulers prefer the current system because most business owners and apartment managers are not knowledgeable about prices paid by other customers for waste services. Arlington staff found that one business in a neighborhood might pay twice as much

for the services as a business in the same neighborhood contracting with a different firm for similar services. Waste haulers who operate smaller-scale operations also argue that franchising unfairly favors larger outfits capable of volume business.

Many environmentalists favor franchising because localities can include provisions in the bidding process that benefit the environment. For example, Arlington could require that the level of recycling services offered to all businesses or multifamily complexes meet a certain minimum level. Currently, some haulers charge much higher prices for recycling services than for basic trash collection. Franchising can also improve air quality by reducing the number of trash trucks traveling through a neighborhood. Arlington would like to impose the requirement that all waste from the County go to the incinerator it shares with Alexandria, rather than to a landfill. While there are environmental drawbacks of incinerators, there are also drawbacks to landfills, and the Arlington/Alexandria facility produces energy from burning trash that can offset pollution from other power plants.

As a result of hauler protests, Arlington has put off a decision on starting the five-year clock for franchising until this fall, when staff will present a more detailed description of the franchising study they would like to conduct. Waste haulers, business owners and managers of multifamily dwellings have joined the SWC and are now actively participating in the study process.

To see Arlington's plan and the issues it addresses, go to <http://www.arlingtonva.us/> and use the search term "solid waste management plan." To support giving the five-year notice for franchising, write to the County Board at countyboard@arlingtonva.us.

MEANWHILE, IN FAIRFAX...

Fairfax County's plan outlines the County's strategy in waste management for next 20 years. The main recommendations as officials drafted the plan this summer included:

- Continuing operation of the Lorton incinerator as the primary disposal system for the county. (Currently manages over 90% of the county's solid waste.)
- Expanding curbside recycling to include mixed paper, plastic and cardboard.
- Requiring construction demolition debris (CDD) recycling and/or recycling plans.

- Increasing business recycling by reducing commercial recycling thresholds.

The county held a series of public hearings, and then adopted a final plan that was submitted to the state's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on June 22.

The Sierra Club Mount Vernon and Great Falls Groups submitted written comments and spoke about the plan at the public hearing on May 10. While the plan contains some good new initiatives for recycling, such as adding eligible materials and strengthening commercial requirements, the plan doesn't go far enough to reduce the waste generation rate.

The County's waste generation rate over the past three years is 6.3 pounds per capita per day (pcd), which is nearly 50 percent higher than the national average of 4.51 pcd. No specific provisions exist to reduce the per capita trash generation rate in the County. Additionally, the County needs more aggressive strategies to reduce construction waste since it only has enough landfill capacity for the next 6.6 years.

Sierra Club members expressed concerns over the continued operation of the Lorton incinerator and suggested that the County discontinue its operation if the Metro area is still in non-attainment (for ozone) by 2011. The incinerator is the County's single largest source of ozone-producing nitrogen oxides (NOx) and also emits mercury and dioxins.

We support the County's proposal to oversee residential collection, as it would reduce impacts on neighborhood noise, safety and air pollution. The solution would likely involve franchising—as controversial in Fairfax as it has been in Arlington.

During the public hearing on May 10, waste haulers expressed strong opposition to the franchising of trash collection. As a result, the County Board deferred action and initiated a task force, whose work concludes next May.

If you wish to become involved in Fairfax county solid waste management issues, contact Ana Prados at ana_prados@yahoo.com. ☺

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

Sierra Club sues, continued from page 4

burning fuels—with no mention of public transportation or ridesharing as alternate, highly effective methods to reduce vehicular emissions.

The current SIP invokes over 30 different state and federal regulatory measures the Committee hopes will bring our area into air quality attainment. These include smokestack controls for power plants; special nozzles de-

