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## September 2017 Newsletter

Dear Friend of KLB,

Summer may traditionally be a time to slow down and relax, but not for KLB. We've been busy keeping Loudoun beautiful with the help of our dedicated volunteers and supporters, so I wanted to keep you in-the-know about what we've been up to and let you know about upcoming opportunities to make Loudoun and our planet better places to live, play, and work. Be sure to read the green tip this month. It's quite lengthy (okay, more like a novel), but definitely worth the read given the current environmental situation here and around the world.

### **2017 KLB Impact so far...by the numbers & beyond**

With our Spring and Summer litter cleanup campaigns behind us, KLB, along with an eco-warrior army of 1,081 volunteers donating over 3,600 hours, have collected and responsibly disposed of 324 bags of recycling along with tons of scrap metal, 935 bags of trash, 212 tires, and a bunch of other bulky items, like TVs, broken chairs, a couch, and a mattress. Beyond these tangible statistics, our work

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translates to a safer community, higher property values, more tourism, a better quality of life, and eco-savvy citizens, to mention a just few of KLB's more intangible impacts.



Even though we still have litter cleanups planned for the Fall and Winter, we have already easily exceeded what we collected in all of 2016...which is good and bad.

It's great that we have over 1,000 volunteers cleaning-up lots of litter all around Loudoun, but the numbers also reveal that our litter epidemic is still a formidable challenge due to an ever-growing population, our disposable-centric lifestyles, and environmental apathy. Now just imagine if KLB and our army of caring volunteers stopped cleaning-up Loudoun after 45 years of service. I'd say we would have a real mess on our hands, which hurts us and our planet, as well as innocent wildlife. Fortunately, we have friends, including you, that care and donate both time and money to support our important work, so thank you very much for that!

### **Potomac Watershed Litter Cleanup Recap**

Even though both attempts at our springtime Goose Creek watershed cleanup were cancelled due to weather challenges and we endured heavy rains the night before that could have impaired the visibility of submerged litter along with the typical summertime threat of afternoon storms, we had a very successful Potomac cleanup on August 12, a success credited to teamwork along with a great volunteer turnout despite the less-than-perfect forecast. I'm extremely proud of our hard-working volunteers that removed 169 tires (totaling almost 3 tons), 10 bags of recycling, 11 bags of trash, and a trailer full of bulky litter from the shoreline and shallows of this important

waterway. You can read more about this cleanup and view the front page coverage by our media friends at the Purcellville Gazette on our [Website](#).

## **Board of Directors Update**

We have a few changes to report, starting with the departure of our longtime friend, Tony Hayes. Tony needed to take a step back, but we are forever grateful for his contributions and we are grateful that he continues to support our mission, just not at the board level. Shortly afterwards, Jennifer Seifert found us through the [Loudoun Cares Volunteer Center](#) and expressed an interest in joining our board. She has experience serving with other nonprofits and she has a passion for the environment & Loudoun, so it was a no-brainer to vote her onboard at our July meeting. She has already contributed with her energy, fresh ideas, and a new perspective, and we know there's more to come. We're always looking to grow our board, so if you have a similar passion for the environment and want to help guide KLB, we want to hear from you!

## **Area Leader News**

Our valued [Area Leaders](#) continue to do a great job of monitoring and cleaning-up their areas in the Spring as well as other seasons, netting the lion's share of the litter collected each year. But the reality is that we have more than a handful of published areas that lack a leader and there are countless areas that have not yet been identified due to constant development. To give this some perspective, KLB cleaned-up around 188 miles of roadways so far this year. We're certainly proud of that number and while that sounds like a lot, Loudoun has over 1,240 miles of gravel and non-multilane roadways. So those 188 miles represent only 15%, meaning that 85% of our roads remain neglected! Why?

Simply stated, people are not stepping-up like they should be to take ownership of areas all across Loudoun. Sure, we could do a better job of getting the word out, and we are taking steps to remedy that, but there's certainly the common "somebody else will deal with that" attitude. Meanwhile, litter continues to accumulate and eventually will get washed into storm drains and ditches on the way to the [North Atlantic Trash Gyre](#) via streams, the Potomac, and the Chesapeake Bay, polluting and damaging our planet along the way. So if this call to action resonates with you, step-up by exploring becoming an Area Leader, whether or not your area is currently listed. In addition, many of our Area Leaders could use help co-leading, so don't be shy about reaching-out to them to lend a hand.

