



THE MOUNT VERNON

SIERRA

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

EXCOM
Candidates
and Ballot

Page 7

The Newsletter of the Mount Vernon Group of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club October / November 2005

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Outings

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 five-minute walk from the Ballston Metro stop on North Fairfax St. 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. Please bring a guest. For more information on these programs, contact Andrew Nicholls, programs chair, at 703-536-5047, or via e-mail at aknicholls@cox.net.

November 8, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Cross-country Skiing: Options in Our Area

Winter approaches, and with the cold and white, new options open up for outdoor recreation. Cross-country skiing is both great fun and great exercise. To learn more, come listen to Mount Vernon Group member Rob Swennes provide insider insight on great cross-country venues, both in the immediate Metro area and in the mid-Atlantic region. Rob will also provide tips on appropriate gear and on local outdoor groups you can join if you want to do and learn more.

continued on page 6

Virginia Elections: Tuesday, November 8

Don't forget to vote in this year's state races! Want to know which candidates have been endorsed by the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club? Log on to our Web site at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/> and learn more.

AGREEMENT IS REACHED, ACTION IS NEXT. WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Regional Officials Meet on Metro's Funding Crisis

by **Chris Carney**

AS PRICES CONTINUE to skyrocket at the gas pumps, even Bush administration officials are advising people to try transit these days. It's clearer than ever that especially for our urban areas, prosperity and quality of life are inextricably linked to good rail and bus transit systems, with stations and stops that are easy to get to on foot or on a bike.

Of course, Sierra Club has always been a strong supporter of improving and expanding public transportation in the Washington area. Not only is it a smart investment when gas prices are rising, it's the most efficient solution to our world-famous traffic congestion. Transit also provides a clean-air alternative to driving, and the land around Metro stations provides opportunities for compact develop-



Photo by Bob Strawn

ment and reinvestment in our urban core.

Unfortunately, in the coming years Metro is facing hundreds of millions of dollars in budget shortfalls. Money is needed to buy new railcars and buses just to keep up with rising ridership.

continued on page 8

Living with Nature in Mind

by **Janet Haug**

SUSTAINABLE LIVING IS ABOUT *living* your values of making the environment a priority in your life. It is a lot easier to do than you would first think. Not only are our lives enriched when we can live in an area that has clean air, fresh water, and healthy food, but amazingly our efforts impact the areas surrounding us as well. What can we do to keep improving our environment? What can we do to help improve the areas around us? You can start right in your own home by using renewable energy resources, creating less waste, and consuming wisely.

Some Facts

To improve your daily habits, begin by evaluating how we'll you're already doing.

There are several tools you can try. One of them, www.myfootpring.org, is found on the Web and easy to use. You can also read *Radical Simplicity* by Jim Merkel and take a more detailed self-assessment. These are simple but effective measurement tools that demonstrate the collective impact that would result from one person's lifestyle choices, assuming everyone made the same choices as you (e.g., if everyone switched to recycled paper products). The ultimate goal is to live in a way that causes the least pollution yet allows you live comfortably.

Nature is very resilient and can survive through many extremes. Many people, plants and animals still *survive* in polluted

continued on page 8

Mount Vernon Group Leadership

PAT SORIANO

Chair, Treasurer, Alternate Delegate to the VA Chapter
5405 Barrister Place
Alexandria, VA 22304-1949
(H) 703/671-3129
patemail@verizon.net

BRUCE PARKER

Vice-Chair
827 Fontaine Street
Alexandria, VA 22302-3610
(H) 703/549-5792
bruce@chesdata.com

ROB SWENNES

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

DIANA ARTEMIS

3431 Lakeside View Dr.
Falls Church, VA 22041-2454
(H) 703-671-4916
artemdi@yahoo.com

MARY KADERA

Newsletter Coordinator
Web Site Coordinator,
Political Chair
18 E. Maple Street
Alexandria, VA 22301
(H) 703/455-0513
marvhalon@yahoo.com

