

# January 2018 Newsletter

## Falls of the James Group

### Sierra Club

Recommended: [View this in your browser.](#)



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FOJG meetings will continue to be held at the Science Museum -- but in a different room. Look for directions as you enter the main doors. Meetings are free and open to the public!

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**January 9, 2018**

7:00 Science Museum of Virginia

### *"Can We Support Renewable Energy Credits?"*

**William L. "Bill" Murray**, Vice President of State & Electric Public Policy at Dominion Energy will explain renewable energy credits as offered by Dominion Energy and other entities.

At the end of his presentation, Bill Murray will address other topics of interest to the membership. Please write down issues you would like him to discuss and send to Gill at

[gill.sigmon1@gmail.com](mailto:gill.sigmon1@gmail.com).

At the winter meetings, bluebird and chickadee birdhouses will be available. Members Andrew Peacock, Steve Yarus, and Bob Campbell crafted these from long-lasting cedar, and they are accepting a \$12.50 donation for the chickadee birdhouses and \$15 for the bluebird houses, which will cover the cost of materials.





**February 13, 2018**

7:00 Science Museum of Virginia

## ***"Dominion Energy's Regulations in Virginia"***

**Vivian Thomson** is author of *Climate of Capitulation*, a book about Dominion's influence on state government and regulations. An expert in environmental policy, Vivian Thomson was Professor in the Departments of Environmental Sciences and Politics at UVA, where she directed the Environmental Thought and Practice BA Program.

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**March 13, 2018**

7:00 Science Museum of Virginia

## ***"New Possibilities for RVA"***

**Stewart Schwartz**, a Richmonder, is founder and director of Coalition for Smarter Growth, which addresses issues of land use, transportation, urban design, housing, and the environment. An attorney, Schwartz has served with the President's Council on Sustainable Development, the Land Trust Alliance and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

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**April 10, 2018**

7:00 Science Museum of Virginia

## ***"Puerto Rico: Paradise in Peril"***

**Rex and Kathy Springston and Rosita Cruz** will bring us up to date on the situation in Puerto Rico with a slide and video program that will record the situation since hurricane Maria. Rex Springston, now retired, covered environmental issues for the *Times Dispatch* and, with his wife, visited the

island before and after the hurricane. Rosita Cruz will tell about her experience during the storm and during a recent visit to Puerto Rico.

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***May 8, 2018***

7:00 Science Museum of Virginia

***"Outdoor Travel Experiences"***  
**by you, our members**

Members will share slides and recent travel experiences. Anyone interested in participating may contact Gil Sigmon at [gil.sigmon1@gmail.com](mailto:gil.sigmon1@gmail.com)

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**RVA Environmental Film Festival**  
**Monday, Feb. 5 - Sunday, Feb. 18**

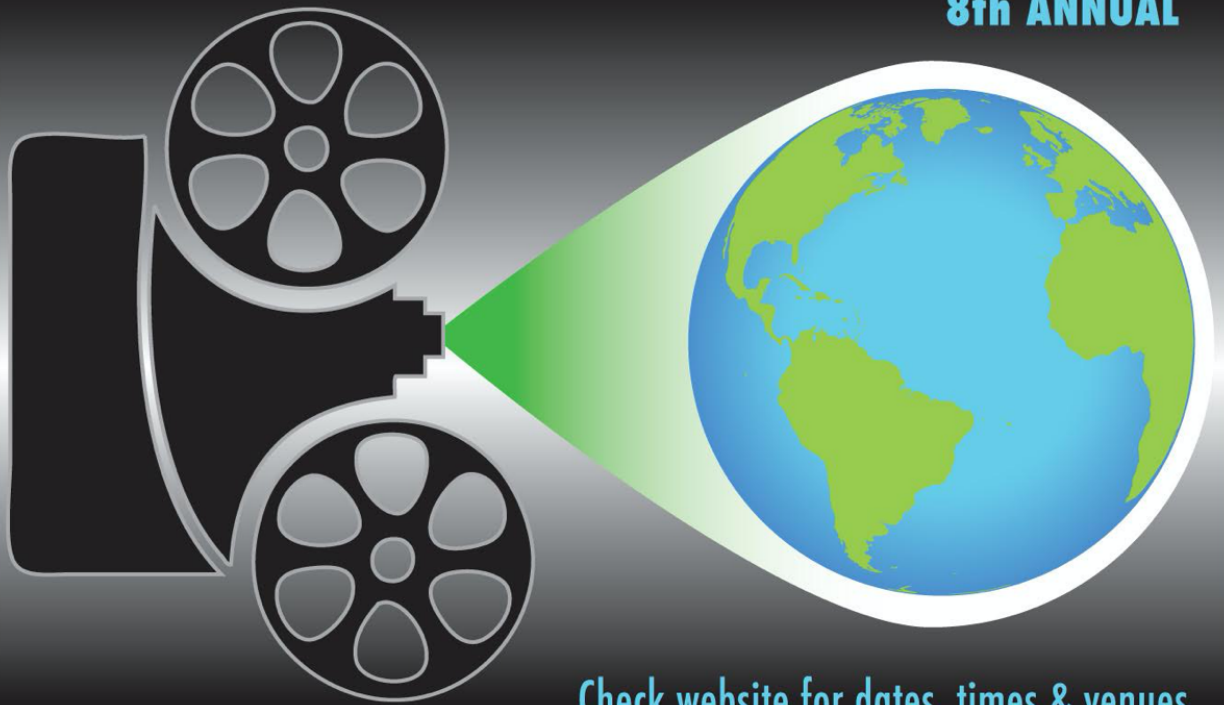
The RVA Environmental Film Festival is bigger and better than ever. Films will be shown in venues throughout the city on most days from Monday, February 5 through Sunday, February 18. Sponsored by many groups, including the Falls of the James Group of the Sierra Club, all the films are free to the public. For the schedule, including links to trailers for the films, see <https://rvaeff.org/>