### **Fundraising Initiatives**

It's hard to believe that it's been a little more than a year since our first-ever [fundraising event](#). Yes, it was a lot of hard work for a handful of volunteers to organize, but it was a fabulous way to get to know our KLB friends in a relaxing setting in addition to raising much-needed funds to fuel our environmental projects. We wanted to hold another fundraiser this Fall, but the venue and catering donations haven't materialized yet. As a volunteer organization, we lack the time and resources to turn over every rock, so if you own or manage one of Loudoun's destination venues and/or provide catering services, and would like to sponsor a fundraiser, please let us know.

In the meantime, we're trying to get creative. In addition to getting almost enough funds through [Amazon Smile](#) purchases to buy a short litter grabber stick 4 times a year (hey, every little bit

helps!), Diana Tenney, the daughter of our board member Richard Woodrum, offered to host a month-long virtual fundraiser for us through her [Scentsy Website](#). That's right, for this entire month of September, Diana will donate 15% of all purchases (excluding shipping charges) to KLB. Thanks to Diana's generosity, you can enjoy the benefits of fragrance therapy wherever you are, while supporting our mission. And with the holiday season right around the corner, Scentsy products make wonderful gifts, so don't delay! And please share this with family & friends so we can purchase supplies and equipment for the anticipated flood of new Area Leaders.

Please visit our [Support page](#) for even more ways to support KLB, like through Benevity (workplace giving) and iGive. If you have some creative ideas for fundraising, by all means, please let us know.

### **Green Tip – You're in Control!**

Since you're a friend of KLB, I assume that you're like me and care about Loudoun, our country, our planet, and are concerned about the global environmental trajectory that we are on. So like me, I imagine that you were saddened by President Trump pulling the USA out of the Paris climate agreement in addition to the dismantling of numerous safeguards that were protecting the quality of the water and air that you and your family depend on every day.

I don't know how the environment became so politicized over the years as science is objective by nature, but it definitely shouldn't be used as a pawn to advance any political agenda. After all, air and water quality, not only for us, but for future generations, should matter to all of us without regard to political party affiliation.

While I may be going out on a limb, I want to let you know that I have zero political agenda with this article as I definitely don't want to alienate anyone over any hot-button subjective political topics. Rest assured that I would be writing this no matter which party is in the White House or Congress as our elected leaders need to be held accountable for nonsensical and harmful policies that can adversely impact all of us.

I'm writing this to tell you only one thing: While these bad decisions have been a setback, all is not lost as YOU are in control. This is about empowerment.

For example, amid the despair of these damaging executive orders, it was absolutely thrilling to see businesses, mayors, and governors all around the country (ironically including Pittsburgh's mayor) take control and [band together](#) to lead the charge in upholding this critical international commonsense agreement. Absolutely thrilling! And you know what? You can take control, too. "But how?", you may ask. Well, you could certainly [join the movement](#), voice your opinion with your elected officials, and elect officials that stop kicking the environmental can down the road. But in the meantime, you can take immediate action and lead by example using the following game-changing tips, so get comfortable and read on.

If you know what KLB stands for and follow what I've been preaching for years, you should know the three words that can save our planet from us. Say them with me now...Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle (and in that order of importance & execution). This is all about reducing energy consumption, reducing the consumption of irreplaceable natural resource, and making a reasonable effort at leaving carbon (fossil

fuels) in the ground, especially when affordable eco-friendly alternatives are available.