ERNE LEHMANN

N. St. Asaph Street
Unit 303
Alexandria, VA 22314
(H) 703/567-2250
ernie265@aol.com

ANDREW NICHOLLS

Programs Chair
Volunteer Coordinator
6914 Farragut Ave.
Falls Church, VA 22042
(H) 703/536-5047
akn99len@yahoo.com

LESLIE NICHOLLS

Fundraising Chair
(H) 703-536-5047
arctic40diva@yahoo.com

*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*

Notes from The Chair

by Pat Soriano



AMONG THE 700 DELEGATES at the Sierra Club Summit in San Francisco in September were about ten of us representing Virginia, including two from our own Mount Vernon Group. We all met for the first time at the massive Moscone Convention Center, and in between eight hours of delegate meetings over the three days of the Summit, there were great programs and films to see and hear, wonderful environmental and organic products from wine to chocolate to hemp clothes to try out, hybrid cars to test drive, opportunities to hike around SF, and terrific speakers to consider.

Former Vice President Gore was a surprise speaker who had originally declined, due to a previously-scheduled speaking engagement in New Orleans, but had to change his travel plans due to Hurricane Katrina. Talking on the theme of global warming, Gore noted how over the past century, our growing population and industrialization have had unprecedented impacts on our planet. He believes, however, that we have the vision, know-how, and technology to address global warming, but lack the political will. Political will, he observed, is a renewable resource and he urged us to make global warming a priority.

Another highlighted speaker was Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who was awarded the Sierra Club's William O. Douglas Award on behalf of his Waterkeeper Alliance. We were in turn awarded with a stirring speech that began with his memories of the hikes and backpacking trips he took as boy with Douglas on the C&O Canal and the Olympic Range in Washington State. He praised wilderness and talked about how all the great religious leaders in history – Buddha, Jesus, Moses, Mohammed – went into the wilderness for their central epiphany awakenings. He closed by stating that wilderness is deeply embedded in the American character, and quoted a Lakota proverb to remind us, "We didn't inherit this planet from our ancestors; we borrowed it from our children." (See the full transcript of this speech at: <http://www.sierraclub.org/pressroom/rfkspeech/>)

Another personal favorite among the many Summit offerings was the film, *Being Caribou*, where filmmaker Leanne Allison and wildlife biologist Karsten Heuer tracked the porcupine caribou herd for 1000 miles on foot over six months. Starting in the Yukon in Canada, the pair crossed three mountain ranges, swam an icy river, encountered wolves and grizzly bears all to follow the 100 thousand plus herd to their calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, and then back to the Yukon. The intrepid adventurers were on hand after the film to answer questions and urge us to protect ANWR from drilling. (See the film site for more information: <http://www.beingcaribou.com/index.htm>.)

As to the main business of the Summit, after considerable discussion, Q&A sessions, and tabulation exercises, the delegates chose "Building a New Energy

Future" as the Club's top priority over the next five years. Nearly two-thirds of delegates voted it the most important priority. Also ranked highly by the delegates were "Building Vibrant, Healthy Communities" (52 percent), "Defending Federal Lands/Public Waters" (49 percent), and "Protecting People and the Planet from Pollution" (46 percent).

In addition to voting on conservation priorities, we also ranked our effectiveness in pursuing them. For example, 64 percent of delegates felt that "Building a New Energy Future" should be a top priority, but we rated our effectiveness in pursuing this goal at 3.2 (out of 10). By contrast, while 49 percent ranked "Defending Federal Lands/Public Waters" as a top priority, it garnered a 5.5 effectiveness rating.

We also voted on how the Club should best invest its resources to reach these goals. The results: (1) seeking new allies and building coalitions, (2) creating media visibility, and (3) bringing people together. Finally, we chose the top three ways to impact environmental decision-makers. They were: (1) influence voters' electoral decisions, (2) focus on state policy-makers, and (3) influence local decision-makers about specific places.

For more information on the Summit, see: <http://www.sierraclub.org/sierrasummit/>.

