



the leaf

Newsletter of the Northwest Cook County Group of the Sierra Club

Winter 2006

Northwest Cook County Group Ex Com Elections

As with any organization, the Northwest Cook County Group of the Sierra Club has an Executive Committee, the Ex Com that takes care of the day-to day responsibilities of organizing the group. Sounds dry, but it is not when coupled with our mission to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet!

The Ex Com handles all essential club tasks and ensures that the group is advancing the interests of its members. We vote on how to spend the group's money, which political candidates to endorse, and we make sure that our group's efforts coincide with the efforts of the Illinois Chapter and the national Sierra Club. The chair and treasurer must be elected to the Ex Com by the membership. Other positions may be appointed by the majority vote of the Ex Com.

The Ex Com is elected by the group's membership. Last year three members were elected to a two-year term. This year, another three members stand for elections for another two-year term. This ensures that there can be some turnover every year, but that some members will always remain from a previous year. Any group member is eligible to run and elections are held each winter.

Listed below are the three individuals who have volunteered to serve on the Ex Com. Please read over the candidate statements and vote for the three candidates—even though we only have three candidates for three positions, we still need to have

an election in order to follow Sierra Club rules. Ballots are at the bottom of Page 2 of *the leaf*. Please return ballots as instructed by January 31, 2006.

We meet on the first Thursday and each month and any member is welcome to attend. The meetings are held at Spring Valley Nature Center in Schaumburg. Contact Greg Stolzer at (847)368-0483 for further information.

Scott Etienne, Ex Com Volunteer

Having a stake in the outdoors is the foundation of protection. If we are to protect our treasured, wild places, the masses must have an appreciation for them. My goal as a Sierra Club volunteer is to guide people to the wild places in a meaningful way, so that they may develop a deeper appreciation for them, and ultimately so they may come to be stewards in their own right.

In just over four years since our inaugural trip as the Northwest Cook County Group we have taken over one thousand participants on hikes, bike rides, service trips, historical and educational tours, backpacking treks, canoe trips, and cross-country ski outings. I am very proud of this accomplishment.

I am very fortunate to be a part of the outstanding group of individuals that comprise the Northwest Cook County Group. The quality of the people has inspired me to continue to improve the outings program and volunteer my time on the Executive Committee. Thank you all.

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Sierra Summit 2005

Myra Owczarzak

Some 700 delegates converged on San Francisco's Moscone Center to participate in Sierra Club's first ever national convention, Sierra Summit 2005. Delegates representing all 64 of the Club's chapters attended the Summit last September.

Our Northwest Cook County Group was represented by Tom Borchard, who joined fifteen other delegates from Illinois, to help set the Club's direction for the next five years.

Mini-Summits were held across the country this past summer as a prelude to the national convention. Several Northwest Cook County Group members attended the meeting at Greg Stolzer's house, where we responded to numerous questions about environmental issues, and how we would rank them in order of importance. Votes were manually tabulated, and this information guided Tom as he voted electronically at the convention, using a device that looked like a garage door opener remote.

Given the myriad environmental problems that confront our nation, and indeed the world, it must have seemed like a monumental task to arrive at consensus regarding the "numero uno" issue. The delegates were up to the task, however, and arrive at consensus they did.

According to Tom Borchard, "Building a sustainable energy future

was chosen as top priority by general consensus."

Former Vice President, Al Gore should be pleased with the outcome of the direction setting process. When he addressed the attendees at the Summit, he urged them to adopt global warming as their top priority. In pursuing our mission of building a sustainable energy future, we will effectively be combating global warming, as well as air and water pollution issues.

In addition to deliberating and voting during the direction setting process, delegates also had opportunities to attend speeches by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Al Gore, Carl Pope, and various others, including activist and professor, Marshall Ganz.

Ganz, who worked with Cesar Chavez for more than fifteen years, addressed the delegates about effective organizing. He said that grassroots organizing is about building power, and that starts in the community.

The Summit appeared to be a very positive experience for the Illinois delegation.

Tom Borchard said, "Most people from our group felt they came away with better tools and contacts for future activism."

For a complete report on the national convention, go to www.sierraclub.org and run a search for Sierra Summit.

From the Chair

Happy New Year everyone!

As the New Year begins once again we find ourselves in an important election year. This year we will all be looking at elections for Cook County commissioners, Illinois governor, federal representatives, state senators and representatives, as well as all the various local elections that will occur. This is indeed a great time to be gathering our concerned voices and playing a key part in all elections.

As chair I hear many Sierrans express frustrations with anti-environmental policies enacted by our local, state, and federal representatives. We can't let our frustrations remove us from the election process, however. This is the time for concerned citizens to step forward by using their votes to help bring about change. Remember: Election change starts with one vote.

