



# BALTIMORE SIERRAN

Serving Baltimore City, Baltimore County & Harford County DEC 2002

## BALTIMORE BELTWAY & HEALTH

By Patrick McMahon & Richard Klein

Could those living within a thousand feet of the beltway be at increased risk of asthma, cancer, and other forms of illness? Several recent studies indicate the answer may be yes. These findings make it more imperative than ever that we improve transit in the region.

Denver researchers found that children living in homes near "high-volume" highways were eight times more likely to develop leukemia. Scientists in the Netherlands found reduced lung function and increased respiratory symptoms among children living within 900 feet of high-volume highways.

It is not just those living near highways who are at risk. The authors of a recent study published in *The Lancet* concluded that 6% of all European deaths are caused by air pollution, half of which is attributable to traffic. Closer to home, traffic-generated air pollution has raised the cancer risk in the Los Angeles area to 1 in 650. Generally a cancer risk greater than 1:100,000 is cause for concern.

### TRANSIT IS PART OF THE SOLUTION

Improving transit is a key step towards lowering pollution in the Baltimore region. Commuting to work by bus generates 10 times less air pollution than driving alone. Taking light-rail or metro cuts pollution by more than a hundred-fold. The trouble is that presently bus, light-rail and metro service is inadequate in the region - few of us can get to where we want to go.

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## CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS

By Richard Klein

It had been our intention to get an issue of this newsletter to you just before the primary elections last September. Unfortunately, a series of delays prevented this from happening. We deeply regret the delays and offer our apologies. Also, a number of our members received the Maryland Sierra Club newsletter *Chesapeake* a couple of days after the November general election. This we regret as well.

The *Chesapeake* listed all the candidates for state and federal office endorsed by the Sierra Club. We also endorsed Baltimore County Councilman T. Bryan McIntire because of his outstanding work preserving farmland and forests.

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## THE HAZY VIEW FROM CHIMNEY ROCK

By Richard Klein

Picture this. You just did the hike up to the Catoctin Mountain overlook at Chimney Rock. You gaze out to the southeast and there, sparkling on the horizon is a vast body of water. At first you can't believe what you're seeing. But then you realize it's the Chesapeake Bay—70 miles distant!

Well, if it wasn't for air pollution, that's what you would see from Chimney Rock. But because of the stuff we put in the air, visibility is not 70 miles, but more like 15-30. So from Chimney Rock we get a hazy view of Frederick County farmland instead of the Bay.

Scientists say its mostly sulfur which obscures visibility. The sulfur is emitted from coal-burning power plants, smelters, refineries and other sources. The particulates from our cars also contributes to haze. Efforts to reduce sulfur emissions and other forms of air pollution suffered a major setback a few weeks ago when the Bush administration announced that it is allowing polluters to dump more pollution into the air by weakening a part of the Clean Air Act called New Source Review. The result of this weakening will be increases in the air pollution that has been linked to asthma, heart disease and premature death, as well as reduced visibility. To learn more about how the Sierra Club is working to reverse this action visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/energy/>

**ARE YOU 20-35 YEARS OLD? CARE TO DO A WEEKEND BACKPACK WITH FOLKS YOUR OWN AGE? IF YES, THEN CONTACT TODD GARTNER 410-342-9977 or [tgartner7@yahoo.com](mailto:tgartner7@yahoo.com)**



**A Rest Stop During The November Little Gunpowder Hike**

# BALTIMORE BELTWAY & HEALTH

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Fortunately, there are a number of steps we can take to improve transit in the Baltimore region. One of these is to implement the recently developed Baltimore Region Rail System Plan. As illustrated in the box to the right, once completed Baltimore would have a metro system comparable to that of Washington, D.C. When combined with improved bus service many more of us could get around without relying on a car.

Implementing the entire Baltimore Rail Plan is expensive and time-consuming, with an estimated total cost of \$12 Billion over 40 years. However, by looking at ways to utilize bus rapid transit instead of heavy rail we can find ways to minimize the cost. Despite the current budget woes, we can not afford to ignore the recent findings about how auto and truck pollution threatens our health and quality of life. Instead we need to take act now to improve our transit system. This is why we hope you'll join with us in urging newly elected Governor Ehrlich to support funding of the first phase of the Baltimore Rail Plan - extending the subway to Morgan State University and adding a new crosstown line from Fells Point to Social Security. At the same time we need to simplify the existing bus system to make it easier for potential riders to understand the route structure and to reduce the time it takes to get somewhere by bus.

