

The Jersey..... SIERRAN

Vol. 32, No. 1

Roughly 23,000 Members in New Jersey

January-March 2003

2002 Election Wrapup

by Richard Isaac, Chapter Political Chair

Nationally, the environment didn't seem to be a major issue. This probably contributed to losses in a few close US Senate and Congressional races.

About the same percentage of Sierra Club members vote as the rest of the electorate. In November, that percentage was 35! If only we could find a way to motivate more of our members to vote—and more of the electorate to base their votes more on environmental issues—we would probably be more successful than we have been to date.

We certainly had successes—in New Jersey the environment seems to be a higher priority than in some other parts of the nation. Retired Sen. Frank Lautenberg, who was endorsed due to his strong environmental record in his three terms in the US Senate, won a solid victory. In House races, nine out of the ten candidates we endorsed won handily. In all candor, the candidates we endorsed won mostly because of incumbency and redistricting, not our endorsement. But it speaks well of this State that we have so many good incumbents worthy of endorsement, and not one federal legislator so poor on environmental issues that we needed to work against their reelection. The only congressional race where we supported a losing candidate was for the State's only open seat, District 5, where Assemblyman Scott Garrett won a solid victory in a district where his (Republican) party has a very strong edge in party registration. And even here we are optimistic, because during the course of the election campaign Asm. Garrett repeatedly pledged to make the preservation of the New Jersey Highlands one of his top priorities.

In local races there's even better news. New Jersey voters approved 25 out of 31 referenda to establish open space trust funds. That high rate of passage continued this State's popular support for open space—in spite of (or perhaps because of) our relentless overdevelopment and sprawl.

The Essex County Group has particular reason to be happy. It endorsed the winning candidate for County Executive (Joseph DiVincenzo) early in the year, which helped him win a tough



Democratic Primary and a somewhat easier general election. Joe has a solid environmental platform, including making the implementation of the County's Recreation & Open Space Trust Fund Master Plan a high priority, appointing an environmental watchdog for polluters, expanding the County's efforts to remediate brownfields and encouraging their redevelopment, expanding the services and maximizing the role of Essex County's Office of Environmental Affairs in addressing environmental concerns such as lead paint, appointing qualified environmental advocates to the County's Environmental Commission, ensuring that all County facilities recycle, and conducting an energy audit of the County's facilities.

Just as encouraging as "Joe D's" strong environmental platform is his appointment of 3 Sierra Club activists to his

Transition Team, including the Chairperson to the Transition Team's Open Space Committee and a member of the Transition Team's Steering Committee. All this shows what can happen when we get involved.

Which, finally, provides me with a segue into the New Year: in 2003 there will be elections for all 40 State Senate seats and all 80 State Assembly seats, producing some 240 major party candidates for 120 offices. Our Club Chapter can use the help of any member who has both a strong interest in environmental issues (hopefully all of you!), as well as an interest in electoral politics. If you are interested in helping us interview candidates and helping the best of them get elected, please contact me at 973-716-0297, or: risaacx@aol.com, and I'll refer you to the appropriate Group Political Chair as well as provide you with free training for our Chapter's political program. With major battles looming on legislation to clean up automobile emissions, stop sprawl, protect our drinking water and require health providers to provide coverage for contraception, we'll appreciate any help you're willing to provide. Hope to hear from you soon! ☺

"...in New Jersey the environment seems to be a higher priority than in some other parts of the nation."



BOOK SUMMARY: CONSUMPTION CHOICES THAT MATTER MOST

by Michael L. Minaides

Each time we check-out at the supermarket, that vexing question is posed to us—paper or plastic? As individuals who care about the environment, and who are aware of the many environmental problems we face, we want to make the right choice. But do our individual consumption choices really make a difference to these world-wide problems?

The short answer is **YES**. However, not all of our consumption choices matter equally. In fact, some consumption choices are virtually insignificant relative to other choices. For example, compared to the choices listed below, paper or plastic is not a very important decision. In an excellent book called *"The Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices,"* by the Union of Concerned Scientists, many consumption choices were studied scientifically and the choices that matter most are ranked.

Topping off the list of consumption choices that matter most to the environment are TRANSPORTATION CHOICES. While driving a personal vehi-

cle provides flexibility and can be enjoyable (if one is not stuck in traffic), it is also very damaging to the environment, and creates dependence on not-so-friendly foreign countries. Every single gallon of gasoline we burn emits 23.8 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Because CO₂ is a greenhouse gas that forms a layer in the atmosphere that traps heat, it is apparent that our collective penchant for low mileage vehicles is a detrimental choice. Further, the manufacture of each vehicle has many additional harmful impacts on air quality, and creates significant water pollution as well. The production of steel, batteries, paints, plastics, aluminum, lubricants, and other fluids to manufacture each vehicle pumps hundreds of pounds of pollutants into the biosphere. The bigger and heavier that vehicle, the more pollution that results from the manufacturing process.

