



Chair's Corner

Dave Blouin

When this issue of the *Sierran* reaches you, we'll be in the middle of a unique election season in Wisconsin's history, the recalls of Governor Walker, Lt. Governor Kleefisch, and four more sitting Senators: Scott Fitzgerald, Van Wanggaard, Terry Moulton, and Pam Galloway (who has retired but is still on the recall ballot). I cannot overemphasize how important it is for Sierra Club members to become involved and to act on our convictions as individuals to make real changes in our state government. To learn more about how to become part of this history-making movement, log on to the John Muir Chapter Web site at: wisconsin.sierraclub.org/GovWalkerRecall.asp

At the local level, I can happily report that the April 4 spring election produced a strong progressive voting bloc of Dane County Board members. The Sierra Club backed 26 candidates for the Board and all but TWO were elected on April 4. This result will help ensure that more farmland and wetlands will be preserved, more lands are made available for recreation, and that sustainable land use, transit, and development policies that increase our quality of life will continue. As Dane County Executive, Kathleen Falk demonstrated that we can grow the economy without sacrificing our environment and natural resources; we will work with the

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The Sierra Club's Changing Role

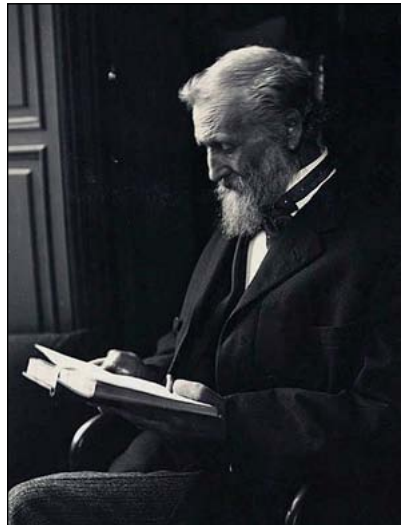
Don Ferber

This year marks 120 years since the founding of the Sierra Club. Next year is the John Muir Chapter's 50th anniversary. And it's more than 160 years since John Muir came to Wisconsin. In that time, much has changed.

While neither the laws of nature nor of physics have changed, nor do we expect them to, the pace of human development and our impact on nature has, and is likely to increase. Not only has technology continued to escalate by giant leaps, but communications and travel have effectively shrunk the world and created much more interaction and interconnection. Along with these advances are losses in how we relate to each other and nature. How is the Sierra Club changing and how must it evolve to meet these challenges? As we think back to our roots, what does that mean for the Sierra Club in looking forward the next 50 or even 120 years?

Looking Back

John Muir and others of a similar mind had a strong appreciation, love, and understanding of nature. During their time, most people were rooted and tied to a small area of geography. Travel was slow and tedious, except by train. Most people became very familiar with the place they lived in, and when they traveled, it allowed, and perhaps even required, direct contact with nature and the elements. Communication was mainly by word of mouth, with some newsprint available to connect people to further



United States Library of Congress: Prints and Photographs

American conservationist John Muir (1838-1914), 29 May 1912

off places. Generally, an intimacy and connectedness existed among people, place, plants, and animals.

People had time to become familiar with nature's cycles and to realize how little control we had over nature. Other than building heated shelters, there was little avoiding the cycles and vagaries of nature and the elements.

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SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Four Lakes Group Outings Summer 2012

For all outings: Wear weather and activity-appropriate clothing (layered is best) and good footwear. Bring fluids to drink, and a snack or food, and sun screen if needed. If there will be burning, natural fiber clothing is recommended with work gloves and sturdy boots. Please contact the leader to RSVP, if you have questions or concerns. If carpooling, please be a little early. Check our Four Lakes Group web site or Facebook page for updates or additions.

Leader Contact Info

Don Ferber, 608-222-9376 or d_ferber@sbcglobal.net

Marian Holton-Manuel, marianholton_manuel@hotmail.com or 608-273-3394

Kathy Mulbrandon, kmulb@charter.net

Waxing Moon Spring Hike – Ice Age Trail Valley View Preserve

Tuesday, May 1, 7 PM

Join us for a 3-mile interpretive hike to learn about prairie and woodland vegetation on the Ice Age Trail at the Valley View preserve. We should have a beautiful sunset, and then a nice moonrise. We'll hike several trail loops and learn from the interpretive signs. Take Mineral Point Rd. ~2.3 miles west of the Beltline, turn left on Pioneer, and then right on Valley View which turns left and becomes Mound View. Go another .5 miles to the kiosk on the right on Mound View Rd. Bring a flashlight or headlamp. Contact Kathy Mulbrandon for more info.

