

December 2011/March 2011



**News & Activities of the
Falls of the James Chapter, Sierra Club**

**FoJG's Thirtieth Annual Holiday "Thelebration" & Fundraiser!
Wednesday, December 7, 2011 6:30 pm !
Featuring special guest speaker Robin Mann, National Sierra Club President**

Can you believe it? Our thirtieth Holiday celebration - and one you won't want to miss. The President of the national Sierra Club, Robin Mann, will make a special trip to join us for our Holiday Celebration and fundraiser, and she will deliver a keynote speech. Robin began as a local leader and activist in Pennsylvania, and then became state Water Chair, working for stronger wetlands regulations and water resources protection. She then became our National Water Chair and led a series of national campaigns in the 1990's and early 2000's to strengthen protection for wetlands and clean water, and she led the Sierra Club's successful campaign to stop the Gingrich Congress' assault on the "Dirty Water Act". For three years, she was the National Vice President for Conservation, and she was elected President in May 2010. Robin holds Masters degrees in international relations from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and in economics from the University of California at Berkeley.



Plus, a **grand** evening of holiday music, great food and desserts, cups of cheer, socializing and shopping for the holidays. This extravaganza will include a Silent Auction, with lots of green gifts, healthy services, and money-saving coupons; another 50-50 raffle; and a presentation of the 5th annual FOJG Green Giant Award, recognizing Richmond-area leaders in environmental stewardship and education.

Auction items include theatre tickets to art works, baked goods to outdoor gear, cabin retreats, boat rides, crafts, landscaping, and weekend escapes. Personal services such as yard work, hairstyling, house cleaning, and massages are popular sellers. While we are still collecting items for the silent auction, YOU still have time to donate a product or a personal service for the benefit of The Club

Sierra Club logo items also will be on sale, including calendars, FoJG coffee mugs, softpak cooler bags, t-shirts and more. But most important, Come !! and bring your friends.

Members please bring: Hors-d'ouvres if your last name begins with: **A-L**

A dessert if your last name begins with: **M-Z**

Bring your own glass or mug if you can...

Volunteers are very much needed to help the night of the auction: Decorators (please show up at 4:30 or 5 !), Greeters, Bartenders, Sales people, Registration folks, Cashiers and Cleanup persons.

Please pitch in and make it light work.

Admission for SC members is \$25 and the cost for non-members is \$30. Be a VIP and sponsor a table for 8 for \$250 - you'll get reserved seats, extra credit and a tax-deduction ! Reservations must be made in advance ! Send your reservation and a check made out to "Sierra Club" to Anne Repp: 2221 Monument Ave., Richmond, VA 23220 . RSVP by phone: 355-3804. Email anne.repp@verizon.net by Noon Mon. Dec. 5th.



We'll Recycle What Your Recycler Won't !! Don't forget to bring your old batteries, CFC bulbs, #5 plastics, cell phones, and other hard-to-recycle goods.

General Meeting Programs

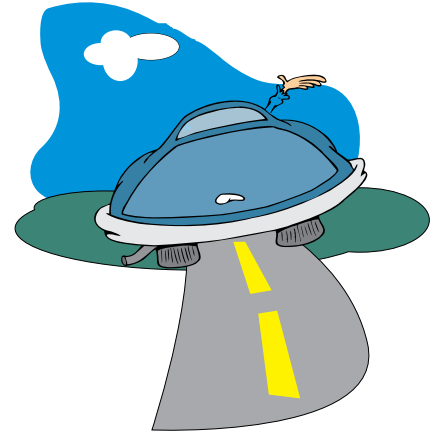
January 2012 Program

Wednesday January 11th,
7:00 pm

Regional Transportation Update

Rt 5 Corridor Study, Mayo Bridge Renovation, and 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan briefing. Lee Yoltan, a Transportation Planner with the Metropolitan Transportation Organization, will discuss the first and third topics, and Nyika Robertson-Ramos, with the City's Public Works Dept. will update us on the Mayo Bridge plans.

New Member Orientation at 6:45! New Members, please come 20 minutes early to learn about the FoJGroup's leaders and Executive Committee, our 2012 goals, and our committees. Refreshments will be served early for you!



New Member Orientation at 6:45!

February 2012 Program

Wednesday Feb 8th,
7:00 pm

Double Feature: My Journey of Discovery on the James River by Kaleigh Remaldo and Legislative Update with Glen Besa.

Kaleigh Remaldo, a student at Open High in Richmond, along with 20 other high schoolers in 2011, won a \$50,000 Dominion Power grant to take a 28 day canoe trip from Covington to the Ches Bay, her "Journey of Discovery on the James River". On their trip, they were to measure and map the relationship between land uses and water quality, keep journals, and record their experiences. This should be a unique presentation. Also, Glen Besa, our Virginia State Chapter Director, will provide

our annual briefing on the General Assembly. Learn about the good, bad, and ugly legislation in the 2012 General Assembly.



