

Spring 2018 Newsletter

Falls of the James Group

Sierra Club

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PROGRAM MEETINGS BELOW ARE FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.



Tuesday, April 10, 2018

7:00 Science Museum of Virginia

"Puerto Rico: Paradise in Peril"

Rex and Kathy Springston, who vacationed on the island in June, have teamed up with Puerto Rico native **Rosita Cruz**, who was there during Hurricane Maria, and Rosita's husband **Bob Fisher**. Rosita and Bob went to the island this winter to help victims. The foursome will take us on a slide and video tour of this US territory before, during and since the devastating hurricane Maria. All Richmonders, Rex is a retired Times-Dispatch environment reporter; Kathy was a journalist; Rosita was an industrial economist in Puerto Rico and Spanish instructor at VCU, and Bob was a VCU biology professor.

Tuesday, May 8, 2018

7:00 Science Museum of Virginia



"Outdoor Travel Experiences"

During the first part of the program, Shavon and Andrew Peacock will share experiences from their caving expeditions. Andrew's PowerPoint presentation will show some of the undeveloped caves that he and Shavon visited while living in Indiana. Shavon will be wearing her caving clothes and carrying essential gear for caving.

In the second part of the program, Ralph White will give us an account of his experiences on "Alaska's Geriatric Glaciers".

Social Time After the Meetings

Volunteers are needed to bring goodies to the April 10 or May 8 meetings for the social time at the end. We have nuts, cups, plates and napkins but a couple of sweet items (cookies, cake, etc.) would be great. Please contact Nancy Patterson at nmgardengirl@yahoo.com or call or text at 804-338-7643.

2018 BIG YARD SALE

SIGN UP BELOW TO VOLUNTEER

You are invited to have a blast helping with this year's Big Yard Sale on the University of Richmond campus.

Sale days this year will be the evening of Friday, May 18th (sale open to UR staff only) and the morning of Saturday, May 19th. Things will be a bit different this year; the Milhiser Gym is no longer available, so we will be using the concourse areas under the Robins Field football stadium. This change of venue will require some new ways of collecting and sorting - we hope that you will help us rise to this challenge.

We are looking for volunteers to help collect and sort items in the run up to the sale from May 1st to 18th. In particular, we will need lots of help collecting, unloading and

sorting on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (5/14, 5/15, 5/16) prior to the sale. We will also need help on the sale days.

Please use these links to volunteer for this annual fun event:

- [Two weeks prior to the sale week \(May 1 to May 13\)](#)
- [Monday to Wednesday and Sale Days \(May 14 through May 19\)](#)

Below, photos from the 2017 Big Yard Sale show how important volunteers are in carrying out this huge effort!



The Big Yard Sale starts here! UR students are moving out and cannot fit everything into their vehicles. Their discards, instead of going to the landfill, are collected by volunteers and sold to support FOJG and UR sustainability initiatives.



Donations get loaded into a truck and then unloaded at the sale site. In 2018, the sale will be at the concourse under the Robins Field Football Stadium. It takes a team to pull off this effort!



The donations are sorted by an army of volunteers and arranged on tables: clothing, linens, kitchenware, books, microwaves, lamps, . . .no space for furniture or rugs this year, however.



The sale is over! Volunteers hug goodbye, filled with a sense of camaraderie and accomplishment!

photographs 2017 by Deborah Hawkins

FOJG Celebrates Passage of Put Schools First

by Steven Carter-Lovejoy

Over 60 years after the unkept promise of the landmark Brown vs Board of Education Supreme Court ruling, the Richmond school system is finally due for a major comprehensive overhaul of its decrepit infrastructure. With Governor Northam's recent signature on the "Put Schools First" initiative, delivered to him with unanimous support by the legislature, we now have legislative approval for the Richmond City Charter change that was overwhelmingly approved by Richmond voters in last November's referendum. It is now up to Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney to deliver a plan.

The Falls of the James Group partnered with the Richmond Crusade for Voters to put the Put Schools First referendum on the ballot and ensure its overwhelming passage. The initiative requires the Mayor to formally present to the City Council, by January 1, 2019, a fully funded plan to modernize the City's K-12 educational infrastructure consistent with national standards. Development and implementation of this plan will be challenging, but the Put Schools First initiative has already galvanized Richmond City leaders to find funding and develop planning ideas to

make it work. The FOJG will work with the City to ensure that solar energy and energy efficiency measures will be a substantial and integrated part of that plan.

Replacement and upgrade of the Richmond City Schools' deplorable physical plant will be a major step in eliminating the vestiges of racism that hold Richmond back from becoming a truly great 21st century city. The Falls of the James Group is proud to be working on this effort.

To mark final passage of this important initiative, the Falls of the James Group ExComm voted to host a Celebration later in April with our partner the Richmond Crusade for Voters, to which will be invited the Mayor, City Council and School Board members, and other city leaders. Look for more information about this event soon as we finalize plans.

Add to your calendar:

**FOJG Spring Picnic:
Pot-Luck and Plant Exchange**

Byrd Park, Carillon Picnic Pavilion
Tuesday, May 22, 6:00 pm

All FOJG members are invited to our annual Spring Picnic including a pot luck supper, plant exchange and lots of camaraderie as we celebrate our 2017-18 program year.

Bring a dish to share, label it with its name and please state whether it is omni, vegetarian or vegan (and bring a serving spoon.) Appetizers, mains, sides, desserts are all welcome. FOJG will provide drinks. Let's continue to reduce trash from the event: bring your own plates, utensils, napkins and beverage containers.