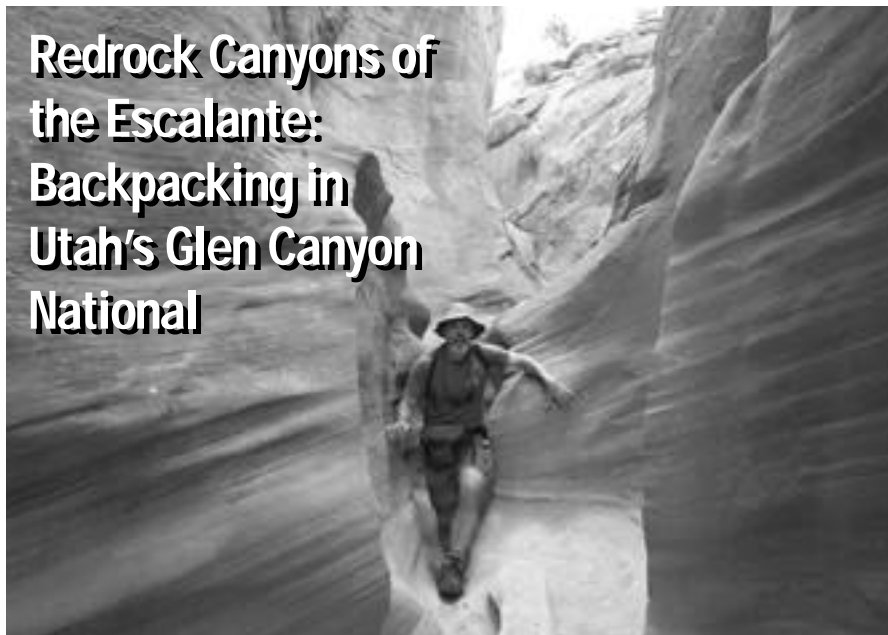
signed to capture vapors at the gas pump; reformulated low-emission paints and varnishes; cleaner-burning gasoline; and state emissions inspections. Additionally, the SIP includes certain non-regulatory measures requiring state or local government financial support. Among these are retrofitting school and transit buses to control diesel emissions; purchasing wind power; and getting more hybrid vehicles on the road. [Strangely, though, both MD and VA are in the process of phasing out their financial and HOV incentives for hybrid owners; see the August/September issue of the newsletter for more information].

Should D.C. fail to meet its next deadline for attainment, the Air Quality Committee has suggested the following as its emergency measures: more reformulated consumer products (hairspray, window cleaner, etc.); stricter control over the use of commercial solvents; and redesigned fuel containers. Again, very little emphasis on public transportation to reduce ground-level ozone or clean-up of point source polluters like the Mirant power plant in Alexandria (see Mirant article in the last issue of the newsletter).

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Write to EPA Administrator Michael Levitt. Tell him you want the EPA to live up to its responsibility to ensure clean air in the D.C. area.
 - Contact the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee with the same message; consider attending one of their monthly meetings.
 - Explore ways to reduce the air pollution you generate. Consider public transit or ridesharing. Other items like lawn mowers and leaf blowers may also be contributing to the problem—so use them judiciously.
 - Advocate for the financial health of our Metro system (see Metro article in this issue). Ask your employer about incentives for employees who commute via mass transit.
- For More Information
- For information about the Sierra Club's latest legal action, visit the Mount Vernon Group's Web site at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/localissues.html>.
 - For information about the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee and the current State Improvement Plan, visit <http://www.mwcog.org/environment/air/>.
 - For further information about the health hazards associated with air pollution, visit the American Lung Association at <http://www.lungusa.org/>.

Redrock Canyons of the Escalante: Backpacking in Utah's Glen Canyon National



When: November 9, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. (socializing from 7:00 to 7:30)

Where: NRECA Building, 4301 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington. (NRECA is at the corner of North Taylor Boulevard and Wilson Boulevard.) Within walking distance of the Ballston Metro. Free parking under the building, off of North Taylor.

What: Local members Bruce Parker and Leslie Nicholls spent a glorious week in mid-May of this year backpacking the canyons that water and time have carved into Navajo sandstone. They will narrate a colorful overview of their trip, with pictures of natural arches, natural bridges, domes, spires, filigrees and narrow slot canyons, not to mention the wild palette of wildflowers in bloom everywhere. They will provide a feel for what a week-long Sierra Club trip in redrock country is

Seth Eaton

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- Promotion of Public Transportation
- Active Sierra Club Membership
- Home Energy Consulting



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703.819.1519

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Annual Election of The Mount Vernon Group Executive Committee

THE MVG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, or ExCom, is composed of nine members – all volunteers – who serve two-year terms managing the affairs and activities of the Group. This year, the terms of four ExCom members are expiring, three of whom are running for office again (the other member resigned because she has moved from the area). In addition, one member who has one year left in his term of office resigned earlier this year. Although we only have four people running for the five open positions, we would appreciate your voting for the candidates as we are required by our bylaws to hold an ExCom election. If you are interested in joining us, please do contact us, as appointments to the ExCom also are possible when no election is underway. Therefore, please review the candidate statements and cast and mail in your ballot as instructed below by December 20th.

