

**Election 2020:**

**The Most Important Election of our Lives**  
by Glen Besa,  
Political Chair of Sierra Club's Virginia Chapter

If you're getting this Sierra Club newsletter it's safe to assume you care about the environment. You also know by now that Donald Trump has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Accords, weakened key air and water quality regulations and attacked bedrock environmental laws like the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act. It should come as no surprise then that Sierra Club has endorsed Joe Biden for president and Kamala Harris for VP. Sierra Club is running a major independent effort in support of Biden/Harris and you can volunteer at [sierraclubindependentaction.org](http://sierraclubindependentaction.org).

Before we mention any other endorsements, we want to familiarize you of the significant changes in Virginia election law. First, we now have 'no excuse' absentee voting. In other words, you no longer need to state a reason for voting absentee; anyone can vote absentee including in person early voting. If you want to vote by mail, you need to request the ballot by October 23 at [vote.elections.virginia.gov](http://vote.elections.virginia.gov). If you want to vote early in person, you do NOT need to request an absentee ballot; just go to your local city or county election registrar's office M-F during regular business hours. Many localities will also have satellite offices where you can vote early as well. Call your local registrar or check out their website for details. IMPORTANT: If you have requested an absentee ballot, you should bring it with you and turn it in when you vote in person. Again check with your local registrar for details.

Here are Sierra Club's endorsements in this 2020 election. We leave it to you to decide who you are voting for, but Sierra Club does endorse candidates to let our members know who we think will best represent our environmental concerns.

As noted above, Sierra Club has endorsed Joe Biden for president and Kamala Harris for VP. We have also endorsed Mark Warner for U.S. Senate and our two incumbent members of the House of Representatives who serve central Virginia: Donald McEachin in VA-4 and Abigail Spanberger in VA-7. You can help Sierra Club re-elect Abigail Spanberger [here](http://here).

Locally, Falls of the James Group has endorsed in the Richmond mayoral and most of City Council races.

- Mayor [Alexsis Rodgers](#)
- Dist 1: [Andreas Addison](#)
- Dist 2: [Tavaris Spinks](#)
- Dist 3: [Elaine Summerfield](#)
- Dist 4: [Kristen Larson](#)
- Dist 5: [Stephanie Lynch](#)
- Dist 6: [Allan-Charles Chipman](#)
- Dist 7: No endorsement
- Dist 8: [Amy Wentz](#)
- Dist 9: [Michael Jones](#)

See all Sierra Club Virginia endorsements at <http://www.scvnapac.org/>. Remember, vote like the climate depends on it!

**Monthly Meeting Speaker Schedule**

**FOJG's Fall 2020 Programs will be VIRTUAL**

You will find the same thought-provoking topics, same "everybody welcome" free programs, same dates and times (2nd Tues., 7:00 pm).

Watch from home; a Zoom reminder will be emailed to you. Sign up below.

Past programs can be viewed on the FOJG website: <https://www.sierraclub.org/virginia/falls-james/archive>

**Art Evans**  
Tues., Nov. 10, 7:00 pm  
Register [HERE](#)



Dr. Art Evans

**The Insect Apocalypse**  
Is the world's entomofauna in decline?

Hate those pesky insects? Entomologist Art Evans will make you think twice about the decline of insect populations around the world. Dr. Art Evans, noted scientist, author and lecturer, will present an overview of the science of entomofauna (the insect life of a region) as well as highlight some of the observed and perceived drivers of the decline in insect populations. He will offer suggestions for reversing this trend on a global and local scale. His presentation will conclude with brief updates on the Virginia Cicada Project and the James River Park System Insect Survey.

Register [HERE](#) (or above) for the November 10 virtual program and more information. A reminder with the link to the Zoom virtual program will be emailed to you before the program.

**A Triple-Feature Travel Program**  
Tues., Dec. 8, 7:00-8:00 pm  
Register [HERE](#)

**1. Touring African American Historic Waypoints in Virginia**  
Presented by Glen Besa



Glen Besa

In these times of reckoning with structural racism, we will virtually visit significant waypoints in the history of African Americans in Virginia. Some of the places I will include in my presentation you may know and others you may have never heard of. Join me on this tour!