Restoration and Clearing at Salmo Pond

Saturday, May 12, 9 AM

This popular pond and fishing area that can be seen from Festge Park has become overgrown with invasives, and is in need of attention. Besides clearing brush, you'll learn about native vs. invasive plants, how invasives crowd out natives, and management techniques. You'll also get some great exercise and have a sense of accomplishment. This is part of the Get Dirty for Dane service day. To sign up, call REI Madison or go to www.rei.com/stores/48. Contact Don Ferber for more info.

Bike the Capital City Trail

Saturday, May 12, 10 AM

Dane County is prime bicycling country. Enjoy a 23-mile paved loop trip that winds through Madison and



the countryside. We'll begin at Eagle School and ride east towards Lake Farm Park, north into the heart of the city, and return via the Southwest Bike Path. Meet at 10 a.m. at Eagle School, 5454 Gunflint Trail. Go 1 block north of PD on Fish Hatchery Rd. to Glacier Valley Rd., take a right to Gunflint Rd., and go left two blocks to the school. A Wisconsin State Trail Pass is required. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.

Cruisin' for Cuisine at Gray's Tied House, Verona

Tuesday, May 15

Join fellow Sierrans to enjoy another great locally owned restaurant and discuss various environmental topics. A great way to meet other members, especially if you are new. Join us at Gray's Tied House (<http://www.graystied-house.com/>) at 950 Kimball Lane in Verona to enjoy their local beers and tasty food in a cozy atmosphere. RSVP at least a week in advance to Lacinda at lacinda.athen@gmail.com or 608-274-7870 for the dinner time. We'll see you there. Bon Appétit!

National Trail Days Hike at Donald County Park

Saturday, June 2, 10 AM

Donald Park is known in part for its trout streams, Deer Creek and Frye Feeder. The Donald Woodburn family donated the original 105 acres for this park, which has grown to 480 acres encompassing oak woods, intriguing rock outcroppings with scenic vistas, and springs. We'll hike 3-4 miles on well-established trails at this diverse park. Meet at 10 a.m. in the Pop's Knoll parking lot ~1.5 miles west of Mt. Vernon off Hwy 92. RSVP to Marian Holton-Manuel.

Continued on page 3

OUTINGS from page 2

Cruisin' for Cuisine and a Concert, Bunky's Cafe and Olbrich Park • Bunky's Café, 2425 Atwood Ave, Madison

Tuesday, June 26, dinner at 5:30 PM, Concert at 7 PM

Join fellow Sierrans for a leisurely two-fer evening that includes a belly full of fine Mediterranean cuisine along with an earful of enjoyable music in the park. Bunky's (<http://www.bunkyscafe.net/>) is known for their terrific Mediterranean food, especially Italian, and Olbrich Gardens (<http://www.olbrich.org/>), just a few blocks away, is a wonderful outdoor setting to settle in and let your food digest. We'll have dinner, and then walk, ride, or drive to Olbrich for the outdoor concert. We can walk the gardens and enjoy the beautiful Thai pavilion afterwards in the evening glow. Contact Don Ferber for more info.

Evening Paddle on Yahara Waterway Trails from Rutabaga

Wednesday, July 18, 5:45 PM

Learn about water wildlife and explore scenic waterways. Meet at Rutabaga at 5:45 p.m. at 220 W. Broadway in Monona. Canoes or kayaks are available to rent, and they have very stable ones for novices, but call Rutabaga to reserve one at (608) 223-9300. PFDs (life jackets) are required. Bring along plenty of liquids. Plan on about 1 1/2 hours of leisurely paddling on the Upper Mud Lake segment going into the Nine Springs E-Way. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.

Summer Picnic Soirée, Lake Farm County Park, Shelter #2

Sunday, August 5

Our annual summer soirée outings event and social will be held this year to, from, and at lovely Lake Farm County Park on the shores of Lake Waubesa. You can get exercise, enjoy Dane County's rural landscapes and lakes, learn about native and invasive species, and enjoy a scrumptious picnic lunch. Join us to meet other outdoors folk, learn what's going on, and celebrate our accomplishments. Contact Don Ferber if you'd like to help with the event or have questions.

