



the leaf

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHWEST COOK COUNTY GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB | AUTUMN 2008

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Our Local Enviro Champions

By THE NWCCG STAFF

As we get closer to Election Day and voters start to weigh their choices, we should all remember that some of the most important officials we elect won't ever set foot on Capitol Hill or on the White House lawn. Indeed, for the past several years, the true leadership on green issues has come at the state level, and that's why turning Springfield green is crucial to our legislative priorities.

Here in the Northwest suburbs, we are blessed to have three environmental champions running for office. While one of them—our longtime friend and eco-wonk, State Rep. **Elaine Nekritz**—is a strong favorite for reelection, two of our other legislative allies are locked in tighter battles for reelection.

State Rep. **Paul Froelich** of Schaumburg is one of them. Paul has been a Sierra Club endorsee for years, having voted the

environmental position 90 percent of the time last year. Many know Paul because he switched his party from Republican to Democrat last year, but that makes no difference for us: we were with him then because of his environmental leadership, and so we're with him now. (See *Lake & Prairie* for more on Paul.)

The other is State Sen. **Dan Kotowski** of Park Ridge, a freshman legislator who was elected in 2006 on the back of a grassroots campaign in which he went door-to-door for



Senator Kotowski

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Let's Have a Clean (Energy) Election

By Sierra Club Staff

Americans will choose a new President this year, and if you live in Iowa, New Hampshire, or another early primary state, that certainly isn't news to you. But something is decidedly different this time around, and that's the attention that candidates from both parties are paying to global warming and energy issues. That's not by chance, either: Sierra Club staff, volunteers, and supporters have worked tirelessly to elevate clean energy as an election issue.

In Iowa, the Club turned out 1,000 caucus-goers with Sierra Club stickers proclaiming "The Clean Energy Future Begins in Iowa," and all major Democratic candidates called for a reduction in global warming emissions of 80 percent by 2050. And in New Hampshire primary, nearly

a dozen Club staffers and 200 volunteers are pounding the pavement to call for clean energy.

November's still a way off, though. If any Presidential candidates show up in your neighborhood, here are five questions about energy and global warming that you can ask them, courtesy of Sierra Club Conservation Director Greg Haegele (now blogging regularly at Treehugger.com).

Most Americans are probably already tired of the election coverage, but we're hoping people stick it out and ask the presidential candidates tough questions. Now is the time to make your voice heard.

The Sierra Club is on the ground in Iowa, New Hampshire and many other states making sure candidates talk about global warming and smart energy policies. Our local organizers and chapter

members are attending the candidates' debates, press conferences and speeches - and the candidates are taking notice of the many people asking about these issues.

Our volunteers in New Hampshire told us that at one event, John McCain thanked them for bringing up clean energy policy. At another event, Bill Richardson noticed one of our organizers holding a clean energy sign. The organizer said that, "throughout his speech (Richardson) mentioned 'Clean Energy,' and at one point, after being asked a question about global warming said something to the effect of 'It's just like this sign here says, 'The Clean Energy Future Begins in NH '08.'"

Just in case you get a chance to ask any of the candidates a question or five,

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NWCCG ExCom Elections

Candidate Statements: The Executive Committee organizes the activities of the Northwest Cook County Group. The ExCom meets the first Thursday of each month and any member is welcome to attend the meetings. From December 2008 to September 2009, meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of the month. The meetings are held at Spring Valley Nature Center in Schaumburg.

Donna Hriljac

As a child I was taught respect for wildlife by my parents. I never questioned whether the air was clean or wondered if the water from the faucet was drinkable. As an adult, we have ozone alerts and hear ads for clean air machines on radio and television. I joined Sierra Club because I love to canoe and hike. As I became more aware of my surroundings I decided to become involved with this great group of volunteers and try to protect the basic requirements of life – air and water. I am currently the group chair and recently spoke at a hearing trying to persuade the county to disinfect the water in the Chicago River. I am also a member of the Chapter's newsletter committee. Please join me cutting brush, visiting your legislator or attending a group program!

Gary Salavitch

One may not think that a site development civil engineer turning farm fields into subdivisions is concerned about the environment, but that is not the case in my situation. As a municipal engineer, I am trying to allow this development to occur with a keen interest in protecting what little natural environment is left in Cook County. I am using my position to enhance or protect natural or wooded areas, wetlands and prairies while allowing development to occur. I am interested in providing my energy and enthusiasm to help in some way to protect and enjoy these areas so that future generations may walk in their splendor as we are able to do. It is for these reasons that I am a candidate for the Executive Committee for the Northwest Cook County Group of the Sierra Club.