Also in the transportation category are the use of powerboats, off-road vehicles, (Continued on page 9)

Political Analysis on Appreciation Day

by Dick Colby

The Chapter's annual "Appreciation Day" party, held at the Princeton Day School on Nov 17th, was graced by the presence of Congressman Steve Rothman, Bob Cottingham (Legislative Aide to Congressman Donald Paine), DEP Commissioner Brad Campbell, Assistant Commissioner Mark Matsil, and many of the Chapter's officers and financial supporters. Rothman, a four-term Congressman, was awarded a plaque for his outstanding environmental voting record, and especially for his efforts to protect the Hackensack Meadowlands that are included in his District.

Congressman Rothman offered the following analysis of the November 5 election results that put President Bush's Republican Party back in control of Congress: He noted that the media gave exclusive coverage all during the Fall election campaign to terrorist issues: the anniversary of Sept 11, 2001, the war in Afghanistan, the search for Osama bin Laden, and pursuit of the Washington beltway snipers (not to mention daily scenes of new carnage in Israel). This made it impossible for environmental or any other issues to be given public attention during the campaign season. He also noted that Republicans outspent Democrats on electioneering by 2 to 1.

President Bush and his media manipulators also took advantage of the Congressional debate over the Homeland Security Bill to decry Democratic Party opposition, hiding the fact that all the New York City Police and Fire Department officers who died in the World Trade Center, as well as many members of the current federal security services, are members of labor unions. The Democratic Party's opposition to the Homeland Security Bill arose from the Republican Bill's attempt to deny labor union protection to a vast number of old and new federal employees who will



Dennis Schvejda, on right, presents Congressman Steve Rothman with his award.

belong to the new cabinet-level bureaucracy created by the Bill. Labor unions are an established institution in our country for protecting workers' interests.

The "Appreciation Day" event also saw a transfer of power, as Tina Schvejda, our Chapter Chair for the last four years, handed her hat over to Sunil Somalwar, our new Sierra Club Chapter Chair. (Sunil quipped that he was more worried about filling her shoes than her hat.) There was also appreciation expressed to Mitchell Stern, a 13-year old supporter from Piscataway, who organized a "swim-a-thon" to collect \$300 to donate to the Chapter. ☺

FOUR APOLOGIES (or, at least, Regrets!)

There were three problems with the production of the previous (Oct-Dec 2002) issue of this newsletter:

(1) Approximately 2000 family members received their issues up to a month late, because the label office in San Francisco mysteriously failed to send labels for that category of member, and the omission wasn't discovered until complaints from members started to come in. At that time a new printing had to be ordered, which increased the delay.

(2) Approximately 500 of those members received their late issues with postage due. The newsletters were mailed at the Princeton Post Office with first class stamps, which the Princeton postal staff said were adequate. "Postage

due" was assessed at the local (receiving) post offices, which obviously had scales that were differently calibrated!

(3) Most of the Group Ballots in the Oct-Dec issue mistakenly had names of candidates from the 2001 Group Ballots. That's why some of the Groups have reissued ballots in this issue, located in the Group News section. Please use them if you are a member of one of the Groups for which ballots are included.

(4) The New Jersey Chapter staff and officers wish to apologize for a "get-out-the-vote" recorded message, from National Executive Director Carl Pope, that was telephoned to many members early in the morning in the weekend before Election Day. We don't know who in the Club decided on the timing.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Among Environmentalists	2
Report from San Francisco.....	2
Population Issues Report	2
Our Longest-serving Member	2
Editorial: American Issues	3
Chair's Message: Accomplishments	3
New Office needs Furniture	3
New Pinelands Commissioners	4
Meadowlands' Empire Tract	4
Fall in the Hamilton-Trenton Marsh	4
Eye on President Bush	6
Eye on Gov. McGreevey	6
Our Largest Bequest	7
Book Review: Swimming Lessons	7
Portfolio: Appreciation Day	8
Sierra Student Coalition	9
Transportation Issues Report	9
Group News	10-13
Hunters and Anglers	13
Winter and Spring Outings	14-16
Leader List	16
More Election Analysis	16