



November and December 2015

NEWSLETTER

Serving the Residents of
Culpeper, Orange, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Fredericksburg,
Caroline, King George



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

Holiday Open House

Sunday, Dec. 6th at 2:00pm -
4:00pm

At the American Legion Hall Post 51
at 461 Woodford Street,
Fredericksburg

Light refreshments served

Silent Auction gift baskets

Program presentation TBA

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

RGSC is one of the several organizations (or individuals) volunteering with the City of Fredericksburg Dept. of Parks & Recreation to plan the annual Earth Day on the Rappahannock every April. The planning meetings are chaired by Linda Bailey who coordinates the ever growing Earth Day event. Meetings are held once a month on a Friday at 9:00am beginning in October through April at Eileen's Cafe and Bakery on Caroline Street in Fredericksburg. Volunteers need not commit to major amounts of time, rather,

TRAVEL NOTES, environmentally speaking . . .

By Paula Chow

My husband and I did a rather ambitious trip this Fall. We flew to Frankfurt, Germany, then boarded a train to visit friends in the Lorraine region of France. We then rented a car to drive to Burgundy to visit more friends and then drove to Frejus, the sister city of Fredericksburg. Frejus held a week of activities to celebrate the 35th year of the sister city relationship. From there we took the ferry with the car to Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily and then onto the mainland up the Amalfi coast and finally to Rome.

We were pleased to consistently see, viewed from the train, solar panels on roughly 20% of the rooftops in each of the small ancient villages from Frankfurt to Strasbourg, France. Throughout France, there were many open fields with rows of solar panels.

While some of the bigger cities have implemented a full scale recycling program that includes composting, the same cities have farmers markets where single-use plastic bags abound. Reusable bags seemed to be more ubiquitous ten years ago.

Our friends arranged a tour of the Smart car assembly factory in Sarreguemines, France, which borders Germany, the origin of the car manufacturer. The Smart car, a two-seater with perhaps 16 inches of trunk space, looks like a matchbox toy car. The gas mileage runs approximately 36 miles per gallon as an average. These super-compact cars are quite popular in Italy where not only parking is limited but the roads are very narrow, many only a one car lane. Hybrid cars were a rare sight but these Smart cars were everywhere.

Wind turbines populated many of the mountain tops on the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. The weather was perfect for us, but unfortunately, not for the wind turbines on these particular days.

It seemed to us that there were noticeably more Italians who

whatever capacity a volunteer can serve will be helpful. If you are interested in helping out for even a few hours, contact Paula Chow at paulachow132@gmail.com and enter "Earth Day" on the subject line.

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sierraclub.org/virginia/rappahannock

smoke than when we visited 2 years ago. Regardless if this is true, cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world and it was generally evident everywhere. What was most disturbing was the butt litter on the grounds of the many ancient Greek ruins throughout Italy. There were no butt receptacles at the entrances to cue smokers.

The Mediterranean Sea's beauty is mesmerizing. We were able to admire it without any visible pollution, in spite of the litter hovering over the cliffs, roads and edges in Sicily and southern Italy. It appears that recycling and littering are not priorities for these southern provinces.

One of the biggest surprises was the increased graffiti in Rome. It truly looked as if every public surface was plastered with tags. Yet, somehow, these taggers have not marked the historic treasures.

Of course, this perspective comes from a traveler who was literally "on the go." However, these impressions give pause and cause to appreciate the efforts of all of our environmental activists here in America.



Rappahannock Group Sierra Club's Fall Open House -

By Linda C. Muller

Rappahannock Group Sierra Club held its annual Fall Open House on September 10, 2015. This year's theme was "Good

RGSC Email News Group send an email to sign-up

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OTHER ORGANIZATIONS/ LINKS

Virginia Conservation Network
www.vcnva.org

Virginia League of Conservation
Voters
www.valcv.org

Southern Environmental Law Center
www.southernenvironment.org

Friends of the Rappahannock
www.riverfriends.org

Tree Fredericksburg
www.treefredericksburg.org

Gardens-Great Results". In her opening welcome, Rappahannock Chair Linda Muller explained "How we treat the soil, what we put into the soil will ultimately find its way back into the eco-system; food, water and air".

Sarah Perry and Caroline Howe of Good Turn Earth Company of Fredericksburg, VA presented on their unique soil and composting products derived from local "green waste". Good Turn Earth Company collects unusable and past expiration vegetable based food wastes from local stores and turns it into rich soil conditioner and compost. Their company offers a "two-fer" benefit 1) diverts "greenwaste" from the local landfill and 2) provides a rich living soil conditioner for healthier gardens.

In keeping with the "Great Results" theme, Rappahannock Group Sierra Club members Bill and Diana Johnson presented organic gardening tips, methods, and processes. With over 40

years of organic gardening experience, Bill outlined garden design, soil preparations, and pest control without harmful chemicals. He also discussed the difference between Unites States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) definition of "organic" and the general term "organic". As an example, the USDA organic certification program prohibits the use of "biosolids" on produce.

Diana shared her tips on freezing, canning, and drying organic produce and even offered delicious samples of freshly made organic apple sauce and fig jam.

Rappahannock Group's next quarterly meeting is scheduled December 6, 2015 2:00pm - 4:00pm at the American Legion Hall Post 51 at 461 Woodford Street, Fredericksburg, VA.

Virginia Chapter Sierra Club PAC Endorsements: Vote Nov 3

By Linda C. Muller

The Virginia Chapter Sierra Club PAC announced endorsements for the 2015 Virginia House and Senate Races. Supporting these candidates and turning out the vote is key to winning elections. RGSC members CAN make a positive difference on election day.
Vote November 3, 2015!