Diana Artemis

I have been a Sierra Club member since 1995. As a member of the Mt. Vernon Group I have worked on the Sprawl/Smart Growth and Clean Air campaigns and assisted the Program Chair with speakers and topics. I currently serve as Publicity Chair to ensure our Club's monthly membership meetings are featured in the Washington Post. The past two years I have been very active as Sierra Club liaison to the Virginia

Conservation League, lobbying in Richmond and working with our Virginia State Senators and Delegates to influence legislation favorable to the environment.

Over the past year I've had the privilege of representing the Virginia Chapter on the Sierra Club's national Sustainable Consumption Committee to look at ways our consumption habits affect the environment in specifically targeted areas of food, energy, transportation and forest products. If elected to the Executive Committee, my goal is to build our membership base through outreach to our allies in the organic and locally grown food or veggie movements, the health community and the simple living movement to augment and strengthen our established efforts on clean air, clean water and transportation. I look forward to hearing your ideas for activities and outreach events that can help raise our community's awareness of the effects of our daily consumer choices. You can reach me at: artemdi@yahoo.com. I hope I can count on your vote.

Andrew Nicholls

I have served on the Executive Committee since January 1997. Over those years, I've seen a lot of furniture. I've been the political co-chair, the conservation chair, the vice-chair, and I'm currently programs chair and the

newsletter labeling chair. (A few more chairs, and its a full dining room set.) If I've learned anything along the way, it is simply that a few well-defined roles and a few well-defined responsibilities are the key to success...and to sanity.

To that end, if I am re-elected, I will focus on three specific roles on behalf of our Group. First, I will continue as the programs chair. In this capacity, I will endeavor to put together a mix of topics for our monthly meetings, from serious issues such as global climate change to programs highlighting outdoor trips. Second, I will continue to host newsletter labeling parties, and hauling some 4,000 newsletters for mailing at Merrifield Post Office. This is not a thrilling function, but it is one those cogs-in-the-wheel things that must be done. Third, I will write articles for the newsletter, largely focusing on energy-related issues. My professional background in energy, and knowledge of publicly available data sources, allows me to write articles that help educate our readers about the tough energy choices we will face in the decades ahead.

Please contact me with any questions at aknicholls@cox.net. I would welcome your vote.

Bruce Parker

Since joining the Sierra Club nine years ago, I have taken an active leadership role both within the Mt. Vernon Group and the Virginia Chapter. The environmental issues that I am most concerned with are sprawl in Northern Virginia and the linked issues of global climate change and energy use. There are long-term problems that require us to educate the public and our elected officials. The Sierra Club, which we have helped to make the most effective environmental organization in the country, is uniquely positioned to provide the leadership to work with our elected officials to help them make the right decisions for the environment.

As a the current Group Vice Chair, I am working a local grassroots organization, Alexandrians for Sen-

sible Growth, to develop a Web site which we hope will help hold elected officials accountable. Initially, the Web site will allow the public to see how the Alexandria City Council members have voted on various environmental issues. It will be expanded later to include excerpts of their public statements.

Ana Prados

During most of this past year, I have served as Conservation chair and as an Executive Committee member of the Mount Vernon Group. As an atmospheric chemist and environmentalist, my main interests are air quality and public education, particularly as it relates to environmental concerns unique to our region. The Mount Vernon Group recently established air quality as its #1 environmental priority. As part of this effort, earlier this year we launched a campaign to clean up the Mirant coal-fired power plant Old Town Alexandria. I have worked on several aspects of this campaign, including building a coalition of allies that now includes Alexandria civic groups and members of the community, and organizing events to inform the public about power plants and air pollution. I have also represented the group at the regional Sierra Club Urban Sprawl meetings and worked on the group's ongoing efforts to help increase funding for metro and reduce our exposure to harmful tailpipe emissions. I currently serve on the Chapter's Air Quality Committee.

I believe that the Sierra Club's principle of grassroots organizing is one of the keys to environmental protection and increased quality of life. For this reason, one of my top priorities as a member of the Executive Committee would be to strengthen our activist base by increasing the number of volunteers, particularly in Fairfax County. If elected, another top priority for me would be building stronger ties with local leaders. I look forward to continuing work within our group as part of the Executive Committee. Please feel free to contact me at ana_prados@yahoo.com.