March 2012 Program

Wednesday March 14th,
7:00 pm

Urban Forestry and City Arbor Day Celebration - Trees, Forests, and More.

A full night: A report on the state of the City's urban forest from the recently established Urban Forestry Commission, and learn about the City's Tree GIS system from one of the City Arborists. Also, Learn about the Richmond Tree Stewards program, and hear about the City's Arbor Day celebration.



April 2012 Program

Wednesday April 11th,
7:00 pm

Joint Meeting: FoJG Sierra Club and the Camera Club of Richmond !

Ken Conger visits with his phenomenal photos and stories of wildlife. Ken is a retired career conservation police officer who worked as a park ranger for 3 years and a game warden for 26. His motivation and enthusiasm for wildlife protection carries over to his pursuit of wildlife photography. He has a huge collection of images that range from birds to large mammals, and

none of the animals are caged or staged. *These are strictly of wild animals. You won't want to miss this!*



May 2012 Program

Wednesday May 9th,
7:00 pm

New Innovations in Solar Power Remote Location

This meeting will be on the site of a solar-powered facility (to be announced). Discover the latest in solar collectors and photo-voltaic systems, and how you can reduce your costs for being "on the Grid". Also, learn about the cost-benefits of going solar and the rebates available.



View from the Chair
by Group Co-Chair Scott Burger
Once Again, Richmond's Riverfront Legacy Is At Stake

Its a blessing and curse that Richmond's downtown riverfront has once again a subject of public planning meetings. Its a blessing that citizens are once again given their chance to voice their opinion on what should happen with Richmond's riverfront. Its a curse because so much good prior planning is often forgotten when it comes to 'putting everything on the table'. And it is simply galling the way the corporations that control so much of the riverfront continue to shape the way the planning goes.

The dual nature of this has never been so evident as in recent meetings held so far at the Virginia War Memorial by the Hargreaves Associates, the firm hired by the City of Richmond for this latest round of planning. The presentations so far have focused on potential corporate real estate developments along both sides of the river. While no one denies that the City should capitalize on its previous Canal Walk development and encourage some economic activity, what has been proposed so far flies in the face of decades of planning to restore the historic Kanawha canal west of downtown and once again threatens the public legacy of this part of the river for locals and visitors alike. It is

especially troubling that so little of the current planning and discussion has not only NOT fully acknowledged the Downtown Master Plan and James River Park Conservation Easement, but I would even say even undermined the recent public sentiments expressed in them. This goes beyond the over-used mantra of property rights to what Richmond wants to be known for.

I do not want to sound like a complete naysayer, because there have been some good ideas suggested by planners and attendees also. And there are serious questions about how to make the riverfront economically as well as environmentally sustainable. It was good for planners to hear from folks on Church Hill and Libby Hill who are concerned about their historic river views and it was good for bicycling proponents to celebrate their successes. However, overall, citizens should be more concerned about the larger implications of what is being proposed. The new 2nd Street connector road as currently configured is more about car worship than river access. While the old canal is not only historically significant, it represents a cleaner transport that deserves revival.

Human interaction with the river is important, yet there are other wildlife opportunities that may be more pressing. Other cities are building wildlife corridors over their highways to go right along with their greenways and help the overall environment. In contrast, Richmond seems determined to coerce nature onto small islands used as playgrounds. In short, there needs to be more emphasis on the natural features of the riverfront or the riverfront will lose out to corporate hegemony.

Richmond's downtown riverfront development needs to be about a lot more than where the next office building goes. And while not every local Sierran lives near this area, what's next for it will set the tone for development elsewhere. The next in this series of riverfront planning meetings is scheduled for Dec. 13.



Fall 2011 Bald Eagle Boat Excursion

On Sunday, October 23, a dozen FoJG members took Captain Mike Ostrander's pontoon cruiser The Discovery Barge II on an early morning boat cruise on the James, east of Richmond around Deep Bottom Boat Landing (Mike is a renowned wildlife photographer). A great variety of wildlife was seen, including Bald Eagles, ducks, geese, songbirds, woodpeckers, great blue heron, great egrets, and many mammals, but most said the best part was cruising thru the early morning mist and fog.

Special thanks to Mike for offering this

"Bald Eagle Boat Excursion" to our Holiday fundraiser, and thanks to Tamara Smith for making it happen. You should bid on this item this December and impress your friends and/or family - Editor.