Rick Szafarz

Currently, I serve on the NWCCG Executive Committee and am an assistant trip leader. I will be attending the outings leadership training this fall and hope to start leading trips on my own. My father used to take my brothers and I hiking in the forest preserves and at a young age I was taught to admire and respect nature. That experience fostered my belief that wild places require protection. As an adult, I have continued this practice by visiting many wilderness areas across the country to hike, fish, swim, paddle, and camp. I would like to serve on the Executive Committee again to encourage more members to take advantage of the outings. My goal is simple—provide people with access to wild places through the outings program with the hope that it will inspire them to protect it and encourage more participation with the club.

Jim McCarthy

If you are reading this, you have paid your annual dues to the Sierra Club. Invest just a little more time and money and make it really worthwhile: mail your ballot, bring it with you on a workday or bring it with you to a monthly meeting, but please vote for candidates to the ExCom! Candidates for the ExCom are not politicians, but volunteers. They give their time; please give them the courtesy of voting! I have been a member of the Club since 1995, and a member of the ExCom for nearly two years, serving as the secretary and the treasurer. Some other members of the Excom have more experience in Club affairs, but I offer attention to details and the desire to do as much as I can to help the Group serve its members well. I hope to have the chance to continue.

BALLOT FOR THE 2008 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ballot #1

Choose Three Candidates
From Below

- Donna Hriljac
- Gary Salavitch
- Rick Szafarz
- Jim McCarthy

Ballot #2

(For Joint Member Vote)
Choose Three Candidates

- Donna Hriljac
- Gary Salavitch
- Rick Szafarz
- Jim McCarthy

• IMPORTANT: Print your full name and address on the outside of the ballot envelope for membership verification.

• Vote for a candidate by putting an X in the box next to his or her name. Mail ballots by February 15, 2008 to:

**NWCCG ExCom Elections
1460 Joan Road
Palatine, IL 60074**

Attention: Elections Committee

An Update

At last year's Earth Day workday/celebration one of the volunteers received a message that a bird had been shot on a prairie. The update, is that the bird is fine, the two adults raised two young and the foursome are all flying.



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Our Champions in Springfield

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eighteen months.

In his short time in the the State Senate, Dan has racked up a strong environmental record. He has voted the environmentalist vote 86 percent of the time, and shepherded legislation through the General Assembly mandating that state agencies reduce their energy consumption by 10 percent. He has also worked to pass a raft of Sierra Club-backed legislation, notably co-sponsoring

two of our key priorities: the Clean Car Act, which would mandate substantial reductions in carbon emissions from cars, and the Global Warming Response Act, which would place a cap on carbon emissions and mandate significant increases in energy efficiency.

As we look across the country, the landscape for green issues has been transformed from just four years ago. But let's not forget that the biggest victories often come closest to home.

Electing Green Candidates

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here's a list to get you started.

Five Questions You Should Ask the Presidential Candidates

1. How would your administration plan to reduce global warming emissions?
2. How will your administration work with other nations to reduce global warming pollution worldwide?
3. How would you balance federal funding for public transportation and road construction?
4. How do you respond to industries who try to argue that we have to choose between jobs and clean energy?
5. What are your policies on new coal fired power plants and new nuclear

power plants?

Global warming and clean energy are important topics and the candidates are paying attention. Polls consistently show that a majority of Americans think global warming is one of the most pressing issues facing the country.

Our major goal in 2008 is electing a president and a Congress that will take major steps to combat global warming. We also want pro-environment state legislators, and those who will work at the local level to protect the environment.

It's time for a change—it's time for the U.S. to take significant action against global warming.
—*Reprinted from the Insider, the flagship newsletter of the Sierra Club.*

TO OUR MEMBERS

Support Your Favorite Candidate Through the Sierra Club!

Looking for a way to support a candidate? Volunteering within your local Sierra Club is an easy process.

"After endorsing a candidate, the next order of business for any Sierra Club group is helping to make sure that candidate gets elected," says Barbara Hill, Political Chair of the NWCCG.

The NWCCG Political Committee does this through phone banking, canvassing, and distributing materials for the endorsed candidates. Working directly with a candidate's campaign office offers a myriad of ways to volunteer support. The Sierra Club Political Committee focuses on ways to get the environmental angle to the public, organizing the campaign message with the Sierra Club's stamp of approval. Education is paramount in campaigns.

To find out more about the upcoming elections and the NWCCG volunteer opportunities, contact Barbara at 847.991.3204, or email barbara.hill@illinois.sierraclub.org. For late breaking endorsements and information on endorsed candidates, visit www.illinois.sierraclub.org/vote. For late

Group Calendar

September 24—Cool Cities Meeting

Lonnie Morris, the Chapter Cool Cities Chair, will hold an informational meeting at Spring Valley, at 7:00 p.m. Lonnie has had wonderful success and now she will be coming to “Cool City Schaumburg” to offer her help and support and to show us how to help our beloved cities keep their “cool.”