*The editor of the **Mount Vernon Sierran** welcomes article submissions from Group members for this quarterly publication. Articles published in the **Sierran** reflect the opinion of the individual author, and do not necessarily represent official **Mount Vernon Group** or **Sierra Club** positions or policies, unless explicitly stated.*

Important Contact Information

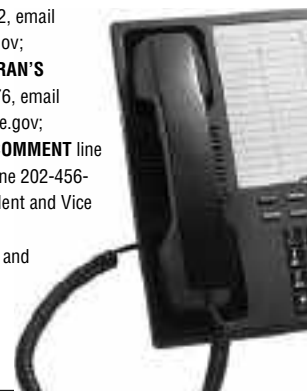
SIERRA CLUB HEADQUARTERS: 415-977-5500; Membership info: 415-977-5653; Sierra Club Legislative Hotline 202-675-2394; National Headquarters: 85 2nd Street, 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94105-3441; Sierra Club website; www.sierraclub.org

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' 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.



Gifts That Are Good for the Earth

by *Mary Kadera*

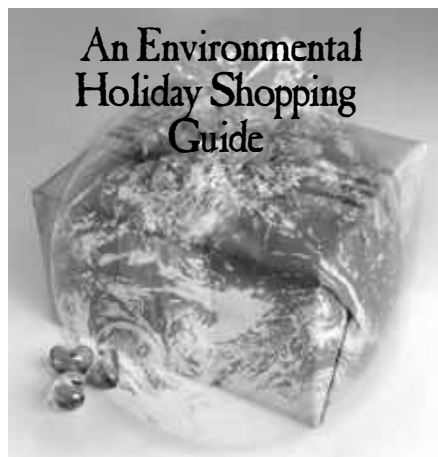
THIS YEAR AS YOU PURCHASE presents for friends and family, consider patronizing environmentally and socially conscious businesses in our area. Shopping via the Internet makes it even easier to "go green" when you get set to spend! Also, consider concluding all or part of your holiday shopping at this year's Mount Vernon Group silent auction on December 13th.

Arts, Crafts and Home Decor:

- *African Craft*, Washington D.C., www.africanart.com. Promotes the work of artisans from all over Africa.
- *Eco-Artware*, Washington D.C., www.eco-artware.com. Gifts from recycled, reused, and natural materials for all budgets and occasions.
- *Ten Thousand Villages*, Alexandria, www.villagesofalexandria.com. Fair trade retailer providing vital income to Third World people by marketing their goods.
- *Tomorrow's World*, Norfolk, www.tomorrowworld.com. Natural bath and body care, environmentally smart cleaning, home decor, gifts, and more!
- *Fair Trade Quilts and Crafts*, Virginia Beach, www.fairtradequilts.com. Authentic quilts, bedspreads, ceramics, jewelry, handbags, tapestries, and other handmade crafts made by artisan cooperatives from Guatemala and Southern Asia.
- *Herbal Animals*, Potomac Falls, www.herbal-animals.com. Animal-shaped pillows made from organic, color-grown cotton and relaxing herbs in a cottage industry.

Jewelry and Apparel:

- *What's Hempenin' Baby*, Stone Ridge,



- www.babyhemp.com. Eco-friendly Baby Hemp clothing: hats, T-shirts, onesies, pants. Mama Hemp maternity and nursing wear.
- *Patagonia*, Washington D.C., www.patagonia.com. Offers high quality outdoor gear and apparel including products made from organic cotton, hemp, and recycled materials.
- *Sass Brown Designs*, Washington D.C., www.sassbrown.com/sb/designs/. Funky jewelry made from recycled guitar picks, game pieces, mah-jong tiles and more
- *Gecko Traders*, Arlington, www.geckotrad ers.com. Hand-woven silk handbags and accessories in vibrant colors designed to mix and match. Handcrafted by disadvantaged and disabled workers in third-world countries.
- *Moonrise Jewelry*, Cheriton, www.moonrisejewelry.com. Operates "Jewelry with

Heart" work-training program for domestic violence victims. Sources materials from Fair Trade companies and cooperatives.

