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FOUNDED 1892

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If no one is in the office to take your call, please leave a message on the answering machine. Please SPELL YOUR LAST NAME, and state whether the phone number you leave is for daytime or evening.

Upcoming ExCom Meetings:

All members are welcome to attend these monthly statewide policy deliberations, held on second Saturdays. Details, including agendas, are available in advance from Sunil Somalwar, the Chapter Chair.

JAN 11 (Deciding Chapter Priorities)

FEB 8 (Reorganizing Leadership)

MAR 8

Meeting locations still to be determined. We'll use our new office location in Trenton if the move has been completed.

Conservation and Political Committee meetings start at 10am. Lunch is shared at noon. The main meeting starts at 1pm. We usually continue discussions informally over dinner at a nearby restaurant, at 5pm.

NEW CHAPTER OFFICERS ELECTED:

Chapter ballots counted on Dec. 14 resulted in the following changes to our Executive Committee, effective in January: **Newly elected to two years on the ExCom:** Ken Johanson. **Re-elected:** Dick Colby, George Denzer and Tina Schvejda. **Continuing through 2003:** Steve Ember, Rich Isaac, Bob Johnson, Sunil Somalwar and Jane Tousman. The ExCom also includes delegates from each of our 11 Groups.

OUTINGS

(Continued from page 15)

ful coffee plantations (www.cafetal.com and www.xandari.com). Price of \$1650 includes all lodging, meals, guided day hikes, kayaking, snorkeling and transportation within the country. Call or email for daily itinerary. Leader: Ellen Blumenkrantz, eblumenkrantz@nrlirect.com, Phone 201-784-8417 (N)

APR 20 (Sun) Singles Hike and Clean-up at Eagle Rock Reservation. We will hike 3-4 miles at a moderate pace and clean up as we go. Bring water, snacks and wear hiking boots. Rain cancels. Meet before 10:00 A.M. at the Highlawn Pavilion Parking lot off Eagle Rock Ave. in West Orange. Take rte. 280 to Prospect Ave (exit 8B) Go north, right turn onto Eagle Rock Ave, left turn into reservation. All participants must sign a liability waiver. Work gloves will be provided. Leader: Ron Pate (973) 364-7573 option #2 (E)

APR 20 (Sun) Thompson Park/Brookdale Community College. Moderate 6.5 mile hike that follows part of the perimeter of the Swimming River Reservoir. Bring drinks and snacks. Hiking shoes preferred. Take GSP to Exit 109. Head west on Monmouth County Rt. 520 approx. 2 miles to Brookdale Community College. Make first right and proceed to parking area #2. Meet in the back right corner at 9 AM. Bad weather cancels. Confirmation/questions please call. Leader: Mike Verange, 908-902-0718 or mjverange@aol.com (JS)

APR 26 (Sat) Blauvelt Parks: Piermont-South Nyack. Strenuous 10 miles. Visit Rockland Cemetery, an old Nike base and an abandoned National Guard rifle range. 2 quarts water. Hiking boots. You can take the Rockland Coaches 9:15 9A bus from the Port Authority Terminal to meet the leader in Piermont. Meet in front of 450 Piermont Ave. (building with mural) by 10:15 AM. LP out, return via abandoned RR. Leader John P. Jurasek 845-365-3618 (no calls past 10 PM) or Jurasek@optonline.net (ACOC)

AUG 1-11 (Fri-Mon) White Water Rafting and Wildlife in Costa Rica. This 10 day trip includes rafting 2 of the most beautiful rivers in Costa Rica, visiting Tortuguero Canals during the giant sea turtle nesting season, and a small rainforest lodge for great hikes to waterfalls, horseback riding, tree climbing, and a day at the beach. First and last nights at beautiful coffee plantations. Price of \$1350 includes all lodging, meals, guided day hikes, white water rafting, and transportation within the country. Call or email for daily itinerary. Leader: Ellen Blumenkrantz, eblumenkrantz@nrlirect.com, Phone 201-784-8417 (N)

ELECTION ANALYSIS: RURAL VS. SUBURBAN VS. URBAN

from @Agriculture On-Line, and circulated on the Sierra Club's Political Chairs E-mail Forum

Cultural issues and strong support for President Bush among rural voters helped push Republican candidates to victory in last month's elections, despite concerns about the economy, according to a pre- and post-election analysis released Thursday by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The research suggests that while rural and non-rural voters largely shared the same concerns about the country, particularly the economy, their support was driven by their conservative views about religion, gun control, and abortion.

Widening a 21% margin of victory established in the 2000 election, Republicans this year won rural voters by a margin of 24%, with 60% of rural voters choosing Republican congressional candidates, Thirty-six percent of rural voters selected Democratic opponents. Democratic congressional candidates were competitive as recently as 1996, but by 1998, GOP won solidly by double digits (24%), the study found.

"If we were to write off the rural vote as simply echoing national trends, we'd miss a seismic shift in American politics," Bill McInturff, partner, Public Opinion Strategies, said. "There's a divide in US voting patterns separating America's heartland from urban and suburban areas. Data makes it clear that rural voting patterns are motivated to a great degree by cultural issues and generally conservative political views, distinguishing voters in rural areas from their counterparts in non-rural areas."

The study also found stronger support for President Bush among rural voters, 69% of whom approve of him, than among voters nationally, who gave him a 64% approval rating. Fifty-three percent of rural voters said they chose a candidate who supported Bush's policies or programs, compared to 44% of voters in the suburbs and 37% of urban voters. The President's position on Iraq is also supported more strongly in rural America than in other areas.

The study also found that rural women are more loyal to their party and more conservative in their political views than rural men, and unlike women elsewhere, their voting patterns closely mirror those of rural men. In short, the gender gap that is commonly accepted as political wisdom barely exists in rural America, distinguishing rural women from their urban and suburban counterparts.

Forty-nine percent of rural men and women voted Republican on Congressional ballots, compared with 51% of suburban men and 43% of suburban women, versus 33% of urban women and 46% of urban men who voted for GOP candidates in the latest elections.

Another of the study's more interesting findings is that 42% percent of rural voters support the National Rifle Association (NRA), compared with 28% of suburban voters and 27% of urban voters. What's more, the NRA's standing among rural voters is steadily improving. In 1998, 34% of rural voters supported NRA positions; in 2002, 42% supported the NRA.

Also 37% of rural voters said they were likely to vote for a pro-life candidate, compared to 34% of urban voters and 31% of suburban voters. In contrast, only 29% percent of rural voters reported they were more likely to vote for a pro-choice candidate, compared with 42% of urban voters and 40% of suburban voters. In addition, 35% of rural voters said they were highly supportive of conservative religious groups, compared to 27% of suburban voters and 22% of urban voters. ☞

THE JERSEY SIERRAN

The Jersey Sierran is the newsletter of the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club. Readers are encouraged to submit articles, photographs, artwork, cartoons on environmental subjects, letters to the editor, poetry, press releases and expressions of opinion.

Articles and letters should be submitted typed and double spaced (or preferably by e-mail or on disk: call for format information). Send submissions to: Dick Colby. The deadline is the 10th of the month two months prior to the issue date.

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Thank you to all who contributed. The Jersey Sierran is produced mostly by volunteers.