Funding for transportation issues will likely be an important issue in the upcoming session of the Maryland General Assembly. We will be looking for your help in ensuring that an increased proportion of transportation funding is earmarked for transit. For further information contact Greater Baltimore Sierra Club Transportation Chair Patrick McMahon at 410-235-1512 or [patrick@mcmahon.com](mailto:patrick@mcmahon.com). For detail on the Baltimore Region Rail System Plan go to: <http://www.baltimoretrainplan.com/>

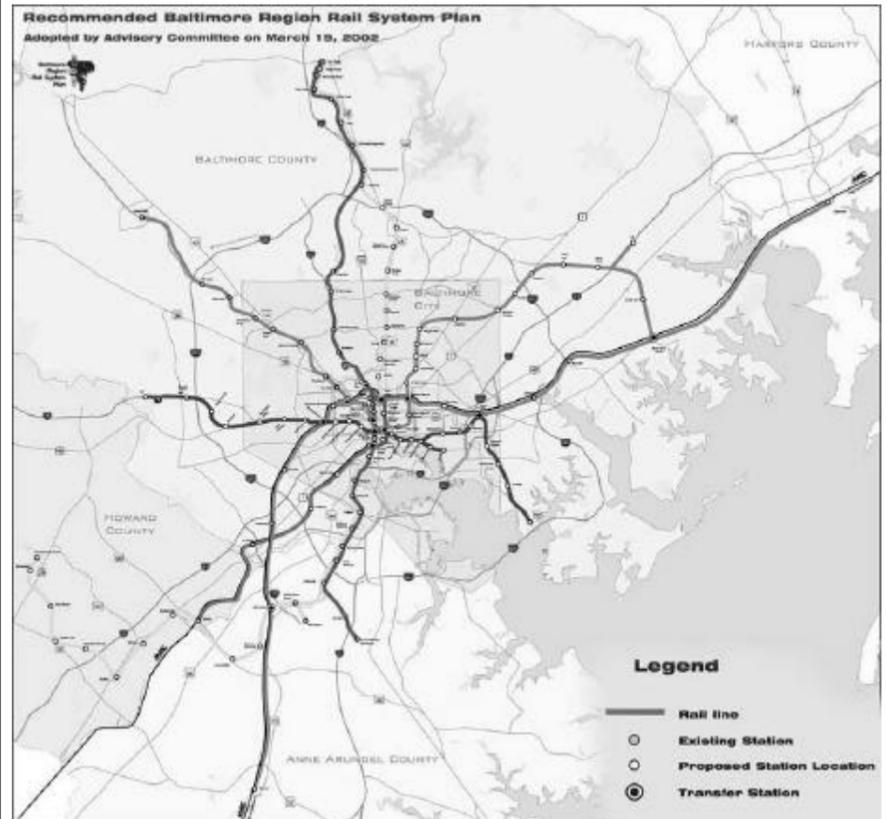
## CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS

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Of the candidates we endorsed, 71% won. In the Maryland General Assembly they were: Ann Marie Doory, Hattie Harrison, Adrienne Jones, Ruth Kirk, Carolyn Krysiak, Salima Siler Marriott, Brian McHale, Maggie McIntosh, Dan Morhaim, Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, Nathaniel Oaks, Jeffrey Paige, Howard Rawlings, Sandy Rosenberg, and Robert Zirkin. Baltimore County Councilman T. Bryan McIntire was also reelected.

## WANTED: NEWSLETTER LAY OUT HELP

Are you skilled in the use of publishing software (PageMaker etc.)? Would you care to lend a hand with newsletter layout? If you are one of these wonderful people and you would like your name spoken with reverence by Baltimore Sierrans, then give Group Chair Richard Klein a call at 410-654-3021.



## DRIVING: TIPS FOR LESS POLLUTION

By Richard Klein

Cars and trucks are a major source of not only air pollution, but water pollution as well. In fact, a sizeable portion of the nitrogen polluting the Chesapeake Bay originates as exhaust which settles from the sky onto our waterways. The best way to reduce pollution is to minimize driving and get more miles per gallon. How do you do this? Well, obvious solutions are car-pooling, combining errands, using transit, bicycling and walking. Other solutions aren't so obvious.

- Whenever the opportunity arises, drive 55 rather than 65 mph. You get 15% more miles per gallon (and less pollution) when driving at 55 mph.
- Aggressive driving habits, in contrast to calm driving, reduce fuel economy and dramatically increase the pollution released per mile traveled.
- Don't let your car idle excessively and avoid drive-up windows.
- Keep tires at the proper pressure and the front end aligned.
- Follow the recommendations in your vehicle owner's guide for tune-ups and emission-control maintenance.