Business Gifts and Awards:

- *Rivanna Natural Designs*, Charlottesville, www.rivannadesigns.com. Elegant, handcrafted desk accessories and awards. FSC-certified wood from well-managed forests. Reclaimed wood. Recycled glass. Most products can be engraved or customized.
- *The Gift that Makes a World of Difference*, Midlothian, www.thesustainablegift.com. Green corporate gifts and awards. Organic cotton tees and bags, recycled money pencils, awards made from recycled glass or FSC certified wood, handmade items. ☺

Businesses— Advertise in The Sierran



Support the Mount Vernon Group's work and activities and reach **over 4800 homes** in some of America's most prosperous Zip codes. Call 703/527-5491 or email lhommecom@verizon.net for information.

Products and services must be compatible with Sierra Club philosophies and principals

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

TIMOTHY A. REESE
REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE

- ◆ Commercial Leasing
- ◆ Sell or Purchase
- ◆ Tenant Representation
- ◆ Land Assemblage

BUCKCOMMERCIAL
www.buckcom.com
703-528-2288 ◆ treese@buckcom.com

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

Alexandria Power Plant Closes — But Reopens, Despite Severe Air Quality Violations

by Ana Prados

ON AUGUST 24TH, the day many Alexandria citizens and Mount Vernon Group activists had been hoping for finally arrived. Just a few days prior, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) had released a study confirming that the air in the neighborhood surrounding the Mirant coal-fired plant exceeds federal health standards for nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxides, and small particles (includes soot). This confirmed what residents and activists had long argued, that the Mirant plant poses a serious health threat to those who live nearby and those who regularly enjoy the Mount Vernon Trail, which runs immediately adjacent to the power plant near mile post 11.

In response to DEQ's request for an immediate correction to this violation, Mirant officials had no choice but to cease operations. The shutdown is a success for Alexandria and MVG activists who have raised concerns about the plant's longtime violation of federal air quality emission standards.

However, the victory was shortlived: a few days later, the District of Columbia's Public Service Commission filed an emergency petition with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission over concerns of diminished electrical power reliability in the D.C. metro area.

Pepco, however, has said its customers would not be affected by a shutdown of the Alexandria plant, and a spokesman from PJM International, who manages the region's power grid, has gone on record to affirm that under most circumstances, the region would continue to enjoy an adequate power supply.

The City of Alexandria has filed a motion to intervene in the case. In the meantime, though, on September 21 and with only one day's notice, Mirant resumed operating the plant at partial capacity by re-starting operations on one boiler, and officials have recently announced plans to restart a second. Both the DEQ and Governor Mark Warner immediately responded to Mirant's irresponsible action.

DEQ states in its letter to Mirant that



Canine support at the June 2005 Alexandria Clean Air Rally, sponsored by the Mount Vernon Group.

it is "unable at this time to conclude that restart on Unit 1 under the conditions set forth in the plan will ensure the protection of human health and the environment". Governor Warner likewise stated he "will not tolerate any assault on the health, safety, and welfare of Virginia's citizens or the environment," and he demanded "compliance with environmental laws and regulations". To view the full content of the letters, see the Mirant information on the DEQ Web site at <http://www.deq.state.va.us>.

Like other concerned government officials and community organizations, the Mount Vernon Group believes that only a permanent shutdown of the facility can en-

sure the safety of the community and are we very thankful to the City of Alexandria, the DEQ and Governor Warner for their recent actions. However, Mirant has clearly indicated that it intends to keep the Alexandria plant open, despite clear and mounting evidence that its continued operation is harmful to residents in Alexandria and across the river in the District of Columbia.

Help Us Keep the Plant Closed !!

Lend your voice and join the Alexandria Clean Air Campaign. For questions or additional information contact Ana Prados at ana_prados@yahoo.com. ☺

Ana Prados is the Mount Vernon Group's Conservation Chair and lives in Springfield.