**2. Exploring SW Virginia during a Pandemic**  
Presented by Carolyn Crighton



Carolyn Crighton

Situated in the New River Valley in far southwestern Virginia, this spectacular region is famous for hiking, cycling, paddling and canoeing – as well as "the Crooked Road", a 333-mile musical heritage trail. You'll be ready to hit the trail after this virtual tour of Southwest Virginia.

**3. Two songs by Heavy Shtetl, a local klezmer band**



Typical instruments in the klezmer band

Two members of the band, Jessica Sims, vocalist, and Bruce Gould, drummer, are active FOJG members. Klezmer music is often described as "Jewish Wedding Music" (Not religious; rather it is up-beat.) Your toes will be tapping as you watch them perform!

For further information and registration for the December 8 virtual program, click [HERE](#) (or above). A reminder with a link to the Zoom virtual program will be emailed to you before the program.

**2021 FOJG Programs**

**1/12/21** - Kristen Davis, Senior Attorney for the Southern Environmental Law Center, will present "Protecting our National Forests through Public Engagement in Environmental Review."

**2/9/21** - Dr. Jeremy Hoffman, Science Museum Scientist, will talk about "Urban Heat Islands and Their Effect on the Health of RVA," as well as new findings related to transportation, public health and socioeconomics.

**3/9/2021** - Jay Epstein, builder and community developer of zero energy homes, will focus on the past and present development of energy-efficient design, especially in Virginia.

**4/13/21** - Lee Williams and her co-chair Karen Campblin will explain and update us on the "Green New Deal Virginia," which is a recipient of a \$1,000 grant from FOJG. 2021 FOJG Programs

**FOJG Ballot for Executive Committee Positions 2021-2022**

The Executive Committee of the Falls of the James Group has five candidates for five openings (all volunteers) to serve two year terms. **Within the next month, a ballot with bios for each candidate will be sent by email from the Sierra Club's Virginia Chapter to all FOJG members.** The email ballot you will receive will also include candidates for the Virginia Chapter's Executive Committee. Please read over the entire ballot and vote for your selections online.

The FOJG candidates' photos and bios are included below. We are excited that such a top-notch group of people have agreed to run for the FOJG Executive Committee.



**Joe Brancoli**

Currently I am the Chair of the Executive Committee of Falls of the James Group of the Sierra Club. In addition, I serve as Vice-Chair of the Virginia Chapter's Executive Committee.

I still have energy and passion for making the Falls of the James Group a welcoming place for members and supporters of Sierra Club to channel their environmental ideas and work. Relationships that I have developed over the past six years in leadership will benefit that work. I ask for your vote for FOJG Ex Comm in Fall 2020. Thank you.

\*\*\*



**Shavon Peacock**

I have been an active member of the Falls of the James Group Sierra Club for 15 years and with the national Sierra Club since the 1980's. For the last three years I have served as secretary of the Executive Committee and for the last two years as Chair of the Membership Engagement Committee, where we plan monthly programs and activities.

Other activities include helping to organize the annual Big Yard Sale at the University of Richmond, working to clear invasive plants and in creating a community park in an underserved neighborhood, engaging in guerrilla gardening by planting bulbs in blighted areas, and organizing kayak and canoe trips with outfitters twice a year. Last year I became a certified Sierra Club outdoors leader.

I am committed to a clean environment and pick up trash regularly with my husband Andrew on our daily walks along the James River. I am interested in increasing the diversity and size of our group so we can be a stronger grassroots organization in our community.

\*\*\*



**Carille Greenberg Ribley**

Carille bills herself as "The Grant Writer Whisperer", using her research and writing skills and her experience in communications, web content design, and public relations to help find funding for agencies and NGO's. Carille has been an NBC-affiliate reporter and a writer/researcher/producer for PBS WGBH-Boston; she currently serves on the board of the RVA Environmental Film Festival and provides grant writing support for the US Biochar Initiative.