2012 Sierra Club Calendars available at Martin's Grocery Stores

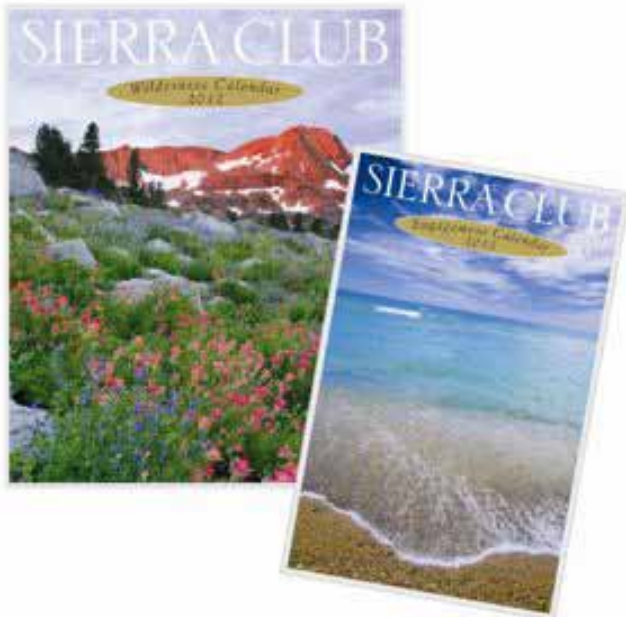
2012 Sierra Club Calendars are now available at Martin's Grocery Stores at following locations: Harbor Point (Hull St), Village (Three Chopt/Patterson), Midlothian (Courthouse Rd), Shortpump (Pump Rd), Cary Street (Carytown). Martin's will return 100% of the SRP to our club, so please visit these stores for your shopping needs and be sure to purchase your 2012 Sierra Club

Calendars. Otherwise, you will find Sierra Club Calendars at regular meetings, the December Fundraising Event, and by contacting tamsmith47@gmail.com. See order form on this page.



Enjoy, explore and protect the planet

2012 Sierra Club Calendars



Order Form

Item	Cost	Qty	Total
Engagement Calendar <input type="checkbox"/>	\$13.95	_____	_____
Wilderness Calendar <input type="checkbox"/>	\$12.95	_____	_____
Subtotal:			_____
Shipping (\$3.00 per calendar):			_____
Sales Tax:			_____
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Please make checks payable to "Sierra Club" and mail to the return address shown in your newsletter

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Blackwater Swamp Trip with Garrie Rouse

Spring and Fall canoe trips with Garrie Rouse, owner of Mattaponi Canoe & Kayak / Flatwater Discoveries are becoming traditions with the FoJGroup. In early April, 15 Sierrans carpooled down to Franklin, to paddle 9 miles of cypress swamp on the Blackwater River beginning at Joyners Bridge. It was a cool and overcast day, but a starkly beautiful trip. Pictured, standing up, is guide & biologist extraordinaire Garrie Rouse. (photo JJZ)



2012 Election of 2 Executive Committee Delegates

The 2-year term of 2 Falls of the James Group Executive Committee Members (aka Delegates) expire in December 2011: Adele MacLean and Eric Vrabel.

Brief Biographical sketches:

Adele MacLean is our current Group Co-Chair and the Conservation Committee Chair; she has been with the group for 5 years and has served as our FoJG rep to the State Ex Comm. She has a law degree, currently works for the Va Commission on the Future, and is involved in everything good!

Eric Vrabel is our current co-Secretary, Web Master, IT guru, and Membership Chair. Eric also helps with HELEN (the SC national membership and activist data base) and is on the Environmental Film Festival committee, working on the website and social media. He has a BS in Computer Science from Penn State University and is a Software Development and a member of the Vegetarian Society of Richmond and is active in the Richmond Citizens Climate Lobby.

THIS OFFICIAL ELECTION BALLOT

contains your membership label on the back.

Vote the left column for single membership or use both columns for joint membership (if two names appear on your label). Vote for up to four candidates -- two are running again and we have 2 vacancies). More than four votes will invalidate the ballot. You may ink out the name and mailing address on the reverse of the ballot, but PLEASE do not ink out or remove the mailing label with your membership number. Only members may vote.

Mail the ballot to: Elections Committee;
P. O. Box 25201,
Richmond VA 23260

This must be postmarked NO LATER THAN 20 December 2011.

The Ex-Com Elections Committee will count the votes and confirm the election results.

The elected Ex-Comm Delegates will be introduced at our January 2012 General Meeting. Thank you for your participation !

Group Delegate Elections

_____ Adele MacLean
_____ Eric Vrabel

Two Ex Comm Vacancies: If you've been waiting for the right time to get involved with the Falls of the James Group, we need YOUR help NOW. We are 2 members short -- talk to any Ex Comm member, find out what the time and energy commitments are, and join us if you can !!

NEW FoJG Outings in December and February

Shavon and Andrew Peacock are the new Falls of the James Group Sierra Club outings organizers. They plan to lead a hike on the Buttermilk Trail in Richmond on December 10th and Petersburg National Battlefield on February 11th.