Here is a list of VA Chapter's Vote Green VA PAC endorsed candidates in the RGSC membership area:

Virginia House of Delegates Candidates:

VA 2nd House District: **Josh King** (includes parts of Stafford County)

VA 28th House District: **Kandy Hilliard** (includes parts of Stafford County & City of Fredericksburg)

VA 55th House District: **Toni Radler** (includes parts of Spotsylvania County)

Virginia Senate Candidate:

VA 17th Senate District: **Ned Gallaway** (includes portions of City of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Culpeper, and Orange Counties)

VA 36th Senate District: **Scott Surovell** (includes a portion of Stafford County) To view all of the Vote Green VA 2015 endorsements, go to <http://www.votegreenva.com>

SUPPORT VOTE GREEN VA CANDIDATES-Get Involved- and remember to VOTE Nov 3, 2015!

To check your Virginia voter registration, voting location, and districts go to Virginia Department of Elections:

<https://www.vote.virginia.gov/search>



Sierra Club Virginia Chapter's Annual Gathering, 9/25-27, in Fort Valley, Virginia

By Diana Johnson, Treasurer

Bill and I attended the weekend Chapter gathering, along with several other Rappahannock Group members. It was both inspirational and enlightening. I recommend that anyone who can go next year, should.

It was especially gratifying to hear our new President, Aaron Mair, speak about his struggle against the incineration industry's pouring out toxic air over his neighborhood. It heartened me to know that his struggle resulted in that incinerator being shut down, and strengthened our resolve to continue to prevent Stafford County from building an incinerator at the Eskimo Hill Road landfill.

We were able to meet Sierra Club members from across Virginia, and the information exchange was invigorating, and almost overwhelming in content. The food was great and the accommodations were rustic and fun.

We heard about issues across Virginia, from removal of over 500 Appalachian mountaintops for coal mining; to pipeline incursions across farms, streams, and woodlands; to offshore drilling; to implementing the Clean Power Plan by focusing on renewable energy sources like solar and wind, instead of gas, coal, and nuclear; and to the struggle to remove climate change deniers from political office.

It makes me proud to be a part of the Sierra Club!

Conservation Chair Updates

By Bill Johnson

Virginia Chapter's ExCom September 12, 2015 meeting at Ivy Creek Nature Center in Charlottesville.

I attended the Chapter meeting. There is a lot going on all over Virginia! Our Chapter is working on:

- The Clean Power Plan: We are focusing on the Commonwealth's implementation of solar and wind technologies instead of coal, gas, or nuclear. That will help Virginia counterbalance the concerted efforts by fossil fuel interests and Dominion Power to

continue to generate electricity in a way that will exacerbates CO2 emissions.

- The Pope's visit: We supported the rally in Washington, DC in September and the Pope's message that climate change is an issue of social justice that has to be addressed immediately to protect the poor.

- Fracking: We have provided comments to the King George Board of Supervisors as they attempt to use their Comprehensive Plan and zoning laws to regulate fracking. Mark Herring, the Commonwealth's Attorney General, has issued a letter ruling stating that localities can ban fracking, but most Counties are afraid to do so because of industry threats to sue. We have also submitted comments to strengthen DMME's proposed fracking regulations.

- Offshore Drilling and Offshore Wind: We are working to get the Virginia Beach City Council to reverse its pro-drilling position taken during the last Governor's administration. Most major beach localities in North and South Carolina have come out against drilling, making Virginia Beach the only major city in the area that supports drilling. We are also working to have Dominion Power build wind turbines off Virginia Beach as a viable alternative to drilling and pipelines.

- EPA Methane Emission Rules: We are providing comments to strengthen those first-ever rules to significantly reduce methane emissions from the well site. Methane is more than 20 times worse for our environment than CO2, and eliminating escaping gases will help slow climate change.

- Solar: We participated in Solarize movements across Virginia, where homeowners and businesses could buy and install solar panels in bulk purchases.

- Dominion Power: We are actively fighting against Dominion's recalcitrance in implementing wind and solar in favor of their building pipelines and an incredibly costly and inherently very risky nuclear power plant.

- Politics: The Sierra Club Political Committee has been working since August on vetting politicians who have views on the environment that are compatible with our beliefs.

- And, water quality, nuclear, forest, environmental justice, parks and public lands, coal dust and air quality, smart growth and transportation policies, sludge/biosolids, incineration, and a host of other environmental issues.

Whew!

Christina Beckham, *Turtle and Tongue*

Winner of the Sierra Club's *Wildlife At Risk Award*

For *Tongue*, I wanted to express the consumption and destruction of our beautiful sea creatures. These animals not only thrive in environments such as coral reefs but also play a crucial role in their existence.

For *Turtle*, I created in hopes of informing more people of not only the products that are often unknowingly discarded into the oceans, but also the impact that they have. These materials have a longer "life" underwater than the animals they are negatively affecting. I hope to encourage better recycling habits and even more-so, to mitigate the use of these products.



Miranda Lovett, *Drowning*

Winner of the Sierra Club's *Rising Seas Award*

This piece is my vision of the world if sea levels continue to rise. It may seem extreme, but with global climate change progressing as quickly as it has been, I don't believe that this grim premonition is too unrealistic. Ice caps are melting, coasts are disappearing, and ecosystems are being endangered. The world is slowly drowning, and if we don't do something to save it, so will we.