Also, this is the time of year to bring those extra plants to trade: bring one, take one; or bring five, take five. Or just take one or more (we usually have extras). Please pot or bag each plant separately for ease of exchange. Native plants will be most welcome since they help support native pollinators. Questions? Contact Catherine Welsh 804-745-1512 or welshcm@verizon.net

It promises to be an easy evening of good food and fellowship. We encourage you to share (or wear) your favorite memory from the past year!

TAKE A SURVEY: GREEN PRACTICES CURRENTLY USED BY FOJG MEMBERS

by Gill Sigmon

Please take a few minutes to fill out the [FOJG Green Member Survey](#) prepared by the Member Engagement Committee. The committee will share the results of the survey so that members desiring to make improvements in their green practices can learn what others are doing. We will continue the survey for the next several months and share the results in an upcoming General Meeting.

Two Paddling Opportunities:

James River Association Canoe Paddle

Sat. May 26, 9:30 - 1:00

Deep Bottom Park, 9525 Deep Bottom Rd., Henrico, VA

by Daryl Downing

Paddle the tidal wetlands of a James River tributary (Four Mile Creek). We will paddle into wetlands and discuss their importance to our everyday lives. We will see many species of birds including the endangered [prothonotary warbler](#) (hopefully).

The James River Association will provide: guides, lunch, drink, lifejackets, paddles, and canoes. Wear comfortable shoes (may get wet). One of our guides will be Nat Draper, Education Manager of the JRA.

Signup: www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4ba8ac29a46-canoer1

Backstory: I purchased this paddle trip at a JRA fundraiser last year. Up to 14 people can attend. I'm asking \$35 per person. To secure a place, please pay the full \$35 (contact me if you'd really like to go but can't afford \$35). Limit of two people/family. I'll advertise widely later in April if core FoJG members don't fill slots.

Come Kayaking in June Ocean Dolphin Paddle at Virginia Beach

by Eileen Tarr

My family enjoyed a summer afternoon of kayaking among the dolphins at Virginia

Beach. It was an amazing experience to be so close to them, and we have talked about doing it again. Well, we are ready and would like our fellow Sierra Club members to join us this time.

The dolphin paddle is open to kayakers of all levels. The outfitters provide the kayaks and basic instruction before getting into the water to meet our “hosts”. The trips last approximately 2 hours. The maximum cost is \$62.00 per person, but will decrease as the size of our group increases. Please visit the websites of these two established outfitters for more information, photos, and videos:

<https://www.kayaknaturetours.net/our-trips/dolphin-adventure-tours/>

<https://www.chesapean.com/services/tours/>

I am proposing the afternoons of Sunday June 24th or Tuesday June 26th. We will encourage carpooling.

If you are interested in this trip, please contact me by April 14th and let me know if 6/24 or 6/26 would work better for you. If you are interested, but aren't available on these days, please suggest others. This trip would be open to others, but is an opportunity for FOJG Sierra Clubbers to kayak together with a professional guide company as our leader. Contact Eileen Tarr - EJT90@comcast.net



Daffodils, planted in December along 25th Street in Church Hill by Ralph White, Shavon Peacock, Joe Brancoli and Bob Campbell, are now blooming. Community beautification done by FOJG.

Calendar in Brief: April 2018 Green Activities in RVA

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

Tu., Ap.10, 7:00. FOJG Meeting. "*Puerto Rico, Paradise in Peril.*" Science Museum of VA. (see above)

Th. Ap.19, 5:30 - 7:30 [Richmond Green Drinks](#) – Two speakers this month on "The Zero Emission Transportation Equation" Väsen Brewing Company, 3331 Moore St, Richmond 23230

Fri., Apr. 20, 3:00 **Talk and book signing by Erik Curren**, author of *The Solar Patriot: A Citizen's Guide to Helping America Win Clean Energy Independence*. Followed by a panel discussion. VCU Commons Theater, 907 Floyd Ave, Richmond 23220. Book info at <http://solarpatriotbook.com>

Sat. Apr. 21, 12:00-7:00 [RVA Earth Day Festival](#) – tabling volunteers needed. South of 14th St Bridge at Plant Zero, Diversity Park, Hull St Rd & 1st - 4th St in Manchester, Richmond 23224. Sign up at [Earth Day](#). More info: dtdowning@comcast.net

Sat. Apr. 21, 1:00 **GroundworkRVAEnterprise Center ribbon cutting** of the Charlie Thomas Bicycle Repair Shop and Lawn Maintenance Service at Bellemeade Community Center. 1800 Lynhaven Ave. Richmond VA.

Th., Ap. 26, 10:00 - 2:30 "**VA-REA: The Legal and Regulatory Parameters for Renewables in Virginia**". One-day event on renewable energy in VA. \$25 , 800 E Canal St, Richmond, VA 23219, USA More info [HERE](#)

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

2018
FOJG EXECUTIVE

FOJG Committee Structure

COMMITTEE

Joe Brancoli, Chairperson
omethid@hotmail.com

Andrew Peacock, Treasurer
shavonandrew@verizon.net

Shavon Peacock, Secretary
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Glen Besa

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Mary Crutchfield

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Bruce Tarr

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Steve Yarus

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Daryl Downing (FOJG liaison to
and vice-chair of VA Sierra Club)
dtdowning@comcast.net

- **Communications**

Committee comprises Enews,
Website, Publicity and Social
Media.

- **Conservation & Advocacy**

Committee comprises Conser-
vation, Legislative/
Political, Pollinators, Bike/Ped.
Meets 4th Wed. each month.

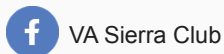
- **Membership Engagement**

Committee comprises Membe-
rship, Programs, Outings, and
Fundraising. Meets last
Thursday of each month.

New members welcome.

Interested? Contact Gill

Sigmon gill.sigmon1@gmail.com



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