9 AM – Restoration Project

Start the morning off right by knocking off some invasive plants so prevalent throughout the park. It's a way to give back and support the park – and work up an appetite for lunch! Meet at Shelter #2 at Lake Farm Park. Contact Don Ferber for more info.

10 AM – Bike Ride on the Capital City Trail

A great opportunity to enjoy a rural bike ride and enjoy some of our fine E-way. You can leave from Madison, enjoy the picnic at the park, and ride home – all carbon free! The ride will be about 10 miles one-way, and will meet at Lake Farm Park Shelter #2. A Wisconsin State Trail Pass is required. RSVP to Marian Holton-Manuel.

10 AM – Canoe/Kayak from Rutabaga

Looking to take a smooth cruise? No better place than from Rutabaga through Upper Mud Lake and into Lake Waubesa to Lake Farm Park. Choose kayak or canoe, yours or one of Rutabaga's, but you'll enjoy the lakes, marshes and wildlife you'll see along the way. Rutabaga is at 220 W. Broadway in Monona. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.

Noon – Picnic Potluck Lunch – Shelter #2

It seems like food, the outdoors, and the Sierra Club just go together. (It's a yummy combination!) Please bring your favorite outdoor side dish, and we'll provide grill items and refreshments. We guarantee you won't go hungry, and you'll have plenty of time to socialize. RSVP to Don Ferber and for meat vs. veggie preference.

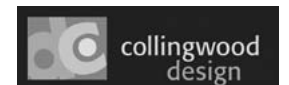
1:30 PM – Prairie/Woodland Hike

After lunch, why not enjoy the lovely prairies, woodlands, and shoreline areas of the park. Outdoor enthusiast Don Ferber won't lead you astray, and you'll have the opportunity to learn about one of Dane County's oldest restored prairies. ■

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Editorial support by Gregory Editing: gregoryediting@gmail.com

Newsletter designed
and laid out by
www.CollingwoodDesign.com



Don't Let Us Waste Away!

Ever notice that despite our recycling efforts (RAH) at east-side Madison festivals, there are a lot more black trash bags than clear recycling ones? Madison began a composting pilot program last year in two neighborhoods and is continuing this year. Isn't it time we joined the composting vanguard and got off the trash wagon?

This local effort (www.madisonrah.org/) is ripe for change. If you're into fun events, believe in sustainability, like community involvement, and can help coordinate volunteers or volunteer yourself to reduce land-fill-bound waste, you're a prime candidate for our RAH team!

Currently an RAH subgroup is analyzing east-side festival waste reduction options for the Waterfront Festival, La Fete de Marquette, Atwood Summerfest, Orton Park Festival, and the Willy Street Fair. Options include added recycling, composting, and refilling fluid containers. We need your help to plan as well as to engage the community. Assistance is also needed to develop signage and publicity.

We also need help Recycling Away from Home at this year's events including Waterfront, Orton Park, and the Willy St. Fair. One opportunity is finding volunteers and entering names into a web-based database — all from the comfort of your home. It's simple, but we offer training.

Last, but not least, we need energetic volunteer crews at these events to haul full bags and replace them with empty ones. For your trouble, you'll receive not only our everlasting gratitude (not everyone gets that!), and an invite to volunteer parties (ditto), but complimentary refreshments of your choice! Ya can't beat that!

Have ideas or want to assist? Contact Don Ferber at 608-222-9376 or d_ferber@sbcglobal.net. ■

Four Lakes Group Sierra Club Contacts

on the web: www.4lakes.org • Like us on Facebook

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*Executive Committee members

CHANGING ROLES *from page 1*

We were largely an agrarian society with many people connected to the land and growing cycles, and much of the food eaten was local. Even in urban areas, people often had gardens and lived more off the land, learning which foods could be stored and how. Electric lighting was not yet the norm when the Sierra Club was founded.

Much of life was local. People knew and often depended on their neighbors. Economies were more geographically based and self-reliant. While some larger companies existed in urban areas, corporations with shareholders were rare and highly regulated. Politics and communications were generally local, with less awareness of the world 100 miles away, let alone thousands. The world people knew was smaller, even though the entire world seemed much bigger. Nature controlled us more than we did it.