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:

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2006

Submission Deadline is January 2nd

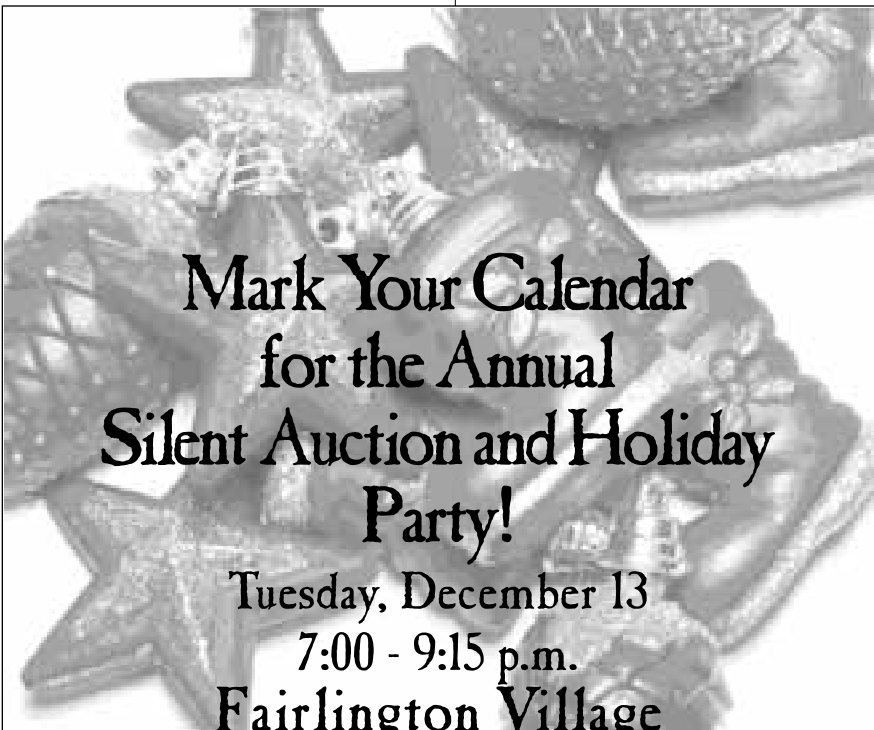


DID YOU MISS the Mount Vernon Group Holiday Party in December? Do you fail to schedule other Sierra Club functions that you really want to attend? If so, sign up for the new Group announcement listserv. You'll get

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 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! ☺



Mark Your Calendar for the Annual Silent Auction and Holiday Party!

Tuesday, December 13

7:00 - 9:15 p.m.

Fairlington Village
Community Center
3005 Abingdon St.
Arlington, Virginia

SUPPORTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORK of the Sierra Club has never been so easy or so fun! Give a gift to the environment and a friend by attending the Mount Vernon Group's primary fundraising event. The money raised at the silent auction helps fund the MVG's activities and educational programs. This year's silent auction will feature a variety of enticing items from outdoor gear to art. So bring a friend and enjoy the festivities! An \$8.00 donation is requested to cover the cost of the food and beverages provided.

DIRECTIONS:

From I-395, exit King Street heading west. Make an immediate right onto S. 30th Street (approximately 1 block after the I-395 overpass). Follow S. 30th Street to S. Abingdon Street (3 blocks, second stop sign). The Community Center is across the 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 in the road. This is S. 29th Street. Turn right at the stop sign onto S. Abingdon Street. The Community Center is the second building on the left. Park in the lot adjacent to the Center on Abingdon Street.

Photo by Otaviano Chignolli. All rights reserved.

TIME TO TABLE YOUR THANKSGIVING
TURKEY TRADITION?

The True Cost of Food, Product Labeling and Marketing Claims

by *Mary Finelli*

WITH THE EVER-INCREASING types of food product labeling and marketing claims attached to meat, milk and eggs, it's no wonder that consumers are confused.

For example, in the past five years, more than a dozen farm animal quality assurance schemes have been developed. However, those generated by the factory farming industries essentially serve to codify environmentally unhealthy and inhumane production practices. And while animal welfare certification standards prohibit some cruel practices, they permit others (e.g., no outdoor access and amputations without anesthesia).

The national organic regulations are vague, with loopholes that enable important provisions to be flouted. Claims such as "free range," "grass fed" and "cage free" have no regulatory definition, and compliance with them is not verified by the USDA.

In addition to environmental and animal welfare concerns, producing animal food products is an inherently inefficient way of utilizing our available farming resources. The conversion rate of pounds of grain to pounds of meat is about 13:1 for beef, 6:1 for pork, and 3:1 for chicken. This requires the use of enormous amounts of land, water and energy.

continued on page 7

Wanted!