\*\*\*



**Aileen Rivera**

Born in NYC and raised in Puerto Rico, I've been a resident of Virginia since 1985. I studied Biology at Virginia Tech where my love for nature and social justice developed. I'm a Spanish Interpreter for an Early Intervention program and have volunteered in many community organizations through the years, like Fulton Hill Neighborhood Resource Center, Alliance for Chesapeake Bay and World Pediatric Project to name a few. Currently, I'm a member of Keep Henrico Beautiful and Route 5 Corridor Coalition.

I've been an environmentalist and activist my whole adult life and therefore passionate about conservation and preservation.

\*\*\*



**Lee Williams**

Lee New Deal VA. Lee is an experienced pipeline organizer and policy advocate for sustainability and environmental justice issues. She has been volunteering with the Virginia Chapter since 2007, and is fulfilling her first term serving on the Falls of the James ExCom as their Advocacy Chair.

\*\*\*

**COVID-19 GUIDELINES UPDATE FROM NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB**

The Sierra Club has extended its COVID-19 operational response through Sunday, February 28, 2021. This means all national, chapter, and shared offices will remain closed, with rare exceptions for urgent business continuity needs. Travel, in-person meetings, public events and outings will also remain on hold at least through the end of February.

**CALENDAR IN BRIEF**  
From around the area

**Tue., Oct 27, 1:00-2:00. "Electrifying City Fleets."** Info and registration [HERE](#).

**Wed., Oct 28, 7:00-8:00. "Color of Money and Your Utility Bill."** with Harrison Wallace. Information [HERE](#).

**Tue. & Thu., Nov 10 & 12, 9:00-3:00. "2020 Virginia Brownfields Conference."** Focus on significant projects across Virginia. Information [HERE](#).

**Tue, Nov 17, 8:00 am & Wed, Nov 18, 8:00 pm. "Solar Focus 2020."** Work on implementing goals set by Virginia Clean Economy Act, Maryland Clean Energy Jobs Act and DC Clean Energy. Info [HERE](#).

**Thu., Nov 19, 6:00-7:30. Disparities in Housing Discussion Series.** Exploring racial disparities in housing. Info [HERE](#).

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

The FOJG Newsletter is seeking a new editor. If interested, please contact [Anne Repp \[anne.repp@verizon.net\]\(mailto:anne.repp@verizon.net\)](mailto:Anne.Repp@verizon.net) for a job description and an enthusiastic review of the position.

<p><b>2020 FOJG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>Joe Brancoli:</b> FOJG Chair &amp; Vice Chair VA Chapter. Ex. Comm omethid@hotmail.com <b>Andrew Peacock:</b> Treasurer: shavonandrew@verizon.net <b>Shavon Peacock,</b> Secretary: shavonandrew@verizon.net <b>Glen Besa:</b> glenbesa@gmail.com <b>Steve Carter-Lovejoy:</b> scarterlovejoy53@gmail.com <b>Kate McClory:</b> kmmccclory12@gmail.com <b>Bruce Tarr:</b> bruce.tarr@comcast.net <b>Lee Williams:</b> im4peas@gmail.com <b>Steve Yarus:</b> hsyarus@gmail.com</p> <p><b>Daryl Downing,</b> Chair of the Sierra Club's Virginia Chapter Ex Comm dtdowning@comcast.net</p>	<p><b>FOJG Committee Structure</b></p> <p>Communications Committee comprises e-news, website, publicity and social media.</p> <p>Conservation &amp; Advocacy Committee comprises conservation, legislative/political, pollinators, bike/pedestrian issues. Meets on the fourth Wed. of each month.</p> <p>Membership Engagement Committee comprises membership, programs, outings and fundraising. Meets on the last Thursday of each month.</p> <p>"Skip the Plastics RVA" Committee fights single use plastic in the Richmond area.</p> <p><b>New members are welcome. Interested?</b> Contact Shavon Peacock shavonandrew@verizon.net</p>
---	--