



Notes from the Chair

by Rick Keller

This winter, we'll welcome two new Executive Committee members (voting instructions elsewhere in this newsletter). Pat Soriano, who has served for an impressive 22 years, is stepping down as is Colin Nackerman. Both will still be involved in the Sierra Club--Pat on outings, Colin likely in our neighboring Great Falls Group in whose area he now lives. I would like to thank them both for their service to the Group and to the Club and look forward to seeing them at events in the future.

In 2020, only four ExCom members will be left from 2016. New perspectives and new voices are good to have; we need more of them. We are underrepresented in the City of Falls Church and in our areas of Fairfax County (Alexandria, Falls Church, Lorton, and Springfield). While we've been able to cover issues through coordination with other organizations and selective participation by the ExCom, we need more member involvement. That holds true for Arlington and the City of Alexandria as well.

Our Group has a long history of empowering members to take leadership roles on specific issues and/or to join local action groups (Ready100 teams operated outside the Group structure as part of a national Club initiative). I started as an "Arlington Issues Co-Chair" before later joining the ExCom. My role in issues didn't change, just my involvement in the more administrative actions that the ExCom performs.

My point being that there is plenty of work and we certainly don't have it all covered. We don't have a Water Issues chair, for example. We have someone focused on electric vehicles, but not mass transit.

A volunteer (as we all are) may pick and choose as wide or as narrow an area as they are comfortable with. If you're a Sierra Club member with an interest and want to work within the Sierra Club organization at the local level, we welcome your participation.

We hope to have a member session by February that will allow people to come and learn about opportunities to get involved. If you'd like to see what's possible sooner, please contact me (rkelley49@verizon.net) or our Membership Chair, Rob Swennes, at robertswennes@hotmail.com. Let us know your area of interest and where you live, and we can start the conversation to get you working on environmental issues in our community.

This content originally appeared in the December 2019 issue of the Mount Vernon Sierran, the Mount Vernon Group's quarterly newsletter. For more information about the Mount Vernon Group, please visit virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/.