For example, Loudoun wouldn't "need" a natural gas-fueled (i.e. fossil) power plant on the banks of our scenic Goose Creek if more households, businesses (including the numerous power-hungry data centers), and government agencies (including our ever-multiplying school buildings) made their own electricity, utilized energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, and used advanced insulation materials, like we did at our home a few years ago with solar PV panels, geothermal HVAC, and sprayfoam insulation. And believe me, don't think for one second that natural gas is a green or clean energy source as the fossil-fuel industry, government officials, and media proclaim. Yes, the burning of natural gas generates less greenhouse gases than burning coal, but when you consider the disastrous consequences of fracking to recover natural gas along with periodic venting, it's probably a toss-up at best – they're both harmful to our environment especially considering that we have smarter choices. Excluding construction costs/materials/pollution/etc. in extracting the fuel and building these various fueled power plants, according to [EIA](#), the pounds of CO2 emitted per million British thermal units (MBTU) of energy for coal is 228.6 and 117.0 for natural gas. Now guess how many pounds of CO2 have been emitted by my solar panels that have generated over 63 MWh (equivalent to 215 MBTU) of electricity so far. A big fat zero! So no matter how much or what color lipstick is applied to this natural gas pig, I think you can agree with me that natural gas is NOT green as compared to solar or wind power since greenhouse gases are still emitted and released into the atmosphere. And of course, generating electricity with our zero-

emissions solar array means that we can enjoy a few personal rewards including only a \$7.63 monthly power distribution fee instead of the usual hurtful electric bill (ultimately recouping our investment in just another 7 years), a more comfortable home temperature, and our four rescue cats can lounge in heated beds guilt-free all winter long.

Now while I strongly encourage everyone to make the investment in humanity's future by exploring some or all of what we did as you will benefit in many ways, certainly not everyone is in a position, like we fortunately were, to act now, soon, or ever. But that doesn't mean that you can't make measurable environmental improvements. For example, you surely can consider reducing your energy profile by replacing incandescent lighting with LEDs, turning off lights when not needed, adjusting your thermostat a little to use less energy, and checking/upgrading weather-stripping, insulation, and perhaps windows to better seal your building envelope. In addition, ceiling fans are a great way to circulate air so you can avoid setting the thermostat higher or lower than necessary. And when it comes time to replace your inefficient HVAC system or appliances, do your homework and consider the available energy-efficient options. On the road, consider electric or hybrid vehicles, and don't forget to walk and use your bike when you can, like walking with your child to the bus stop instead of driving a few hundred feet to the end of the block or country lane (keep in mind that your children are watching and learning from you – so teach them well). Remember to take advantage of our wonderful [commuter bus service](#) and [Metro](#) that gives you and your car a break. In your yard & garden, eliminate or at least reduce the amount of herbicides, pesticides, and non-organic fertilizers to give the birds and the bees (and other beneficial

creatures) a break as well as the Chesapeake Bay. And speaking of water, conserve it by using WaterSense appliances & fixtures and use rainwater catchment for outdoor watering duties. Online shopping has its place, but we humans do what we do best and go overboard in the name of convenience (or perhaps laziness) as this comes at a [significant environmental cost](#) considering just the packing materials and all those tree-killing cardboard boxes (even if recycled as recycling is by no means a carbon-zero, chemical-free process). The solution is to curtail online impulse buying, and instead, shop online when you need to and support your local brick-and-mortar businesses by efficiently combining errands. I hope you get the picture of some easy-to-do and long-term ways of Reducing, all or which make a positive impact at combating human-induced climate change and pollution, to name a few of the benefits.

Moving onto Reusing, starting with the #1 environmental disaster and litter source...Do you have bottled water in your refrigerator or stacked-up in your garage? If so, kick this unsustainable habit right now and choose affordable reusable cups and bottles. If you own or operate a business and provide or sell bottled water, show that you care about your planet and your customers by terminating its use. Instead, provide tap water and provide or sell reusable bottles or cups and encourage your customers & employees to bring their own reusable bottle... and educate them by saying why this is important. Do you enjoy coffee and need a fix at a local coffee shop? If you didn't bring your own reusable coffee mug, buy one at the shop if available, or turn around and go get one at a store that offer these planet-saving mugs. Want to stop wasting more than 1.6 billion gallons of oil a year?