For more tips visit: <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/protect/road.html>

## BALTIMORE INNER CITY OUTINGS

By Robert Burchard

Baltimore Inner City Outings (BICO) is one of 45 members of the Sierra Club's national community outreach program. BICO has been providing outings to Baltimore inner city youth since January 1999. It is composed of four teams directed by 15 dedicated leaders plus other volunteers. Each team conducts one outing per month, year-round, for youngsters affiliated with a partner agency. Our current partnerships are with Digital Harbor High School in south Baltimore; The Learning Cooperative, an alternative school in Hampden; the Choice Program of UMBC's Shriver Center; and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Maryland. Since start-up, BICO has conducted 135 outings for ~ 1500 youngster experiences.

BICO outings provide enjoyable and educational outdoor learning experiences for Baltimore youngsters. Our main goals are to help these young people develop a comfort with and understanding of the natural environment, provide leadership and team-work development opportunities, and nurture a community service ethic. Outings destinations extend from Baltimore's Leakin Park and city neighborhoods to Assateague Island and the Appalachian Trail. Activities include hiking, biking, canoeing, visiting nature centers, learning outdoor wilderness skills such as orienteering, and community service projects such as urban trees plantings. "Leave No Trace, Only Footprints" is a theme common to all outings. We typically venture farther away for camping outings, giving the youngsters the opportunity to get away from "the city lights". For some kids, it's the first chance they have had to gaze up at a clear night sky and observe the stars. To promote teamwork, the youngsters are assigned group responsibilities including camp set-up/take-down and kitchen duties such as cooking and clean up.

Another popular outing among BICO youth is "The Appalachian Challenge", an outdoor obstacle and ropes course offered to us by The Park School of Baltimore. The purpose of the course is to provide team-building skills, including learning to trust teammates and effectively communicate with one another in attempts to reach a common goal. To be away from familiar ground and to be challenged to perform a task that requires 100% group effort can be intimidating for our youngsters. However, by day's end, the challenges are met and inter-personal bonds developed. Hopefully, the challenges that will confront them throughout their lives will be approached with greater self-confidence as a result of this type of experience.

Funding for BICO outings, cost-free to the youngsters we serve, has been provided by grants from the Annie E. Casey, Abell, Baltimore Community, France-Merrick, and Lockhart-Vaughan Sierra Club as well as the Sierra Club individual donations and in-kind gifts from such firms as Dick's, Rite Aid, Spring River, Westview Mini Storage and Wiggy's. REI has been a particularly generous supporter of the outings program. BICO leaders also fund-raise by selling Sierra Club calendars. We continue to seek additional sources of funding as a 501(c)3 organization.

## OUTING LEADERS WANTED

### Inner City Outings

ICO is a Sierra Club community outreach program that provides outdoor adventures and environmental education to under-served urban youth. For detail visit

<http://www.sierraclub.org/ico/baltimore/outings.html>

To become an ICO leader contact Bob Burchard  
410-744-0510  
[burchard@umbc.edu](mailto:burchard@umbc.edu)

### Adult Hikes, Ski Trips, Tubing, Etc.

Jack Wise  
410-256-3963  
[hikingjack@hotmail.com](mailto:hikingjack@hotmail.com)

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS WANTED

Do you have interest in helping the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club become even better? If yes, then please consider serving on our Group Executive Committee (ExCom). Call Group Chair Richard Klein at 410-654-3021.

## Maryland ECO (Environmental Citizens On-Line) System

By John Railey

As we approach the next session of the Maryland General Assembly, a new tool has become available to those environmentalists who have Internet access, and who wish to make their voice heard in Annapolis. The League of Conservation Voters has established an e-mail system to alert you to upcoming environmental legislation, and to direct your comments to key legislators. The service is free and confidential.

The LCV will send out periodic alerts, which will include a brief overview of the issue, a place to get additional information, and a sample letter to be sent to the key legislator. If you choose to contact the decision maker, simply e-mail a reply back to the League, and the Maryland ECO System will automatically convert it to a fax, and forward it to the legislator. And if you choose not to express your opinion, just don't send the reply. It's that easy.

To sign up for this service, go to [www.MarylandEcoSystem.org](http://www.MarylandEcoSystem.org). It will take about two minutes to get connected. Then check for the alerts, during the next legislative session, and voice your opinion.

