By Robert Aquirre

The coming election--Tuesday, November 6--is highly critical and essential to our democracy. In part this article will be IMHO (in my humble opinion) while the latter part represents the view of the Nepessing Group of the Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club as well as the Michigan Chapter. The list of supported candidates will primarily focus on those running generally in the Nepessing Group area with the exception of statewide races and congressional districts that weave in and out of our group area. The election this year is really a referendum on the whole dramatic, terrible tectonic shift that occurred in 2016. Literally, everything the Sierra Club supports on the national, state, and local levels has been under attack and is in the process of being destroyed. From national monuments to rules by the EPA, this administration has taken us as a nation backwards to a very dangerous position.

Destroying the National Park system, renewing the use of coal, reversing emissions standards for vehicles, dumping mine waste into the river system, ignoring the climate change problem, stopping and in many ways halting the innovative movement forward to establish new options to reverse Global Warming, and finally the pending decision to allow free expulsion of methane gas into the environment--all actions that totally ignore scientific fact. We and our children and generations to come will be facing increasingly catastrophic events as a result of these decisions.

Folks, it is happening right now. We need only look at the situation in Syria, which has been described as a war between different religious factions. While this is the explanation for public consumption, the true reality is that Syria faced a five-year drought that led to a famine before the uprising. The famine, coupled with the selling off of all of their grain supplies, meant there literally was no food for the people. This caused enormous numbers of people to move from the outer regions of the country to the cities in search of work and food. It was environmental disaster and the subsequent massive population shift that led to protests and unrest that generated this tragic, on-going war--not religious differences.

In our country and across the globe we are experiencing the predicted warming that is leading to icecap melt in the Arctic and Antarctica. This melt, which is rapidly...
accelerating, means more water in our oceans, causing increased flooding in lower coastal areas. The use of plastics, polluting all regions and affecting our waterways and oceans, negatively impacts the habitats of a multitude of vulnerable species, endangering their very survival. We humans are included in this group of vulnerable species--and we are choosing to destroy the very place on which our lives depend.

The questionable condition of Pipeline Five, any failure of which will deeply impact the Mackinaw Straits and all of the coastline, wildlife, and fisheries/fish species for years to come, has been largely ignored by this current Governor and State legislators. This is in spite of all the data available that demonstrates the potential impact of a spill, such as that on the U of M website: http://graham.umich.edu/water/project/mackinac-oil-spill. While there has been some response from the current leadership, the reality is the response has been to push the issue down the road. The Coast Guard, which claims to be able to quickly respond, in fact may not have the capacity to do so. And, current discussions among legislative leadership does not address the issue of a winter spill, which could go unnoticed for weeks.

Enbridge does not have the financial resources to handle the cost of a clean-up--it would ultimately fall to us the taxpayers, so in essence we are subsidizing industry to do whatever it wants and we are then charged with fixing the problem.

From there we move to the Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) issue. These man-made chemicals are or have been used all over the world since the 1950’s. The depth of contamination is enormous. It has impacted our drinking water and all species in our world, including the human species, with very little understanding of its true impact. In our area, the Flint River has been substantially contaminated all along its length with little to no understanding of the impact on our bodies and long term health. Currently, there are now warnings for not eating fish from a number of rivers across Michigan, specifically the Flint River region. The following is a list of issues that have been identified with PFAS contamination;

- Increases cholesterol levels
- Affects the immune system
- Increases the risk of cancer

The response by the current leadership in Michigan has been to give it all a pass. Their response is that they are studying the issues. In addition, the legislature largely led by Senator Ken Horn has established an oversight board for the DEQ that is made up of industry representatives with only one spot left to the general public. So who will these people really represent?

One of the sad aspects of the current political environment is that it has been enabled by two elements: gerrymandering and a serious lack of voting by the people. The issue of gerrymandering has been tackled to a degree; two ballot issues will allow us to establish a more balanced method of defining districts in a far less partisan manner (see list below). This ballot issue is supported by the Sierra Club - Michigan Chapter.