We can certainly do more though than simply exercise our right to vote. We can also engage in political activism. Political activism. That phrase intimidates many people. It shouldn't be intimidating. All it really means is the engagement of people in order to bring about change. How does the Northwest Cook County Group engage people? We do so primarily through the actions of our political committee, led ably by our Political Chair, Barbara Hill. I won't go into great detail about the political committee and its duties, but please know that all kinds of volunteers are needed. It may be as simple as folding letters for mailing or putting labels on envelopes. No matter how involved you want to be Barbara will gladly put you to work. (I'm sure she would love to hear from you at barbara.hill@illinois.sierraclub.org or (847)991-3204.

Whatever you do this coming political season I ask you to please be an informed citizen. Know the candidates and the positions they espouse, including their environmental thoughts. We need to let candidates know that the environment is a key issue. By volunteering with the Sierra Club you can play a key role in letting candidates know that the environment is an issue that concerns many.

Thank you for being Sierra Club members. I hope you all had a great 2005 and I wish you luck in 2006. *Greg Stolzer*

Winter Events at Spring Valley Nature Center

Spring Valley is an incredible 135-acre Nature Sanctuary and Nature Center, located at 1111 E. Schaumburg Rd. in Schaumburg (west of Meacham Road and east of Plum Grove Road).

Snowshoes for Rent!

Snowshoes may be rented at the Nature Center for use anytime there is at least four inches of snow. Rentals are available between 9 A.M. and 3 P.M. daily for \$3/pair for three hours, \$6/pair for the day, or \$15/pair for the weekend. Snowshoes can be taken off site with a \$50 deposit. Call (847)985-2100.

Sugar Bush Fair

The annual Sugar Bush Fair is Saturday, March 18 and Sunday, March 19, 9:00 A.M.–Noon. This popular family event focuses on the craft of maple syrup and sugar production. It features a tree tapping activity, a puppet show, Native American and pioneer sugar camps and a pancake breakfast. Admission is free, however tickets may be purchased for the breakfast. Tickets for either a half-stack or full-stack can be purchased in advance at Spring Valley for \$3.00 and \$4.00. Tickets on the day of the event are \$3.50 and \$4.50. For information call (847)985-2100.

Order Native Plants - March through April

Homeowners interested in landscaping their yards with native Illinois wildflowers, grasses and shrubs can order a variety of plants through the Nature Center from March 15 to April 30. This annual native plant sale is held in conjunction with Spring

Valley's Backyards for Nature Fair. Order forms can be obtained by visiting the Nature Center, or by calling (847)985-2100. Pre-ordered plants will be available at the Backyards for Nature Fair Sunday, May 7.

The Eagles are Coming!

Join the NWCCG for our annual eagle watching trip to northeast Iowa. This year we have a special family focus to this fantastic conservation event. We have seen HUNDREDS of eagles in past years! We stay in rustic cabins for two nights and are treated to four group meals and loads of winterland fun! Dates and cost: February 18th and 19th/\$85.00. Club and non-club members are welcome. For more information check out the outings section in the Lake & Prairie or call Tom Borchard at (847) 390-8386, or email thomas.borchard@illinois.sierraclub.org

NWCCG Social Club

Looking to socialize with fellow Sierrans? Email Greg at gregstolzer@illinois.sierraclub.org for more information.

March Primary Sierra Endorsements

Barbara Hill

The Sierra Club has endorsed two candidates for Cook County offices in the upcoming democratic primary election. Notably, both entered politics because of their concern for the environment.

Mike Quigley is running for Cook County Board President. A lifetime Sierra Club member, Quigley understands the needs of our forest preserves better than any other county officeholder. He vows a thorough reform of county government, increasing efficiency to keep taxes down. During his two terms as a county commissioner, Quigley has offered several thoughtful initiatives for reform. You

may remember him cutting brush with us on Earth Day.

Debra Shore is running for the board of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District. MWRD handles our sewage and stormwater. Shore edits Chicago Wilderness magazine and is a long-time restoration volunteer. She sees water issues as increasingly important in the coming decade and says that MWRD needs a voice for the environment.

Learn more at our January program meeting. To help these great candidates win, contact Barbara Hill at (847)991-3204, barbara.hill@illinois.sierraclub.org.

Water Sentinels Finish 1st Year Monitoring

Donna Hriljac

The Water Sentinel program for the NWCC Group has finished its first year. I am thrilled with the dedication, consistency and enthusiasm of these volunteers.

This work begins the monitoring of the health of Salt Creek and Spring Creek. These records and additional data every year will be used as measuring tools that, over time, will help the State EPA realize when and if the waters are getting polluted, will help to identify what is causing the pollution and allow agencies or municipali-

ties to stop the polluters. Hopefully our efforts will protect these creeks.

Every other week since the beginning of June we recorded the following information: weather and precipitation, air and water temperatures, water flows and levels. We also performed tests for Nitrite, Nitrate levels and turbidity. Samples collected from designated sites were brought to a Harper College laboratory for further analysis (phosphorus and chlorine levels). Tom Dowd, Associate Professor in the Chemistry Department also took samples of the sites, testing for dissolved oxygen.