# **RVA ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL**

## **February 5 through February 18, 2018**

**PRESENTERS INCLUDE:** • Enrichmond Foundation • Sierra Club • Viridiant  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network • Capital Region Land Conservancy

**8th ANNUAL**



**FREE & OPEN  
TO THE PUBLIC**

Check website for dates, times & venues

**[RVAEFF.org](http://RVAEFF.org)**

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## **New Year's Letter from FOJG Chairman Joe Brancoli**

January, 2018

Hello to all members of the Falls of the James Group (FOJG), one of twelve Sierra Club local groups in Virginia. To welcome in the New Year, I would like to address something you may occasionally wonder about: What does FOJG do with its resources? By

resources, I mean money and people.

The money resource (what we have on hand, which has recently been moved to a local bank with no ties to large corporations) comes from years of organizing the Big Yard Sale at the University of Richmond, from holiday auctions and from members' contributions. Furthermore, in the past few years, by switching to an emailed newsletter and returning our monthly meetings to the Science Museum, we have reduced expenses to near zero. That allows us to spend small amounts on projects like those listed below, and to offer grants up to \$1,000 to local groups doing good work. Four such grants were funded in the past year; now several more are under consideration. The groups who received a grant are the Tree Lab, Virginia Farmers Markets Association, United Parents Against Lead, and Virginia Interfaith Power & Light.

Our more important resource is the 2,000 members who can be engaged in many ways:

### **Service Projects**

The largest of these is the Big Yard Sale in May that could not be done without 100+ volunteers each year. This also serves as our primary fundraiser.

The Environmental Film Festival, a week-long run of free environmental films shown at various venues in Richmond, is an educational effort which FOJG sponsors with several other groups.

An exciting new opportunity is beginning on January 20th as we partner with other groups in ongoing monthly work like invasive species removal, trash removal and planting in the Bellmeade area of south Richmond.

Several rain garden projects have been done by members in the past 18 months, and we would like to continue that effort.

### **Political Action**

This is fresh on everyone's mind: many of our members helped elect pro-environment candidates to state and local office in November. This is annual work in Virginia and recent results are very encouraging. Join us in connecting with the Sierra Club's VA State Chapter for advocacy at the General Assembly or working on upcoming campaigns.

### **Meetings and Outings**

We would like more people to join these events and help plan them.

### **FOJG's Committee Organization**

I left this to last so as not to scare you, but we need more people willing to sit in rooms with friendly fellow members to plan all of the above. The *Member Engagement Committee* directs outings, programs, fundraising, and meets the final Thursday of the month. *Advocacy Committee* includes local demonstrations, campaigns, letter writing and brainstorming. It's conducted on the 4th Wednesday at K-Town restaurant downtown RVA.

The *Communications Committee* publishes the monthly newsletter, updates the website and calendar, and communicates through social media. We could use some help on this committee to expand publicity and public relations.

In 2018, we want to become more diverse, more collaborative, and more involved in local efforts like encouraging the use of green technology in school construction and renovation. Please join these efforts by contacting any of the nine Executive Committee members listed at the end of each newsletter, or by speaking to one of us at a meeting at the Science Museum. It's your group; it's our year; let's make it a wonderful one.

Joe Brancoli, 2017-2018 FOJG Chair

## Recent Activities of FOJG Members



Steve Yarus, Andrew Peacock and Bob Campbell construct birdhouses that will be for sale after upcoming meetings at the Science Museum.



Ralph White and Bob Campbell have fun during a clean-up and daffodil planting in a Richmond neighborhood.