When Muir and other Sierra Club founders gathered, initially it was a means to share those connections and enjoy nature that sustained us. While the Sierra Club began as an outings organization, when places members loved were threatened, they united to stop the destruction. They learned that science, communications, and affecting public policy were necessary to save and preserve places that inspired awe and passion. As a result, they talked to people and spoke at meetings, wrote articles and letters, and led outings so people could appreciate what was at stake. The Club moved into the political arena, and worked with businesses, community leaders, and other organizations to accomplish its goals. The Sierra Club evolved to also being an activist organization that worked to affect public sentiment and policy, and influence legislation.

A Changed World

Our current world has become considerably more complex and we can alter the environment in here-to-fore unthinkable ways. In response, the Sierra Club has increasingly weighed in on new issues

such as support for unions, campaign finance reform, taxes and subsidies, and corporate personhood – non-traditional areas that may not seem very related to environmental concerns. How do these issues fit our mission?

For a start, our relationship with nature has been transformed dramatically. It seems we know more of our world, but in many ways we know it less well and have become more disconnected from place. Our homes are better insulated and heated and cooled, and we can go from work to home, encountering the elements only as a view through a windshield. We can obtain most foods we want from across the globe any time of year. We irrigate fields with water when there's no rain, funnel and change the course of rivers, extract minerals and fossil fuels from beneath Earth's surface, and strew waste products across the land, and into the water and air. We seem much more in control of our environment and circumstances and much less subject to the vagaries of nature.

In addition, there's been a major paradigm shift away from our connection to nature. In the U.S., we now seem to worry more if we have green in our wallets than if our habits are green and sustainable. Where we live and the jobs we hold have both become more temporary and transitory, resulting in added personal and economic insecurity. We often now find ourselves less connected to community and other people.

When money and profits become the measure of security and success, people and nature become a means to an end, especially when management and shareholders are disconnected from the workers and places generating those profits. The earth becomes a *commodity*, not so much to sustain us as our bank accounts. When choosing between pollution and environmental risks, or costly clean up or avoiding pollution, industries too often choose profits over people and the planet.

Increasing disparities in wealth have vastly changed balances of power and influence. Captains of industry and finance control communications and access to decision makers as well as much more of the marketplace. Especially after the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision, money's influence in politics has further gained the upper hand. The best investment (highest payback rate) many companies can make is to a political campaign. The huge accumulation of wealth by just the top 1%, allows them to purchase or influence significant chunks of media messaging. The wealthy can also retain lawyers, lobbyists, and consultants whose purpose is not to be objective or support good science, but provide information supporting their ends. The maxim that, if you tell a lie often enough, it becomes the truth, is becoming more of a harsh reality.

The Sierra Club's Role

This is the world we now inhabit. It is ironic that one of John Muir's famous quotes applies now: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." Economics, politics, the environment, and much of our culture have become highly entwined. While not all industry and the rich work to make more profits at any cost to people and the planet, too many do, and we're faced with taking on the entire "machine" that generates this activity. As Aldo Leopold stated long ago, we must deal with the economic key-log and consider the ethics of our actions. The Sierra Club and other environmental organizations cannot compete with industry's deluge of spending on anti-environmental messaging. However, the Sierra Club stands on solid moral ground when it weighs in on many new issues to help protect people and the planet.



Happy Sierrans at Garden Expo, February.

Economics

Large disparities in wealth create significant differences in accessing much in our society – food, housing, health care and other services, and safe goods. Environmental (in)justice has become a significant issue, not just in this country, but world-wide. Many environmental hazards are placed near or in lower income communities. The poor and even middle class have less means to make their voice and concerns heard. They need jobs more, and are more likely to tolerate poor wages and living conditions, since it may be a matter of survival with little choice. Because of this, corporate personhood giving corporations excessive power, industry subsidies, fair tax rates, and living wage issues is of increasing relevance to environmental concerns. The Sierra Club strongly supports regulations that account for the true costs of industrial damage and fossil fuels, rather than subsidizing our own destruction and further lining the pockets of exploiters.

Those with economic means can often buy their own piece of nature or travel to far off pristine areas, while those with lower incomes rely more on public lands to access nature, making protecting green spaces and public areas an environmental justice issue.