All you have to do is stop using disposable shopping bags, as that's what's unnecessarily consumed by us to make the 30+ billion plastic bags that serve us for only a few minutes and then mostly end-up in the landfill or in the trees as litter. The solution is insanely simple – reusable shopping bags... affordable, efficient, and planet-saving. Planning a Labor Day celebration? If you have disposable plates, cups, plasticware (even the so-called compostable ones), and paper napkins lined-up, you can, and need to do better if you truly care about your planet and future generations. We humans use and toss enough of this disposable entertainmentware in one year to wrap around the Earth over 300 times, according to [earth911.com](http://earth911.com). That's over 7.5 million miles of disposable stuff that's mostly headed to the landfill or ends-up as litter. So what's the eco-smart solution? The same solution that KLB uses when we provide refreshments for our volunteers...reusable plates, reusable cups, reusable beverage coolers & dispensers, reusable silverware, and even reusable napkins, all very affordable and planet-saving, waiting for you at your closest department superstore (don't forget to take your reusable bags in with you!). In the yard & garden, you can save countless beneficial CO<sub>2</sub>-eating trees from the sawmill simply by ditching the wasteful disposable yard waste bags and using one or more super-affordable reusable trash cans with "Yard Waste" written on the side for eco-friendly curbside pickup. And you can save even more trees by using washable rags instead of paper towels, just like we do at KLB. And don't forget all the wonderful local nonprofits that help us keep valuable stuff out of the landfill as well as help make these same items affordable to those looking for a bargain. Check them out [here](#). I could go on and on with the countless examples and benefits of reusing vs. disposable, but I trust you get how easy it

is to make a difference just by choosing to reuse.

Now for the last of the all-important R's...Recycling. It absolutely amazes me how few people see the value of recycling these days, especially when it's so easy to recycle. Sad and frankly pathetic. Don't believe me? Just do what I do all the time, taking pictures when I can...I dare you to take a look in public trash cans at malls, plazas, department stores, wholesale centers, grocery stores, convenience stores, mom & pop shops, home improvement stores, farm stores & markets, garden centers, professional offices, company picnics, government facilities, airports, break rooms, hospitals, churches, schools, nonprofits, fundraisers, networking events, breweries, wineries, fast food restaurants, gas stations, festivals, shows, parks, walking/biking trails, stadiums, playing fields, parking garages, municipalities, and really anywhere the owner/manager/administrator couldn't be bothered to put a recycling bin right next to every trash can (which is what you need to do). Maybe there's even recycling in your trash can at your home or business. If that's the case, take control and start recycling everything that you can. And don't forget to e-recycle your discarded electronics if they cannot be reused by a charity listed above. If you view recycling as a privilege instead of a chore, and understand how much energy and natural resources are being saved for us and future generations, then that should easily motivate you to do the right thing. The example that I think is pretty compelling is that the recycling of just one aluminum soda can is equivalent to three hours of electricity for your TV or one cup of gasoline.

That's valuable and that's why KLB goes the extra mile to separate and recycle litter that can be recycled. If you own, operate, or are a staff member at a business/organization/government agency, take

action and make sure that recycling is available to both customers and employees by placing a recycling bin next to every trash can. And as a responsible business, be sure to recycle whatever you can and not just the county-mandated principle (i.e. only one) recyclable material. Don't let all this value end-up rotting in an ever-growing landfill mountain. At the end of the day, you are in control of your recycling. And speaking of control, you are also in control of making sure that all of your curbside recycling doesn't become litter, which is actually a law. How? Just use a covered recycling bin instead of the should-be-outlawed open-top totes, which are the #1 source of careless littering and account for over half of all litter. Never put recycling into overflowing trash or recycling bins and never toss lightweight recycling into a pickup truck bed or trailer as it will most likely blow out at highway speeds.

Lastly, don't forget that you are empowered to express your environmental concern by not shopping at places or participating in activities where the owner/manager/organizer exhibits environmental indifference, like by not recycling, which is the very least they could do.

So there you have it. With all of these tangible, practical examples, I hope you can see that you are definitely in control of your environmental destiny, which impacts our global environmental destiny.

When you lead by example, others will follow, and the world will change. And did I mention that every eco-friendly example here will save you money over time, directly and indirectly. That's the big secret that manufactures and retailers of disposable stuff don't want you to discover, but now you know better. Now if I'm preaching to the choir and you are already reducing, reusing, and recycling, that's fantastic, but remember that there's always room for improvement

and far too many people still don't get it, so please spread the word.

*I hope you found this newsletter helpful. As always, your candid feedback is always appreciated.*

**Thanks much for your support and please share this with your network.**

Mark Lenko  
President, KLB Board of Directors

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