Silent Auction items to round out our offerings. If you would like to donate an item for the auction, please contact Leslie Nicholls on 703-5376-5047 or via email on arctic40diva@yahoo.com. We are looking for contributions for our themed baskets: green gardener; chocolate lover; happy trails; what's cookin'; etc. and are also happy to accept larger items. All funds are used to support the local education and outreach activities of the Group.

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Outings

Membership meetings, continued from page 1

January 10, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. **Kilowatt Ours: Building a Low Emission Nation**

Electricity use in our homes is a key component of our overall demand for fossil fuels, including coal. To learn more, we will watch a film by Jeff Barrie called *Kilowatt Ours*, which reveals the often unreported consequences of our predominantly coal- and nuclear-powered economy. Barrie takes viewers on a journey from the coal mines of West Virginia to the solar panel fields of Florida, as he explores solutions to America's energy related problems. *Kilowatt Ours* invites viewers to help build a "net zero" nation, by conserving energy to the greatest extent possible at home, then using clean renewable power to provide the electricity used. Popcorn will be provided for this film screening and discussion! For more information about the film, visit <http://www.kilowattours.org/learnaboutfilm.html>.

HOLIDAY PARTY AND SILENT AUCTION December 13, 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Join in the festivities as the Mount Vernon Group hosts its annual holiday social event at the Fairlington Village Community Center in Arlington. Enjoy good conversation, excellent food and drink, and holiday cheer with fellow Group members. Then, support the Group's local advocacy and outreach work by participating in the silent auction, with dozens of donated items from area individuals and businesses. For more information, see the larger ad within this newsletter. We're also looking for volunteers to help coordinate the party and solicit auction items. If you think you can help, please e-mail Leslie Nicholls at arctic40diva@yahoo.com.

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: Tuesday, November 2, 6:30 p.m.

Annual Retreat: Saturday, January 7, 9:30 a.m.

CONSERVATION MEETINGS

Want to roll up your shirtsleeves and get involved in the Group's local environmental campaigns? This is the meeting for you! The MVG Conservation Committee meets at the Common Grounds Coffee House on Wilson Boulevard in Arlington, a few blocks from the Clarendon Metro station. All MVG members and other, non-MVG interested volunteers are welcome to attend! 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:

Thursday, November 18, 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 19, 7:00 p.m.

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 or by email at: aknicholls@cox.net.

Dates of upcoming labeling parties are: Tuesday, January 24, 6:30 p.m.

TRUE COST OF FOOD DINING EVENTS

Join fellow MVG members for an earth-friendly dining adventure! We meet for dinners at local restaurants and throw potluck suppers. To learn more about our restaurant events or RSVP to attend, contact Grace Holden at 703-536-0844 or by email at: gmh829@aol.com. You may also contact Diana Artemis at 703-671-4916 or by email at: artemdi@yahoo.com. We look forward to meeting you and learning more about how we can make daily food choices that will protect our health and the health of our planet. Please send in your RSVP at least three days in advance so we can ensure that there is enough space for everyone.

Dates of upcoming dining events are:

Saturday, November 19, 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Thanksgiving Dinner at POPLAR SPRINGS FARM ANIMAL SANCTUARY, 15200 Mt. Nebo Road, Poolesville MD 20837, 301-428-8128

Participants are asked to bring a \$10 donation to the sanctuary and a vegan dish to share. Please contact Susan Prolman if you have any questions about this event at: prolmans@aol.com.

Thursday, January 26, 6:30 p.m.,

SINGH THAI. 2311 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201 (Clarendon Metro). Please RSVP to Diana Artemis at 703-671-4916 or artemdi@yahoo.com by Monday, January 22.

THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGIONAL OUTINGS PROGRAM (MWROP) at 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 virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/

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 toll-free or write to Sierra, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80328.