It's your state and your legislature, and the decisions that are made in Annapolis this year will impact the air you breathe, the water you drink, and the welfare of every creature that lives in or passes through Maryland. So make sure your voice is heard.



**BALTIMORE  
SIERRAN**

# Outings Winter-Spring 2003

**Cross Country Ski Trips Anytime.** Ski locally in the Baltimore area or in Western Maryland when there is enough snow. Jack 410-256-3963

## January 2003

Wed. Jan. 1 GB - Moderate New Years Afternoon Hike. Approximately 5 easy paced miles in Oregon Ridge Park, with 2 or 3 short steep hills. Be prepared for ice/snow on the trails. Meet in the nature center parking lot at 1:00 PM. John, 410-752-0104.

Sun. Jan. 12 GB - Moderate Big Gunpowder Falls Sunday Afternoon Circuit Hike. 4- to 6-miles, lasting 2-3 hours, in moderately hilly country adjoining Big Gunpowder Falls. Meet at Mt. Carmel Road Park & Ride, next to I-83 exit 27, at 1:00 PM. Richard: 410-654-3021.

Tue. Jan. 14 GB – Outings Meeting. Call Jack Wise 410-256-3963

Fri-Mon. Jan. 17-20. GB. Moderate. Cross Country Skiing in Western Maryland Cross-country skiing at New Germany State Park. Beginners welcome. For details call Jack (410-256-3963) by December if possible.

Sat. Jan. 25. GB. Moderate Little Gunpowder River Hike. 7 miles at a leisurely pace. Can be a little slippery if muddy. Meet at K-Mart parking lot on Belair Road (Route 1) just north of Beltway exit 32 at 10:00 AM, or at Gunpowder State Park Jerusalem Mill parking lot at 10:40 AM. George: 410-668-2492

Sun. Jan 26. GB – Moderate Local Cross Country Skiing. If there is not enough snow, a hike in Loch Raven will be held. Meet at Loch Raven High School, Cromwell Bridge Road and Cowpens Avenue, at 11:00 AM. Jack 410-256-3963.

## February 2003

Sun. Feb. 9 GB - Moderate Cedarville Forest Hike. Easy paced, 8 mile, circuit through the forest, with one or two short steep hills. Be prepared for ice/snow. There is a nominal forest entrance fee. Depart Southwest Park & Ride, off Rolling Road, near UMBC, at 9:30 AM. John 410-752-0104

Sun. Feb. 9. GB. Moderate. Big Gunpowder Falls Sunday Afternoon Circuit Hike. A 4- to 6-mile hike, lasting 2-3 hours, in moderately hilly country adjoining Big Gunpowder Falls. Meet at Mt. Carmel Road Park & Ride, next to I-83 exit 27, at 1:00 PM. Richard: 410-654-3021.

Sat. Feb. 22. GB. Moderate Gunpowder/Sweet Air Hike. 6 miles at leisurely pace with nice late fall vistas and pine forest section. Meet at Loch Raven High School parking lot on Cowpens Avenue and Cromwell Bridge Road, just east of Loch Raven exit of Baltimore Beltway at 10:00 AM, or call for alternate meeting spot if coming from PA or Northern Baltimore or Harford counties. George: 410-668-2492

Sun. Feb. 23. GB. Moderate. Loch Raven Hike.. A 4- to 6-mile hike, lasting 2-3 hours, near Loch Raven

Reservoir. Meet 1:00 PM at Willow Grove Farm off Cromwell Bridge Road 1.5 miles northeast of beltway exit 29A. Richard: 410-654-3021.

## March 2003

Sun. Mar. 9. GB. Moderate. Big Gunpowder Falls Sunday Afternoon Circuit Hike. A 4- to 6-mile hike, lasting 2-3 hours, in hilly country adjoining Big Gunpowder Falls.

Meet at Mt. Carmel Rd Park & Ride, next to I-83 ex 27, 1 pm. Richard: 410-654-3021.

Sun. Mar. 23. GB. Moderate. Loch Raven Hike. 4- 6-miles, near Loch Raven Reservoir. Meet 1:00 PM at Willow Grove Farm off Cromwell Bridge Road 1.5 miles northeast of beltway exit 29A. Richard: 410-654-3021.

**FOR OUTINGS SCHEDULED SINCE THIS NEWSLETTER WAS PUBLISHED VISIT <http://maryland.sierraclub.org/baltimore/outings.html>**

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