I would like to thank all the monitors: Carolyn White, Kathleen Wagner, Nancy Wedow, Jamie Herold, Lara Jackson, Udo Schaefer, Rich Szafarz and Noelle Hoeffner. Thank you also to all the students who did the analysis: Stephanie Liverant and Charmi Patel. Tom Dowd deserves a big thank you for all his help: taking samples, the use of his facilities and chemistry students and charting the course for the future. Cindy Skrukud and Jen Hensley were wonderful guides—giving us their time and expertise. Without this combined effort this beginning project would not have done as well. Thank you all.

If you would like to participate in this important project for our local water, please call Donna at (847)967-7835.

Ex Comm Elections from page 1

Donna Hriljac, Ex Com Volunteer

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 adults, 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 coordinator of the group's Water Sentinel program and the group delegate to the Chapter Executive Committee. I am also a member of the Chapter's new lobby committee. Please join me cutting brush, visiting your legislator or attending a group program. info.

Barbara Hill, Ex Com Volunteer

I have been a Sierra Club member for 20 years and have been active in our group since it emerged from dormancy five years ago. I currently serve on the group's Executive Committee and I am the group's political chair. As political chair, I ensure that we endorse worthy candidates, get them elected, and get politicians to enact policies that help the environment.

I would like to serve on the Ex Com to empower more members to become active in our Club's mission of exploring, enjoying, and protecting the planet. I am particularly interested in two things: (1) strengthening the political committee to give it a more powerful local voice for the environment and (2) getting more volunteers active in restoring natural ecosystems to our area, particularly in the Spring Creek forest preserve in Barrington Hills. I would appreciate your vote!

Calendar of Events

Program meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month, September through June, at the Spring Valley Nature Sanctuary at 1111 East Schaumburg Road (west of Meacham Rd. and east of Plum Grove Rd.), in Schaumburg. Meetings start at 7:00 P.M. with refreshments and snacks, and the program starts at 7:30 P.M. Programs focus on natural history or environmental issues. Our meetings are free and open to the public. For more information about our programs contact Greg Stolzer at (847)368-0483 or greg.stolzer@illinois.sierraclub.org for more information.

Also see the Outings section of *Lake & Prairie*, (the flip side of this newsletter) and on our website at: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/NWCook>

Thursday, January 12. Cook County Board Elections. Doug Chin from the Illinois Sierra Club chapter office will discuss the upcoming March 2006 elections for our Cook County Commissioners. The Commissioners have among their primary concerns the efficient running of county government and the management of our forest preserves. Help get Sierra Club-endorsed candidates elected.

Sunday, January 15. NWCCG Restoration Workday. Help us continue our restoration work at Spring Creek Forest Preserve. Don't worry about the cold—we will have a bonfire going at this event! Meet in the Spring Creek "Beverly Lake" parking lot at 11:45 A.M. The Beverly Lake entrance is a few miles west of the Route 59 (New Sutton Road) and Route 72 (Higgins Road) intersection (just north of I-90) in Hoffman Estates. We will work until about 3:00 P.M. Tools, hot cocoa/tea, and hot dogs will be provided. Contact Greg at (847)368-0483 or at greg.stolzer@illinois.sierraclub.org for more information.

Thursday, February 9. Steve Packard from the Audubon Society will do a presentation on the Spring Creek Forest Preserve. Come learn more about this 3,900-acre forest preserve in far-northwest Cook County.

Thursday, March 9. Come to the NWCCG's Open House. Come out and learn about our group's outings program as well as the various volunteer opportunities that exist within the group. A fun time!



the leaf Winter 2006

Disclaimer: *the leaf* is the official nonprofit quarterly newsletter for the Northwest Cook County Group of the Sierra Club. Unless otherwise stated, all articles, opinions and comments are solely those of the author(s)/contributor(s) and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Sierra Club and/or the Northwest Cook County Group of the Sierra Club. *the leaf* may be redistributed, whole or in part, so long as the original content remains unchanged and full credit is acknowledged to the respective author(s)/contributor(s) and to the Northwest Cook County Group of the Sierra Club. All content, in all forms print and electronic, is copyright the Sierra Club and/or the Northwest Cook County Group of the Sierra Club.

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Northwest Cook County Group Ex Com Ballots

Instructions:

- You must be a member of the Northwest Cook County Group to vote.
- IMPORTANT: You must print your full name and address on the outside of the ballot envelope for membership verification. Mark your envelope: "Attention: Elections Committee."
- Joint memberships may use Ballots #1 and #2—be sure to print both member names on the ballot envelope (needed for membership verification).
- Do not send any items except your ballot(s) in the envelope (no membership renewals, etc.).
- Vote for a candidate by putting an X in the box next to his or her name.
- Vote for up to three (3) candidates.
- Please return ballot(s) by **January 31, 2006**

Please mail ballots by **January 31, 2006** to Greg Stozler, 1208 W. Northwest Hwy, Arlington Heights, IL 60004-5249, attention: Elections Committee.

Ballot #1

(for Single Member vote)
Please choose 3 candidates

- Barbara Hill
 Scott Etienne
 Donna Hriljac

Ballot #2

(for Joint Member Vote)
Please choose 3 candidates

- Barbara Hill
 Scott Etienne
 Donna Hriljac