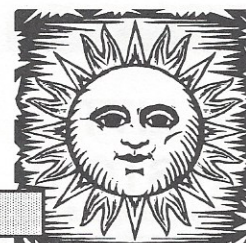


NARROW RIVER NOTES



Summer 1995

NRPA Celebrates 25th Anniversary !

NRPA invites you to join us in celebrating our 25th Anniversary on Tuesday, September 12th at our Annual Meeting. The meeting will take place at Corless Auditorium on URI's Narragansett Bay Campus. Refreshments will be served at 7:00 PM and the meeting will begin at 7:30 PM.

This year's meeting will combine the past with the present. Mr. Irving Sheldon, our keynote speaker, will take us back in time with an interesting discussion on ship-building in Saunderstown. Slides of the local area will accompany his presentation.

Mr. Richard Grant of NRPA will provide an overview of NRPA's 25 years. He will discuss our beginnings and highlight our achievements over the years.

Mr. Timothy Haxton and Ms. Anna Prager, Town Council Presidents from Narragansett and South Kingston, respectively, will discuss their towns' positions regarding replacement plans for Middlebridge. A question and answer period will follow.

25th Anniversary !

Narrow River Preservation Association's

1995 ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, September 12, 1995

7:00 PM Refreshments
7:30 PM Annual Meeting

Corless Auditorium
URI Narragansett Bay Campus

The W.E.R. LaFarge Memorial Award (formerly known as the "Friend of the River" Award) will be presented to Mr. Barry Devine. Barry is a past Board member and founded the Narrow River Run. He chaired the race for a number of years and continues to help in this event which takes place every spring.

Tributes will be made to the Watershed Watch Narrow River monitors who have spent many hours taking samples and measurements from the river.

Youths will be recognized in the

second year of the Youth Achievement Program.

The meeting will conclude with the kayak raffle drawing. The winner will receive a pair of kayaks. Raffle tickets can be purchased prior to the meeting in Corless Auditorium.

Hopefully, you have all received your membership renewal mailing by now. Please remember the date for renewal is September 1, 1995.

inside...	A Little Bit of History	page 2
	Updates & Year in Review	page 3
	Monitoring Update & Road Race	page 4
	Kayak Raffle	page 5

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

The following is the third in a series of intriguing articles written by John Elder Dick on the "colorful and eventful history" of the Narrow River.

THE NORSE SETTLEMENT ON NARROW RIVER

In the spring issue we talked of the probability of a Norse settlement south of the Middlebridge somewhere in the early 11th century. Our information was based on Frederick Brown's research and summation of Leif's Saga and the remarkable points of similarity to this region. In this segment we shall attempt to reconstruct what type of settlement, how long and what happened to end it.

The material that seems to relate to "Hop," the settlement here, is contained in the saga of Thorfin Karlseffni and Gudrid Thorbjornsdottir. Gudrid was Thorfin's wife, and by all accounts an excellent sailor, a tough leader and maybe more of a Viking than her husband. After several voyages, they reached our area which they called "Hop." They brought with them cattle, supplies and settled in, to the point where at one time it would seem 165 people occupied the community. There were "houses near the water and farms further back on the other side of the hill." The hillsides were "all covered with vines and the valleys grew self sown wheat" (Indian rice?). The river flowed "from the north into a lake and then into the sea. Halibut were caught in pits dug in the marsh!"

Eventually contact is made with the natives who are called "skraelings" - barbarians or screechers, described as "small, dark, ugly men with unkempt hair, broad cheekbones and bulging eyes." They begin to trade. The natives are observed from a rock to the west (still there) where you can see to the mouth of the river. The natives waved their "staves" sunwise (east to west) which is taken as a sign of peace. What did they trade? Milk was an unknown delicacy to the natives and the sagas record "they carried their purchase away in their stomach!" That along with narrow strips of red cloth obtained dark pelts for the Vikings. Karlseffni forbade trading iron which they desired. The trading came to an astonished end when a bull belonging to Karlseffni came bellowing out of the forest frightening the wits out of the natives who took off! Ah, but the wily Karlseffni figured they'd be back for vengeance and ordered his house palisaded with sharpened wooden spears placed around. Battle plans were made. When the natives returned, they proceeded toward the area between the lake and the river driving "their bellowing bull before them."