With the help of Laurie Tata, Nepessing Group Vice Chair and Chair of the Political Committee, presented below for your consideration is the following list of candidates who are on the ballot for the November 6, 2018 election and who are supported by the Nepessing Group and the Michigan Chapter:
Michigan Congressional Races:
U.S. Senate: Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Congress 5th Dist.: Dan Kildee
U.S. Congress 8th District: Elissa Slotkin
(Clinton, Ingham, Livingston, Northern portion of Oakland and Southern portion of Shiawassee Counties)
U.S. Congress 10th District: Kimberly Bison
(Thumb Region: Lapeer, Eastern Tuscola, Huron, Sanilac, St. Clair and Northern Macomb Counties)

State of Michigan Races:
Governor: Gretchen Whitmer
Sec. of State: Jocelyn Benson
Attorney General: Dana Nessel
State Senate by District:
27th Dist: Jim Ananich (Flint/Genesee)
31st Dist: Cynthia Lucza ((Lapeer/Saginaw/Bay)
32nd Dist: Phil Phelps (Genesee/Saginaw)
14th Dist: Renee Watson (Genesee/Oakland)
State legislature;
(First 5 are Flint/Genesee)
34th Dist: Sheldon Neeley
49th Dist: John D. Cherry
48th Dist: Sheryl Kennedy
50th Dist: Tim Sneller
51st Dist: David Lossing
95th Dist: Vanessa Guerra (Saginaw)

Ballot Issues:
Proposal 1: Legalize recreational marijuana
Proposal 2: Establish an independent citizens redistricting commission
Proposal 3: Voting Rights Policies Initiative

Please visit the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter website: https://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/endorsed-candidates if you wish to see information about other parts of the state and candidates receiving support from local groups like ours. We have listed the ballot issues that will be statewide. Of course in each of our individual voting regions there may be other ballot issues that we are not aware of, so please become informed.

As to the marijuana issue the Nepessing Group and the Michigan Chapter have not taken a stance on this so it is for you - the voter - to decide. As to the other gerrymandering issues, we have taken a stance and encourage a yes vote for both.

It is very important to note that all of the above-listed candidates are from the Democratic Party. In many respects this is deeply saddening because of what it says about our political process. The Republicans absolutely refuse to step away from their primary donors, principally large corporations and elites who pour huge sums of financial support into the process, which is completely unrestricted and supported by our courts. In essence, only one Republican in another region of the state received any level of support by the Sierra Club. The Republican Party largely rejects the issues raised by the Sierra Club, failing to acknowledge the difficulties and issues we must address of the environment, the air that we breath, and the water we drink to sustain life. Therefore, more than ever, it is absolutely critical to VOTE - VOTE - VOTE.

Please join us for the Lake Nepessing Sierra Club Annual Holiday Potluck Saturday, December 8 Noon to 5 pm At Ligon Nature Center 5213 East Farrand Road Clio, MI 48420
Take Clo/Montrose exit off I-75. Proceed east on M-57 (Vienna Road) Approximately 7.3 miles to Genesee Rd., turn north (left) onto Genesee Rd., Turn east (right) onto Farrand Rd., Proceed east for .7 miles. Turn north (left) into the gate. Park on the Pavement in marked spaces only.
Scopes Monkey Trial, Flint Water Crisis and Climate Change

T M Haley

There had been a sea change for me in the Flint Water Crisis when Marc Edwards sued defendants Melissa Mays (Flint, MI), Paul Schwartz (Washington, DC) and Yanna Lambrinidou (Blacksburg, VA) for defamation also, along with the Mackinac Center sued defendant Wayne State University on qualifications and actions of employees who are working efficacy of filters in Flint. In two past articles on the water crisis I outlined the creation the MDEQ from the MDNR was used to speed up environmental permits and the water crisis is a workplace issue because employers have too much control over our personal lives. [See Elisabeth Anderson’s book Private Government: How Employers Rule Our Lives (and Why We Don’t Talk about It)]. These two causes are subsets of the superset Culture Wars. [In mathematics, a set A is a subset of a set B, or equivalently B is a superset of A.]

In historian Paul Keith Conkin’s book When All the Gods Trembled: Darwinism, Scopes, and American Intellectuals argues that Scopes trial was one of the most dramatic events that came about in the wake of the publication of Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of the Species in 1859. In Naomi Oreskes’ & Eric M Conway’s book Merchants of Doubt how a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming argues how a loose-knit of high-level scientists, with extensive political connections, ran effective campaigns to mislead the public and deny well-established scientific knowledge over four decades. In James Davison Hunter’s book Culture Wars, The STRUGGLE TO DEFINE AMERICA argues that Christian fundamentalists, Orthodox Jews and conservative Catholics have joined forces in a battle against their progressive counterparts for control of American secular culture in battles over family values, art, education, law and politics.

Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines: culture 1: CULTIVATION, TILLAGE 2: the act of developing the intellectual and moral faculties esp. by education 3: expert care and training 4: a : enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training b : acquaintance with and taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad and broad aspects of science as distinguished from vocational and technical skills 5 a : the integrated pattern of human learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations b : the customary beliefs, social forms material traits of a racial, religious or social group. Hence, culture is a big deal.

Therefore, delving into Charter Schools, the Flint Water Crisis, the MSU Finger Doctor, Enbridge Line 6b, 1973 Michigan/Velsicol Chemical PBB feed poisoning the one thing they have in common is that they happen and their aftermath was in the workplace where the boss must not be questioned. These events are not outliers, but fibers in the fabric of our Cultural Wars, which is a stalking-horse by the rich to get richer. At an Ann Arbor signing of his book The PEOPLE’S LAWYER author Frank Kelly the former Attorney General of the State of Michigan stated three times, “The only thing that can protect you from business is government.” Culture and science can coexist. People need to vote in their own self-interest and not the interests of the rich guised as culture. That way the environment can be protected.
Board Elections ✔️
Vote for not more than four.

☐ Mark Warren
☐ Fred Townsend
☐ Wendy Lawton
☐ Carol Graham Banes
☐ Write-in:

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Please Post mark your ballot no later than January 4, 2019. Votes will be counted at the EXCOM meeting on January 9, 2018. Those who have two members in one household can vote on the same ballot. Please remove this sheet, fold in half, secure loose sides with tape, apply postage and mail. (Enclose in envelope is preferred.)
Denny Crispell
PO Box 436
Montrose MI 48457-0436
Outings
by Denny Crispell

It has been 22 years now that the Nepessing Group has published a yearly outings schedule. I would never have guessed it would become such a tradition. So many friendships have been made over the years. It hurts to report another long time hiker, Mary Downey, recently passed away. Mary had many friends here, and shared many stories around the campfire.

In May, we had two service outings. The first was at the Ligon Outdoor Center. Many troops of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts camp there through the year, so again we split and stacked cords of firewood. But a new service outing was at the Lake Ann Campground, near Interlochen. Bill Klocek and Terry Reechko organized this cleanup. Eight of us showed up to tidy up the campsites and trails.

Almost every week we have a local hike, but occasionally something new is on the schedule. This year it was Lynn Livingston’s camping at Wide Waters National Forest campground and kayaking the Indian River.

Our July potluck at Seven Lakes State Park drew at least 30 members. Thank you Linda Berker.

Soon after, Bill Klocek hosted a camp and canoe at the Pine River near Wellston.

After July comes August and that means the annual Two Hearted camping hosted by Lynn Livingston. Afterwards, a few of us attended the annual Sierra Club Retreat at Camp Miniwansa south of Ludington. There we get to reconnect with members from throughout the State of Michigan. We also have the opportunity to learn the latest about Line 5, the latest CAFOs, the political endorsements and other activities like tubing, rope climbing, building bird house, identify birds and the latest news of the planets.

On the last day of August, a few of us attended the MDNR release of 125 sturgeon into the Cass River in Frankenmuth. It will take about 15 to 20 years before they mature enough to return and spawn. The children who attended were allowed to reach into the pails and cup the 5 inch sturgeon in their hands and release them into the river. I’m sure my 8 year old granddaughter will always remember this day and being there with her grandfather.

This Labor Day, a few members headed north for the Mackinaw Bridge Walk, and others travelled south to participate in the Labor Day Parade in Detroit.

DTE Windmill Tour
by Denny Crispell

On Saturday, September 29th, members of the Nepessing Group of the Sierra Club made the trip to the Huron Renewable Energy Center in Bad Axe, Michigan. There, DTE spokesman Michael Sage showed a movie of a windmill being constructed, followed by his presentations and a question and answer opportunity.

Then, for the adventurous, a bus ride to a working windmill. We were able to stand nearby and listen for ourselves the noise some people complain about. I thought it was much quieter than the three sisters I grew up with! Michael soon made a phone call and the blades slowed to stop. We were not expecting the key to appear and a door unlocked. How many of you can make claim to being inside a windmill? Well, 19 of our group can. And I’m not going to tell how high we went inside, but we did see the Inverter. This converts the DC voltage generated to AC voltage that we use in our homes. All this is done without any CO2 added to the atmosphere. I’m sure DTE and the Sierra Club will become closer allies. Michael Sage, again we, Thank You. It was a great tour!
Make everyday Earth Day, please recycle!

Visit us on the Web!
www.michigan.sierraclub.org/nepessing

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Robert J. Simpson
1100 Sussex Lane
Flint MI 48532