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This also pertains to access to some other public services. Most jobs to manage and safeguard our land, water, and air resources are lower or middle class positions, with many of those held by unionized public workers. When public service cuts occur, parks and natural areas are often viewed as mere amenities more subject to financial cuts, harming land management as well as limiting access to those of lesser means. When signs at rallies proclaim "Sierra Club Stands With Workers," it's because we depend on so many of them to help manage and protect the environment.

Politics

The devilish ties between money and politics are well documented. Once in office, higher contributions often affect access to legislators whose votes are highly correlated with powerful financial contributors' interests. In addition, some contributors have the access and means to participate in writing legislation. It's clear whose interests they support.

A current claim is that government doesn't create jobs, only businesses do. This would surprise millions of public employees and those who benefit from government spending. Especially in the regulatory arena, government is often under attack. Agencies such as the EPA are repeatedly labeled as job killers who hurt industry, despite solid studies that show public benefits. And who provides the evidence that these regulations are warranted? It's primarily scientists, who help safeguard public health, safety, and welfare. Just as with the tobacco industry, merchants of doubt not only deny the accuracy of scientific reports and hire their own 'consultants', they often aim to defund agencies and personnel who provide "inconvenient truths" that stand in the way of their profits. The denial of the dollar has become very powerful.

“[S]cience, communications, and affecting public policy were necessary to save and preserve places that inspired awe and passion.”

It's time to get the undue use of money, and the influence it brings, out of politics. That's why the Sierra Club is a proponent of campaign finance reform and overturning the *Citizens United* decision. The Sierra Club and other non-profits cannot compete and have their voices heard equally, and ensure we have the workers necessary to protect the public arena, without political finance reform.

Democracy

One person, one vote. That works in the ballot box, but not so well when one part of society controls too much of the messaging, as well as jobs that many others depend on. Survival is a powerful instinct, and when people depend far more on the next green dollar, and who it comes from, than the green of nature that Muir did, the influence of those who control the purse strings is understandable. In addition, our psychological well-being seems to depend on growth and consumption, making the earth a resource to be plundered for gain. As a finite resource, the Earth doesn't respond well to the many disruptions we cause to nature, and the results of our avarice come back to haunt us.

Nature benefits from balance and diversity and the avoidance of major disruptions, but with money, it seems to be about accumulation and imbalance. As voices of those with strong connections to nature are drowned out, our environment suffers. With the environmental and health effects many low income communities and people incur, those with fewer resources to insulate themselves from

environmental damage are like the proverbial canaries in the coal mine. Tied to issues of justice and equity, this provides good reason we need for everyone to have a real voice in our democracy. As we allow and continue to cause the less well off to suffer, these problems will cause increased harm. With climate change in particular, but also many pollution and health problems, that canary has begun to sing. The Sierra Club stands not only with the 99%, but asks that all 100% of voices be heard equally.

Moving Forward

Muir was right – everything is indeed hitched to everything else. But the core of what we're now connected to (money) is artificial, not something real (nature). We must realize, as Gaylord Nelson stated, "that the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment." Perhaps we should listen to the plants and animals as well as every person.

The Sierra Club has strength in numbers. We have stories and deeper connections to tell, and tell them we must, with every voice, human and otherwise, being heard. New social media allow people to connect and share stories and information while bypassing mainstream media. We must return to our connections with nature and "climb the mountains and get their good tidings" (Muir). We also must stop worshipping at the artificial monetary altar, and relearn the connections to the natural world that Muir, Leopold, and others taught us so well. ■

Volunteer Openings and Happenings



Cheerful C&SMT volunteers at the Four Lakes Volunteer party, held at Brocach Irish Pub in January. From left, in back: Tracy Dawicki, Sierra Pope, Lacinda Athen, Trelana Daniel, Berenice Wiecki. Front: Terri Gregory and Don Ferber.

Communications & Social Media Team

Help "get the word out" about Sierra Club events, issues and engagement options. Contact Lacinda Athen < lacinda.athen@gmail.com > to get involved!

Tabling & Outreach

Help at events throughout the year by staffing the Sierra Club information booth or table, to help spread the word about our conservation efforts. You don't have to be an expert, just have a friendly smile and a few hours to spare. Contact Don Ferber < d_ferber@sbcglobal.net > to get involved.

Outings Leaders

One of our primary missions is to encourage participation in outdoor activities and in the experience of nature's beauty. If you enjoy hiking, cycling, camping, paddling, or other outdoor activity, and are willing to help others do the same, we'd love to hear from you. Contact Kathy Mulbrandon < kmulb@charter.net > to learn more.