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 leading and managing the affairs and activities of the Group. We have four openings on the ExCom and four members running for office. Although the number of candidates equals the ExCom openings, we would appreciate you casting a ballot since we are required by our bylaws to hold an election every year. *Therefore, please review the candidate statements and mail in your ballot as instructed below by December 20th.*

Candidate Statements

Jennifer Abel: I have been a member of Sierra Club for only a few months but have long been interested in environmental issues. I have been a member of several other environmental organizations and volunteer with Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment. In that capacity I led two water stewardship neighborhood teams in which I encouraged my neighbors to adopt practices to improve water quality and conserve water resources. I am also in the process of developing an energy conservation class for 4th graders in Arlington. This program will be pilot-tested in December.

I am also the coordinator for the Arlington Farmers' Market and have a passion for supporting local food projects and initiatives. The impetus for my joining Sierra Club came when I became involved in the True Cost of Food program led by Diana Artemis. I have conducted research on how urban planners can strengthen local food systems, worked on starting and improving farmers' markets in two states, and have helped with starting community gardens. If elected to the ExCom I will promote events in which members can become involved in creating a vibrant food system where the needs of the environment, farmers, and consumers are all respected.

If you have any questions, please contact me at jennyabel@verizon.net.

MARY KADERA: It's been my privilege to serve on the Group's Executive Com-

mittee for the past two years, and I have been inspired by the dedication of my fellow Group leaders and many other Group members who volunteer their time and talents. For the past year and a half, I have been coordinating the Group's quarterly newsletter publication, and I'm also the Web master for our MVG site on the Internet— bookmark us at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/>! This year, I've worked as the Group's political chair to interview candidates for the House of Delegates and recommend MVG endorsements in several races (again, check the Web site!).

I'm a lifelong resident of Northern Virginia, and I grew up enjoying the many beautiful places that surround us: canoeing on the Shenandoah River, camping and hiking in the George Washington National Forest, and cycling on the C&O Canal towpath, to name a few. Preserving these opportunities for future generations in our area means smarter land development; wise choices in transportation planning and mass transit incentives; and a serious effort to remedy our severe non-attainment status in federal air quality standards. I believe the Sierra Club has a critical role to play, and I'd appreciate your vote.

PAT SORIANO: I would appreciate your vote to continue serving on the Mount Vernon Group Executive Committee. This past year has been challenging trying to keep ahead of the developments with the Mirant power plant in Alexandria. Our group held our first rally to publicize the serious air quality and health caused by this coal-fired power plant within the community, and our work continues in this respect. Our group also has worked within the greater community to call attention for more permanent funding of Metro as opposed to

more road building and expansion – when there will never be enough roads to accommodate all the peak-hour traffic. With gas prices at record levels, the importance of conservation in our homes and on the roads, including funding of public transportation and better land-transportation planning at the local level could not be more important. The list of things that need to be done goes on, and I am committed to doing all I can alongside the many other committed activists – and friends I've made – as a member of the Sierra Club.

ROB SWENNES: I am completing my second two-year term as a member of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Mount Vernon Group. Thanks are due to several people in the Group's leadership who spend many hours each month to ensure that the Group functions well. Through their efforts the Group has a positive impact on environmental issues in Northern Virginia. I serve as the Secretary for the Group ExCom. I am also the administrator of our announcement listserv established so that all our 5000-plus members who subscribe (hint!) will have better knowledge of upcoming meetings and Sierra Club-related events.

I am a long-standing Arlington resident and active in cycling advocacy in the Washington area. I serve on the county's Bicycle Advisory Committee and formerly chaired its transportation commission. Much of my time is spent working with the county's Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee, which helps to fund improvements on public property in single-family neighborhoods and thus to preserve them for future generations. I support a roll back in exces-

sive residential development rights in Arlington so that future home construction will be carried out in an environmentally sensitive manner. If reelected to the Executive Committee I will continue to pursue these initiatives and others to improve the quality of life for all in Northern Virginia. ☺

True Cost, continued from page 5

The American Dietetic Association has stated that: "Appropriately planned plant-based diets are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases." With the diverse bounty of marvelous tasting food produced from alternative protein sources, now readily available in your favorite local market or restaurant, there's never been a better time to opt for this healthier, environmentally responsible, and far more humane way of eating. For more information, visit this Sierra-sponsored Web site at <http://www.truecostoffood.org>.