The Buttermilk Trail is an easy urban hike paralleling the south bank of the James River, starting near the JRPS Reedy Creek Visitors' Center at 4301 Riverside Drive. It is roughly 2.5 miles long, with a few small hills (though length could depend on the level of interest). Pls meet at the Visitor's Center parking lot 9:00 a.m. (Note: very rarely, cars in this lot are broken into -- mostly during the

summer. Be smart and leave valuables at home, and don't lead juveniles into temptation!) Walk across the Railroad tracks and take a right to the Visitors center. Bring hiking shoes, water, food and/or snacks and a cell-phone (if you have one).

The Petersburg National Battlefield is comprised of several large park parcels with an extensive series of trails and paths, interpretation areas and more. The largest Park is the Crater, with a museum and a siege of Petersburg interpretation film, plus several creeks and numerous breastworks, replica camps and forts, and the world-famous Crater. If everyone has already seen

the Crater, we can explore other parts or other satellite locations..

As we get closer to the date, we will post on our website a central Richmond location where we can meet, park cars and get into a few carpools, and drive down to the place we decide to hike. Also, it is part of the National Park System, so there a is a charge for admission: \$5 /car or \$3 / individual entry. Another good reason to car-pool.

For more info, email Andrew or Shavon at SHAVONANDREW@VERIZON.NET

2012 U of R Big Yard Sale Coming....

Last year, more than ninety Sierra club members and volunteers helped run the University of Richmond Big Yard Sale, diverting thousands of students' discards from the land fill and getting them into good homes. We grossed about \$11,444, and gave half of it (roughly \$5,250) to UR Green, the student environmental group.

Planning for the next BYS will begin

in January and we are looking forward to an even better BYS. Our goal is 100+ volunteers, better advertising, and better organization of the goodies displayed in the Milhauser Gym. We'd like those interested to get involved early - we need help with a publicity committee to provide a comprehensive approach to advertising and letting the neighborhoods know about the

event. Please contact Tamara Smith (h) 562-2500 (c) 647-8130 or tamsmith47@gmail.com or Gil Sigmon at (804)919-2868.

And it's not too early to mark your calendars for the 2012 Dumpster Dive, Monday, May 7th and Tuesday the 8th, with the Big Yard Sale on Saturday, May 12th.

Sierra Club
Falls of the James Group
 P.O. Box 25201
 Richmond, VA 23250
www.virginia.sierraclub.org/foj

Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. Postage Paid
 Richmond, VA
Permit Number 3022



**General Membership Meetings - Second Wednesday Each Month,
 September - May, 7 pm.
 Free & Public Invited to Attend
 Science Museum of Virginia - 2500 West Broad Street, Richmond**

Falls of the James Group Delegates & Current Executive Committee Officers:

Co-Chairs	Scott Burger Adele MacLean	scottburger@mac.com amaclean94@gmail.com
Vice Chair	John Zeugner	jjzeugner@comcast.net
Treasurer	Mary Beth Mains	marybeth125@verizon.net
Secretary	Catherine Welsh	vaappraisalinstitute@cavtel.net

Group Delegates Elected by Membership (Ex Comm)

Scott Burger	714-5444	EXPIRES Dec 12
Adele MacLean	282-8637	EXPIRES Dec 11
Tamara Smith	562-2500	EXPIRES Dec 12
John Zeugner	288-5005	EXPIRES Dec 12
Mary Beth Mains	212-6897	EXPIRES Dec 12
Eric Vrabel	571-244-1087	EXPIRES Dec 11
Catherine Welsh	745-1512	EXPIRES Dec 12

NOTE: 2 Vacancies ! Great pay, choose your hours, vacation & party with the Stars!

The Executive Committee meets usually the 1st Wed, Sept - June, 7:00 pm at the SC VA Chapter Office 422 E Franklin St, Suite 302

Join the Sierra Club today
 and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag

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 Card Number _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

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 Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80328-2968
 or Call (415) 977-5653**

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 804-288-4455

**Put your tax free dollars to work right here in Central Virginia,
 contribute to The Sierra Club Foundation.**

 Tax year 2011 may be one of the last years in which taxpayers can deduct donations to tax free organizations such as The Sierra Club Foundation. Past donations to TSCF have supported local Environmental Film Festivals, and more recently our ability to donate copies of Silent Spring by Rachel Carson to a local High School. Please consider helping further our mission by making your donation before the holiday rush in order to secure your tax deduction for 2011. Checks must be made to "The Sierra Club Foundation" with notation "Falls of the James Group Acct GG3552". Contact Marybeth Mains, Treasurer for further instructions and mailing address. marybeth125@verizon.net