The natives returned! Waving their "staves" from west to east, now, the sign of battle! The first Norse defeat occurs. The Vikings retreat toward the palisade and are absolutely terrified when the natives hurl over the palisade a "blue black object about the size of a sheep's belly that makes a hideous noise!" Panic ensues!

Retreat! And a Viking woman saves the day!

Freydis, a woman described as heavily pregnant, sees the Viking men fleeing by her house and remarks, "Why do you run from men such as these? You should slay them like cattle. Give me a sword and I could do it myself." With that she sets out to follow the retreating Vikings. Slowed as she is with pregnancy, the natives pursue her, when she comes upon the body of one Viking. Grabbing his sword, Freydis turns, hones the sword on her body while screaming Viking imprecations at the natives! Much to all's astonishment, the natives, dumbfounded at this display, take off!

The settlement leaves and there ends our tale. For a brief period of maybe 10 years nearly 165 Norse voyagers may have made their home here. Cattle were brought and milk was the delicacy sought by the natives. Interestingly enough, in colonial days that area raised large amounts of cattle, not for beef, South County's cheese was the famous export with a unique flavor much prized, probably due to the cattle's diet of salt marsh hay. It may be worth speculating, that the first child of European parents was born here where it all may have happened, nearly a thousand years ago, on the shores of the Narrow River!

(Acknowledgment is made to Frederick Brown for much of the material digested above)

UPDATES

Robin Woods Development: This is a proposed subdivision in the Mettatuxet area of the watershed. After reviewing updated plans, NRPA strongly objects to this subdivision based on the following reasons: 1) housing density - 37 houses are proposed for zones that mandate fewer; 2) drainage problems - inability of the land to support 37 additional houses; 3) design of detention ponds and other aspects of the drainage system - design does not fit the geological/hydrological/soil conditions. Currently, this proposed development is before the Zoning Board who will vote to approve or deny this subdivision.

Strathmore Street: There was a proposal brought forth by Canonchet Farm Developers (CFD) to abandon Strathmore Street (part of a development CFD is proposing in Narragansett). Prior to 1984, access to Canonchet Farm and parts of the watershed was provided by a partly public and partly private Strathmore Street. NRPA voiced its concern at many meetings that access to the watershed and Canonchet Farm be renewed and the Town of Narragansett not abandon its portion of Strathmore Street. Recently, the Narragansett Town Council decided not to abandon the street until the Planning Board approves the plans for the proposed subdivision by CFD. If approved and Strathmore Street is abandoned, NRPA is pleased to report that the Narragansett Town Council stipulated that public and emergency vehicle access would be provided.

Middlebridge Replacement: As most of you know already, studies done recently have shown that widening of the bridge would not effect the flushing of the river and that DOT plans to replace the bridge with the same span it has now. NRPA is concerned about this and is currently funding a study by Applied Science Associates that will indicate the minimum widening and deepening of the river needed to increase

tidal flow and enhance flushing without risking changing the habitat of the Pettaquamscutt Cove.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

As the end of our fiscal year approaches, lets take a look back at all that has happened during this past year.

The River Watch Program completed its 4th year of water monitoring. NRPA donated \$600 to aid in the continuation of this program and to help pay for salinity kits. (see page 4)

NRPA Board members attended a number of meetings to voice NRPA's concern about abandoning Strathmore Street and wanting renewed access to Canonchet Farm and the Narrow River watershed. (see Update section)

NRPA has been very active this year in the proposed Mettatuxet subdivision, Robin Woods, reviewing past and current plans and attending meetings to voice our objections. (see Update section)

NRPA has been following the problems of Gilbert Stuart Stream that has periodically shown high levels of bacteria. The Town of North Kingstown was contacted and DEM is investigating this matter.