Madison Inner City Outings (ICO)

Madison Inner City Outings is a youth outreach program of the Sierra Club. ICO offers hiking and camping trips, boating and skiing outings, and other outdoor adventures to underprivileged youth in the Madison area. We work with Partner Groups and certified Volunteer Leaders to offer outdoor learning experiences for our kids. Visit www.madisonico.org to learn more, then contact Ron Haeger < icomadison@gmail.com > to get involved!

Recycling Away from Home (RAH)

We recycle at home, why not away? RAH works to extend recycling efforts to neighborhood festivals in Madison. We help festival organizers minimize waste, manage recycling, and move towards offering composting and hosting a "zero waste" event! If you're interested in recycling, organizing, brainstorming and outreach, consider volunteering for RAH. Visit www.madisonrah.org to learn more about this project, then contact Don Ferber < d_ferber@sbcglobal.net > to get involved! ■

new strong majority on the Board to build on that success.

Current Dane County Executive Joe Parisi is already building on Kathleen Falk's excellent record of stewardship with an exciting new initiative for bicycle path improvements and additional trails that could number in the hundreds of miles. Executive Parisi has proposed the **BikeDane 2012 Initiative** based in part on discussions coming from the BikeDane 2010 meetings. The BikeDane 2012 Initiative will focus local, state, and federal funds towards bike and pedestrian safety improvements and also on efforts to reduce conflicts and tensions between motorists and bikers. The Sierra Club is a strong supporter of efforts to reduce car usage and increase transit alternatives including biking and we're excited to see the launch of the BikeDane 2012 plans.

I'm pleased to report that the **February mining education** and benefit concert was a successful and enjoyable blend of storytelling and education from Patty Loew, speaking as a Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chipewewa member, and great music from folksinger Tom Neilson. One very positive result of the benefit is that the Four Lakes Group has made a \$1,000 contribution to the Penokee Hills Education Project of the Mining Impact Coalition of Wisconsin to further their education, research, and outreach efforts about the potential for iron ore mining in the Bad River watershed of Lake Superior. More information on the Penokee Hills Education Project can be found at miningimpactcoalition.org

The Four Lakes Group also continues to help fund the **Inner City Outings programs headed by Ron Haeger**

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Four Lakes Group Sierra Club
222 S. Hamilton St.
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<http://4lakes.org>

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Newsletter and Enews

Our goal is environmentally responsible, cost effective communication with all of our members. Our primary modes of communication are this newsletter, the Four Lakes Enews and the 4lakes.org web site. We mail newsletters to members for whom we do not have email addresses or those who request a hard copy. Others receive an email notice and can download the latest issue from our web site. You can help save trees and reduce use of print materials and inks that use energy and can have harmful environmental effects. It also saves funds we can use toward our essential missions. Please consider sending us your email address to receive your newsletter electronically. An added advantage is that you can get our Enews newsletter that is sent out 2-3 times a month and will keep you connected and more up to date on what's happening. Please contact Don Ferber at:

- By email to d_ferber@sbcglobal.net
- By phone at (608) 222-9376
- By mail at 4700 Allis Ave., Madison, WI 53716

CHAIR *from page 7*

and his certified volunteers who help city youth experience the outdoors via hiking, camping, canoeing, and more. We were able to contribute \$2,300 towards their activities for this year. To learn more about the work of the ICO and other programs and campaigns of the Four Lakes Group, go to 4lakes.org and click on "campaigns."

Looking ahead to this summer and beyond please be sure to check 4Lakes.org regularly for updates on outings and activities including our annual summer picnic and outing event. The **potluck picnic** is a great social get-together that will be on August 5 at Lake Farm Park. Watch the website or our Facebook page for updates. Be sure to "friend" us on the Facebook page (just search for Sierra Club–Four Lakes Group or link from the 4Lakes.org Web site) to ensure you're getting updates.

As always, I look forward to hearing from members with any questions or concerns or about issues that are important to you. Don't forget that we need your help with our ongoing political, conservation, and volunteer opportunities. The Sierra Club is unique in that we members are the leaders and decision-makers guiding the direction of the organization, but it takes member volunteers to take action to accomplish our goals.

See you on the trails! ■