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## APPLICATIONS for FOJG GRANTS DUE FEBRUARY 15, 2018

The Falls of the James Group of the Sierra Club periodically awards grants to groups participating in efforts to protect the environment. Grant applications are being accepted now until February 15, 2018. Four grants of \$1,000 each were awarded in the past year.

To find more information about the grants process, see the [Grant Guidelines](#) and [Grant Application Form](#) on the FOJG website.

## Green Events in RVA January, 2018

For events scheduled by VA Sierra Club and other local groups, see the Calendar at <http://www.sierraclub.org/virginia>.

**Thurs. Jan. 4 - Two webinars** about the market and policies pertaining to electric vehicles. 8:00-9:00 pm. See info [HERE](#).

**Sat. Jan. 13 - Citizens' Climate Lobby Chapter Meeting.** 12:30. Sabine Marx speaking via video conference on "The Psychology of Climate Change Communication." 12:30. Belmont Library, 3100 Belmont Ave. 23221.

**Sat. Jan.20 - FoJG Workday in Bellemeade w/ Groundwork RVA.** 9:00-noon. Bellemeade Community Center, 1800 Lynhaven Ave, Richmond 23224 This is the first FoJG workday in Bellemeade! Bob Argabright ([Groundwork RVA](#) Board Chair) is targeting the removal of invasive plants and some small trees, pollinator garden cleanup, stream restoration, and general cleanup near the Bellemeade Community Center (adjacent to Oak Grove/Bellemeade Elementary School). FOJG members will work alongside Groundwork RVA High School students, Middle School Green team students, community volunteers, Boy Scouts, volunteers from RES.Us, and Richmond Tree Stewards.  
Sign up at [www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4ba8ac29a46-bellemeade](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4ba8ac29a46-bellemeade)

**Mon. Jan. 22 - Conservation Lobby Day.** Meet with VA legislators about conservation issues. Info at <http://www.vcnva.org/lobby-day/>

## Spring 2018 Paddling for the the Active Sierran

by Shavon Peacock

Membership Engagement Committee Member

A FOJG Sierra Club Dragon Run Kayak Trip is tentatively being planned for April 28th in coordination with Friends of Dragon Run. Dragon Run is a breathtakingly beautiful, very narrow, winding waterway in the middle Peninsula lined with cypress trees, beaver dams and deep swamps that is assessable for only about a month a year. If interested, sign up early as these trips, run by Friends of Dragon Run, fill up quickly.

Contact Shavon Peacock at [shavonandrew@verizon.net](mailto:shavonandrew@verizon.net) or at 804-320-2318 to sign up and receive further updates on this trip. See the Friends of Dragon Run website for more information about this jewel of Virginia. <https://www.dragonrun.org/>

Other great outdoor outings including hiking, biking and paddling are organized by Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation and are listed in their Winter/Spring 2018 Program Guide at <http://www.chesterfield.gov/ProgramGuide/>

**Get involved!** Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the Sierra Club's Falls of the James Group.

### 2018 FOJG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Joe Brancoli**, Chairperson  
[omethid@hotmail.com](mailto:omethid@hotmail.com)

**Andrew Peacock**, Treasurer  
[shavonandrew@verizon.net](mailto:shavonandrew@verizon.net)

**Mary Crutchfield**, Secretary  
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**Glen Besa\***  
[glenbesasierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:glenbesasierraclub@gmail.com)

**Scott Burger**  
[scottburger@me.com](mailto:scottburger@me.com)

**Steve Carter-Lovejoy\***  
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**Shavon Peacock**  
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**Bruce Tarr\***  
[bruce.tarr@comcast.net](mailto:bruce.tarr@comcast.net)

**Steve Yarus\***  
[hsyarus@gmail.com](mailto:hsyarus@gmail.com)

\*Newly elected to the 2018 Executive Committee.

**Daryl Downing** (VA ExCom liaison)  
[dtdowning@comcast.net](mailto:dtdowning@comcast.net)

### FOJG Committee Structure

- **Communications Committee** comprises Enews, Website, Publicity and Social Media.
- **Conservation & Advocacy Committee** comprises Conservation, Legislative/Political, Pollinators, Bike/Ped. Meets 4th Wed. each month.
- **Membership Engagement Committee** comprises Membership, Programs, Outings, and Fundraising. Meets last Thursday of each month.

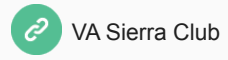
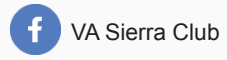
**New members welcome.**

**Interested? Contact Gil**

**Sigmon**, [gill.sigmon1@gmail.com](mailto:gill.sigmon1@gmail.com)

Thanks to Adele MacLean, Tamara Smith, Ralph White and Steve Heinitz for their years of service on Executive Committee and in many other roles. We will miss their experience, their insights and their good fellowship.





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