The Middlebridge rebuild has been another of NRPA's concerns and is currently funding a study to help address this issue.

The Education Committee has been very busy with presenting slide shows to different community organization' speaking on the radio about Narrow River' participating in two environmental fairs; distributing information at the Narrow River Tours; and judging the Science Fairs, where four local students received awards for their environmentally relevant projects.

Scholarships were awarded to four area seniors for the first time this year. (see page 6)

Also for the first time, walkers were united with runners at NRPA's 8th annual road race which was a great success.

NRPA continues to monitor the Route 4 & 1 reconstruction and problems related to Route 138.

Members again participated in the Mettatuxet Yacht Club's river clean up.

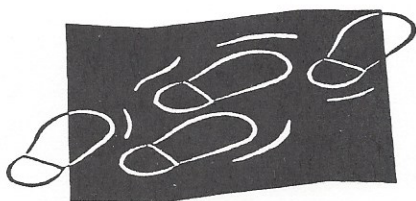
As always, NRPA continues to monitor land development, review CRMC applications, respond to resident's concerns and attend local and state meetings pertaining to the watershed.

WALKERS & RUNNERS UNITE FOR ROAD RACE

For the first time in the Narrow River Run's history, walkers were able to participate and enjoy the scenic views of the Narrow River along with runners. NRPA's 8th Annual Narrow River Run was held on May 20, with great weather and a record number of participants. NRPA would like to thank the runners and walkers for coming out to support this race and all the volunteers who worked so hard to make this race a success.

Special thanks go to Barry Devine for his continued support in organizing this event and to Washington Trust Company for their sponsorship of this year's race.

We wish to thank all our sponsors: Providence Journal-Bulletin, Pierce Imports, Textron, Charlie O's, AMICA, Pierbank, Ocean State Blueprints, Applied Science Associates, RISE, Abbott Box Co., Cynthia & Richard Williams, Russell's Garden Center, Banner Oldsmobile, Ryan's Market, Yankee Travel, Liberty Rentals, Kane Motor Car Co., Beth Voso, The World Store, Wilson's of Wickford, Tony's Pizza of Bonnet, Kingstown Camera, Stop & Shop, Feet First, Zero Wampum, Belmont Fruit, McDonald's Restaurant, the Narragansett and South Kingstown Police Departments, the Narragansett Recreation Department and the URI Graduate School of Oceanography.



River Monitoring Update

Water quality monitoring of the Narrow River is now well into its fourth year. Ten sites along the river continue to be monitored by a dedicated group of 24 volunteers. The Watershed Watch office has provided us with some initial feedback on this year's bacterial sampling. It appears that bacterial counts at all sites have been relatively low this year. This may be a result of less run off due

It appears that bacterial counts at all sites have been relatively low this year.

to the dry season we are experiencing. Another possible explanation may be that we are seeing the effects of expanding sewerage along the river. It is still a bit too early to come to a conclusion, but we hope this low bacterial trend will continue into the future.

This year we've added salinity measurements to our biweekly monitoring protocol. Salinity is a measure of the amount of salts dissolved in water. Salinity levels can to a large degree control the types of plants and animals that can live in different zones of an estuary. As a result, drastic changes in salinity can alter the numbers and types of animals and plants. Changes may be brought on by such events as draughts or storms.

Often throughout the season we get asked, "How is the river doing?" Surprisingly, this is a diffi-

cult question to answer when we are in the middle of a monitoring season. Although measurements of dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll, temperature and water clarity are made every other week throughout the season, final compilation and analysis of the data doesn't take place until completion of the season. This gives a full picture and allows for verification of the results. Also the monitoring program is designed to monitor water quality trends over time. The initial years of monitoring established a baseline for the river's water quality. As monitoring continues, we compare each year's results to the baseline to determine if there are any notable increases/decreases in the health of the river.