See also:

- *Food Labeling Fact Sheets*, Food Safety & Inspection Service (USDA), available at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Food_Labeling_Fact_Sheets/index.asp
- *The Facts About Farm Animal Welfare Standards*, Farm Sanctuary, available at: http://www.farmsanctuary.org/campaign/standards_booklet_FINAL.pdf
- *So You're An Environmentalist... Why Are You Still Eating Meat? E* magazine, available at: <http://www.emagazine.com/view/?142&src=>

Mary Finelli is a Sierra Club member living in Silver Spring, Maryland. ☺

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, 2005 to: Bruce Parker, Elections Chair, 827 Fontaine Street., Alexandria, VA 22301-3610.

| | SINGLE MEMBERSHIP | JOINT MEMBERSHIP |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| MARY KADERA | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ROBERT SWENNES | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PATRICIA (PAT) SORIANO | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| JENNIFER ABEL | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Metro, continued from page 1

Now we have a step forward. On October 3, public officials from around the Washington area convened for a regional summit to establish secure, long-term funding sources for Metro. While they didn't agree on an all-important dollar figure, they committed to working together to find a solution – guaranteed funding sources solely dedicated for Metro – which has been lacking all these years and has been a critical success factor for other urban mass transit systems across the U.S.

What's next? An agreement is well and good, but now we need action.

Contact your state and local public officials and tell them you are willing to pay for less crowded trains. If you have to drive, tell them that getting more trains and buses equals less congestion on our roads. Let them know that you expect them to deliver on the promise for secure, long-term dedicated funding for Metro.

For more information on Sierra Club's efforts to improve and expand Metro, visit our website at <http://www.sierraclub.org/dc/sprawl/metro> or call Chris Carney at 202-237-0754. ☺

Chris Carney works in the Sierra Club's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office and leads its D.C. area "Challenge to Sprawl" campaign.

The Sierran is printed by:
MASTERPRINT, INC.
703 / 550-9555

Sustainable, continued from page 1

and congested areas. However, what we are shooting for is not *survival* but a balanced ecosystem where people and other living things can enjoy *abundance* and *diversity*.

What can you do?

Are you light, medium or ultra nature minded?

After you take an assessment on how you are living, you can more clearly see how often you keep nature in mind. Now you can start making changes to help you achieve the goals of Sustainable Living. Living with nature in mind doesn't mean you have to give up style, comfort or convenience. It means thinking creatively each day.

Living Nature-Minded

- A *living light* person is a just starting to live with nature in mind. You may recycle your cans or plastics when convenient, or try to not to waste energy by turning off your lights and appliances when you leave your home.

- A *medium minded* person has experienced the benefits of Sustainable Living. You watched your energy bills decrease because you have installed energy-efficient appliances and you make fewer trips to the trash bin because you are composting and recycling to less waste, and purchasing products with less wasteful packaging.

- An *ultra minded* person may have been brought up to live with nature in mind, and many of these suggestions are already old habits for you. Re-energize your commitment to nature by thinking creatively

about living with nature and helping your neighbors to live sustainably.

New Steps to Consider:

- Purchase energy saving appliances.
 - Buy more fresh, locally-grown produce.
 - Learn about your local ecosystems and watersheds.
 - Grow plants at home or in your office space.
- Use mass transit, carpool, make your next car a hybrid.
- Take advantage of environmental tax incentives.
 - Choose a renewable energy provider for your home.
 - Invest in companies that endorse sustainable design and development.
 - Watch what you put down the drain or pour onto the ground.
 - Take a walk in your neighborhood or local park.
 - Turn your lawn (if you have one) into a Freedom Lawn (eco-landscaping).
 - Start a recycling program at your workplace.
 - Support and encourage others who want to live sustainably.

Start today and pick one or two little changes to make in your life. Set the example in your community and encourage others to join you in Living with Nature in Mind.

Janet Haug moved to the D.C. area in June 2005. She recently completed a Masters Degree in Business with an emphasis in Environmental Studies from the Air Force Institute of Technology in Dayton, Ohio. ☺



5405 Barrister Place • Alexandria, Virginia 22304

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