September 27—Restoration Workday

Join us for National Public Lands Day at Spring Creek Forest Preserve. For more info please email Greg Stolzer at gstolzer@hotmail.com. It will be at Healy Road/Beverly Lake, 2.5 miles west of the Higgins Rd.-Rt. 59 intersection.

October 9—Program Meeting

The November Elections. Please join us as we discuss the upcoming, critical November 2008 elections and the role environmental policy will play.

October 11

Friends of the Forest Preserve Fundraiser

Please mark your calendar for the 2nd annual Ignite the Night fundraiser. Lots of food, fun, friends, music and nature. For more info please visit www.fotfp.org.

November 13—Program Meeting

Why we can't “Nuke” Global Warming. Please join us as Dave Kraft from the Nuclear Energy Information Service presents on why nuclear energy shouldn't be a part of the Global Warming solution.

Nov. 15, Jan. 25—NWCCG Restoration Workday

Help us continue our restoration work for Spring Valley Nature Sanctuary in Schaumburg. Helping to restore native habitat is our way of saying thanks to Spring Valley for letting us use the nature center for our meetings. In November, meet in the Spring Valley parking lot at 8:45 a.m. We will work until about 11:30 a.m. or so. In January, meet in the Spring Creek “Headwaters” parking lot at 12:45 p.m. We will work from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Don't worry about the cold—we'll have a bonfire!

December 11—Program Meeting

Holiday Potluck and Photo Sharing. Please bring a dish and, if you'd like, e-mail five of your favorite vacation/outing photos to Greg Stolzer (gstolzer@hotmail.com). While we eat you can share your photos from around the country and world.

January 8—Program Meeting

Native Plants in the Home Landscape. The dead of winter is the perfect time to start planning changes to your garden or even a new garden bed. Come learn about the benefits of using native plants, the negative effects of lawn, and the beauty of natives in sunny and shaded gardens.

Program meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, September through June, at Spring Valley Nature Sanctuary at 1111 East Schaumburg Road in Schaumburg. Meetings start at 7:00 p.m. and the program, focusing on natural history or green issues, starts at 7:30 p.m. For more information contact Greg Stolzer at gstolzer@hotmail.com or 847.561.5004. See the Outings section of *Lake & Prairie*

Spring Valley Events

Sunday, October 5 from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Autumn Harvest Festival

Spring Valley's largest and most popular event features demonstrations of 19th century farm life at the Volkening Heritage Farm as well as a re-enactment of frontier life at a pioneer encampment near the log cabin. Cider pressing, woodstove cooking, blacksmithing, and horse-powered threshing will be demonstrated at the farm. Pioneer era activities include primitive fire starting, campfire cooking, and more. Live traditional string music will fill the air at both locations. In addition, children's crafts and games, hayrides, and a host of food and beverages will be available throughout the day. The admission fee for the event is \$4/person or \$16/family; children three and under are free.

Friday & Sat, October 24 & 25 from 5 to 9 p.m. A Haunting in the Valley

A new look on the long-running Halloween program, covered wagon rides will depart periodically to transport participants down a trail of fun, surprises and mystery.

In addition there will be games, refreshments, and a bonfire in the Nature Center's backyard. Pre-registration is encouraged but walk-ins will be accepted. The fee prior to October 24 is \$4/person, and the walk-in cost is \$5/person. All ages are welcome; however, children must be accompanied by a paid adult.

Friday, November 7 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Nature's Night Life

This program offers adults a perfect way to unwind at the end of the work-week while nurturing their connections to the natural world. Participants engage in seasonally-based activities and explorations along Spring Valley's trails and conclude the evening around a campfire with refreshments, readings from selected authors, and informal discussion.

There is a \$7/resident or \$10/non-resident fee.

Saturday, Nov. 22 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Owl Adventure

This is an all-ages adventure. After a walk to the woods a naturalist will attempt to call in Spring Valley's resident screech owls or the great-horned owl. Participants will then learn some fascinating owl lore while enjoying refreshments by the fireplace in the log cabin. The fee for this program is \$6/resident or \$9/non-resident.

Spring Valley is located at 1111 E. Schaumburg Road, just west of Meacham Road. The site's grounds and miles of trails are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information on facility hours and other programs, please call 847.985.2100 or visit www.parkfun.com. Pre-registration is encouraged for many Spring Valley programs, since some do fill up quickly.