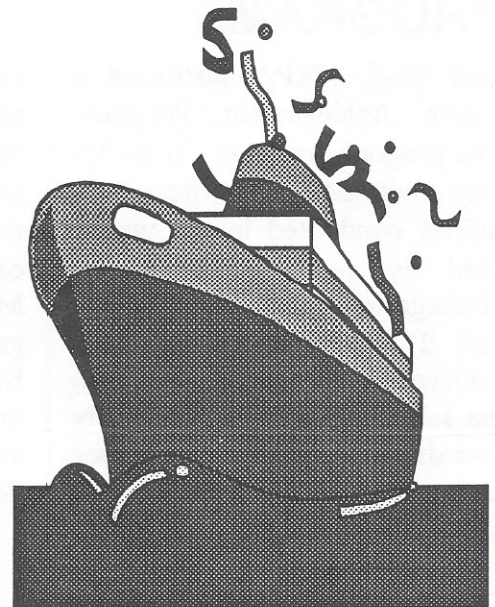
- Annette DeSilva

6239

NRPA is now a part of the United Way Work place campaign. This is our donor option number. If you or your company are going to make a United Way donation, please consider designating a portion of your gift this year to NRPA and help us to continue our work to save a very special river.

*Have you ever wanted to
“cruise” down the Narrow
River??*

*Well, here’s your chance!!
Just take a chance.....*



We have enclosed 3 raffle tickets for you to *take a chance*. If you win, you could be the owner of two kayaks and be able to take that “cruise” down the river.

The cost is \$5 for 3 tickets and \$2 for 1 ticket. Please return the stub with your name and address on them along with your check (made out to NRPA) in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. The Kayak raffle drawing takes place at NRPA’s Annual Meeting on September 12, 1995, so..... please have your tickets returned by this date!

Take a chance.....and take that “cruise” down Narrow River in your very own Kayak! Remember, if you win, you win two kayaks, so take a friend along!!

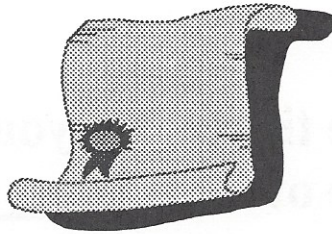
YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAMS

Last year, NRPA instituted a Youth Achievement Program. The program seeks to: 1) recognize environmentally-oriented activities conducted in the watershed by young people from kindergarten through high school and 2) to promote academic achievement of young people in the sciences. In the past, yearly awards have been presented for environmentally-oriented activities and science fair projects.

This year, NRPA awarded the 1st Narrow River Preservation Association Scholarships. Scholarships were awarded to seniors graduating from high schools in the watershed. Applicants were primarily judged on their partici-

pation in environmentally-oriented activities, academic achievement in science courses and science teacher recommendation. Scholarships in the amount of \$500 each were awarded to Maria C. Reppucci of Narragansett High School, Michael A. Blitzer of North Kingstown High School and Nikki A. Kostarides and Kathleen McHugh, both from South Kingstown High School.

- *Melissa Hughes*



Narrow River Notes

Published quarterly by the Narrow River Preservation Association

NRPA Board of Directors

Sherric Blott, President

Melissa Hughes, Secretary

Kim Salisbury-Keith, Treasurer

Jon Boothroyd, VP Science

Jerry Petros, VP Legal

Richard Grant, VP Public Affairs

Connie Alexander

Veronica Berounsky

Annette DeSilva

Dimitrios Karamanlidis

Christopher Kincaid

Robert Leeson, Jr.

John Maciel

Bill Moylan

Sarah W. Quan

Julia Randall Sharpe

Fraser Vaughn

Tom Warren

Co-Editors: Veronica Berounsky &

Dori Maione, Coordinator

ANNUAL MEETING IS ON SEPTEMBER 12, 1995

Narrow River Preservation Association

Box 8

Saunderstown, RI 02874

NON PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

SAUNDERSTOWN, RI

02874

PERMIT No. 3