MVG Executive Committee Ballot

Please vote for no more than four candidates. If you have a joint membership, please use both columns – one for each member voting. After marking your votes, please cut the ballot with your mailing label on the reverse. Please do not remove the label or cross out your membership number or you will invalidate your ballot. Please mail your ballot by December 20, 2004 to: Pat Soriano, Elections Chair, 5405 Barrister Place, Alexandria, VA 22304.

	SINGLE MEMBERSHIP	JOINT MEMBERSHIP
Diana Artemis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Andrew Nicholls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bruce Parker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ana Prados	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Design and layout of The Sierran

Upcoming Meetings, from page 1

with the VCN White Papers on specific topics, he will present a colorful description of how the legislative process works and how our members can influence the decision making process in Richmond.

GROUP COMMITTEE MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE (EXCOM) MEETINGS

Join the Group's elected leadership at these meetings where we direct and plan Group actions and activities. All Mount Vernon Group members are welcome to attend. For more information, including meeting location and agenda, and to RSVP, please contact Pat Soriano, Chair, at 703/671-3129 or by email at patemail@verizon.net.

Dates of upcoming scheduled meetings are:

November 16, 6:30 – 9:00 pm

January 8, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm (annual retreat)

CONSERVATION MEETINGS

The MVG Conservation Committee meets the third Thursday of every month (except December). Meetings are held at the Common Grounds Coffee House on Wilson Boulevard in Arlington, a few blocks from the Clarendon Metro station. For more information, including meeting agenda information and to RSVP, please contact Ana Prados, Conservation Chair, at ana_prados@yahoo.com.

Dates of upcoming scheduled meetings are:

November 18, 7:00-8:30 pm

January 20, 7:00-8:30 pm

NEWSLETTER LABELING PARTY

Location: Home of Andrew and Leslie Nicholls in Falls Church near Seven Corners. Join us for good pizza from The Italian Café and over 5000 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 Andrew Nicholls, Newsletter Labeling Coordinator, at 703/536-5047,

aknicholls@cox.net.

Dates of upcoming labeling parties are:

January 25, 6:30 – 9:00 pm

GROUP SOCIAL EVENTS

HOLIDAY PARTY AND SILENT AUCTION

The Holidays are just around the corner and its time to start making plans to attend the Sierra Club's Mount Vernon Group's annual party and silent auction on December 8th, 2004. The Silent Auction raises much-needed funds for the Sierra Club's important local conservation work. It's the Mount Vernon Group's single largest fundraiser of the year, and your help can make 2004 our most successful year ever. Join your fellow local Sierrans at the Fairlington Villages Community Center for an evening of good food, good conversation, and fabulous finds at the auction! December 8, 7:00 – 9:15 p.m.

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 as follows. For information on any additional offerings, please see our website at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/>.

Check Out Our New Web Site!

We've updated the look—and the information—for the Mount Vernon Group's Web site. Visit the site to find a month-by-month calendar of events, information about local issues where the MVG is active, FAQ's about the group, links to other environmental organizations in our area and more. To learn more, see <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/>.

Metro Funding, continued from page 3

INTERCOUNTY CONNECTOR (ICC)

In Maryland, Sierra Club will continue to work with our allies to challenge plans to build the Intercounty Connector, an 18-mile, six-lane toll highway between Rockville and Laurel, which would be the first link of an Outer Beltway. With a price tag of \$3 billion, including financing, the ICC would waste funds that could be spent on higher priorities like transit and local projects.

BUILDING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY

Across the country, grassroots activists are the heart and soul of the Sierra Club and the primary reason the Club is so successful in fighting for stronger protections for our environment. The Club has recently launched a new initiative to strengthen our grassroots organizing that will focus on reaching out to our neighbors through one-on-one conversations and expanding outreach efforts. Called Building Environmental Community, the initiative has been very successful in a number of communities and is now coming to D.C. This year, the Challenge to Sprawl Campaign will become one of the Club's newest BEC sites. For more details, visit www.sierraclub.org/community/

GET SPRAWL CAMPAIGN UPDATES

If you would like regular updates on the Metro D.C. Challenge to Sprawl Campaign, sign up for our Action Updates online newsletter. This one-page update keeps you posted on actions and volunteer opportunities around the Washington area. To sign up, just send an e-mail to Chris Carney at chris.carney@sierraclub.org. For more information or to volunteer with the campaign, call Chris at 703-312-0533, or e-mail to the above address. For more information visit [@www.sierraclub.org/dc/sprawl.](http://www.sierraclub.org/dc/sprawl)

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