
NARROW RIVER NOTES

Newsletter of the Narrow River Preservation Association

Summer 2000

NRPA ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

The Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) now has a site on the World Wide Web: www.narrowriver.org. The purpose is to increase visibility of the organization, promote NRPA goals, make educational information available, publicize meetings and help with logistics for events such as the Narrow River Run.

The site includes information on NRPA and the Narrow River, the water quality monitoring program, educational materials, a land-use update, photos, a calendar of events and more. Links to other sites give information on such things as fishing and kayaking, show a live camera shot of Narragansett Beach and speculate on Viking landings in the River.

Our Web committee designed the site and scavenged NRPA files and photo albums to add content. Barry Doherty of PC Guide Services was instrumental in getting the site estab-

lished and did so *pro bono*. Student volunteers from local schools have started work on a Kid's Page that will help students learn about the River and how to get involved. We have many ideas for new things to add, such as watershed maps, the Narrow River Bibliography, a virtual photo tour of the River and information on current research in the River.

According to NRPA's Executive Director, Teresa McKinley, "The Web site has already been useful, saving time and stamps by providing information and an application form for the Narrow River Run." We welcome any ideas from members on how to make this site even better. If any readers have any interesting photos of the River, maps, items of history or other items that could be enjoyed by all, please bring contact the office.

~Stephen Hale

Celebrate Rivers Day

Join in the fun on Saturday, June 17th for the 2nd annual South County River's Day. An array of activities are planned in and along the river. See enclosed flyer for details.



Annual Meeting: September 12, 2000

Join us at 7 p.m. in Corless Auditorium on the campus of the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography.

NRPA College Scholarships Awarded

Winners of the this year's NRPA Scholarships are Thomas N. Hale, South Kingstown High School (SKHS) and Megan Dyer, Narragansett High School (NHS). These students were honored at the Senior Awards banquets at their respective high schools and at a reception held by the Board of Directors of NRPA.

NRPA initiated its college scholarship program in 1994 to promote and reward excellence in scientific course work and initiative in environmental stewardship. The \$500.00 awards are based on academic excellence in science and math courses, environmental activities inside and outside of high school, an essay on the impact of human activity on a water-

shed and science teacher recommendation. The two recipients were very involved in environmental activities both connected with and outside of their high schools.

From 10th to 12th grade, Thomas Hale served as chairman of the Rhode Island High Schools Organized to Protect the Earth (RIHOPE). RIHOPE's mission is to support high school environmental groups state-wide. He was President of Students for Environmental and Social Justice for two years at SKHS. This group addresses environmental and social justice issues. He also served on the staff of the Sierra Student Coalition, the student-run arm of the Sierra Club.

Megan Dyer served as co-President of the Local Environmental Action Force (LEAF) at Narragansett High School in 12th grade. This group studies environmental issues and conducts clean-ups. She was a member of the NHS Envirothon team whose members enter competitions after learning about environmental problems. She was a State officer in Future Farmers of America and, as a Girl Scout, her Gold Award was achieved by creating birdhouse kits (for construction by two troops) and later mounting the boxes in the Narrow River watershed to attract species back which might have left due to loss of habitat.

~Melissa Hughes

The President's Cove

The present work by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), concerning the health of Narrow River, has brought to my attention just how sensitive this ecosystem is. Now, every resident in the Narrow River watershed has the opportunity to become more aware of the sensitivity of our area.

Over the last six years, the NRPA River Watch Testing program (a volunteer effort funded by Narragansett, North Kingstown, South Kingstown, and contributions from NRPA members) has pointed to specific hot spots with high fecal coliform count. Fecal coliforms are bacteria present in human and animal wastes, and are the standard indicator for sewage pollution. The current DEM program, initiated due to the NRPA River Watch Program's efforts, plans to carry NRPA's program further by clarifying pollution sources or at least by providing information which will help control non-point pollution.

The Total Maximum Daily Loading (TMDL) plan, being conducted by the DEM, is a restoration plan for an impaired (polluted) waterbody. The study defines the problem, identifies the pollutant, locates where the problem exists, and checks for compliance with set standards. For example, it has come to our attention that a seldom used outhouse can have a negative effect and a failing septic system can cause concern. Feeding waterfowl and not controlling animal waste can also increase the pollution count.

NRPA has increased the awareness of the non-point pollution problem through *The Narrow River Handbook: A Guide to Living in the Watershed* and through our many educational programs. Our last newsletter (Spring 2000) provided in-depth information about the current DEM study and we will continue to publish news concerning our beautiful river. Please assist us in our educational efforts by donating time to one of our many programs or by making a donation to a specific program. By working together, we'll continue helping our extraordinary ecosystem to thrive.

~Richard Grant

*The Narrow River Preservation Association is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.
The mission of NRPA is to preserve the quality of the communities and natural environment within the Narrow River Watershed.*



The 13th Annual River Run drew participants of all ages to join in the fun in support of NRPA's programs.



News Clip Volunteer

The NRPA has been collecting news clippings from local newspapers to track the Association's publicity efforts and to catalogue information pertinent to the Narrow River watershed. If you would enjoy assisting us by clipping and compiling articles related to Narrow River on a regular basis, we would appreciate your services. Please call the office at 783-6277.

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NRPA is part of the United Way Workplace Campaign. This is our donor option number. If you plan to make a UW donation, please consider designating a portion of your gift to NRPA.

Science Fair 2000 Winners

In order to encourage the curiosity of young scientists and to help them gain respect for the environment, NRPA has judged high school and middle school science fairs in Watershed towns since 1989.

The Narrow River, also known as the Pettaquamscutt River Estuary, flows through Narragansett, North Kingstown, and South Kingstown. An Award from NRPA is given to one student in each school in recognition of the quality of the student's research and its relevance to NRPA's goal of protecting the Narrow River and its watershed as a unique, dynamic and fragile ecosystem.

Honorable Mentions are given to students in each school in recognition of each student's participation in a well-done, environmentally oriented science fair project with relevance to NRPA's goals. The projects do not have to be about the Narrow River specifically, but can be on any relevant topic. All projects should be experimental and follow the scientific method: a hypothesis proposed, a method for testing the hypothesis, some data collected and some conclusions reached from the data. The projects should also show some originality and creativity. NRPA's judges also take into consideration each school's instructions for undertaking projects and their criteria for judging the projects.

The student receiving the "Narrow River

Preservation Association Science Fair Award" will receive a certificate, a \$50 U.S. Saving Bond, a reception at NRPA's Board of Directors' meeting and recognition in NRPA's newsletter and at NRPA's Annual Meeting. Students receiving "Honorable Mentions" will be recognized in the newsletter and at the Annual Meeting.

Science Fairs have been judged by NRPA in Watershed schools including South Kingstown Junior High School, Davisville Middle School and Msgr. Matthew Clark School. The Narragansett Pier School held their second annual science exposition in May and NRPA judges gave out "NRPA Science Fair Participant Award" certificates to students with appropriate environmental projects.

At elementary schools with science fairs, "NRPA Science Fair Participant Award" certificates are also given out to students with appropriate environmental projects. NRPA board members attended the science fair at the South Road School, South Kingstown, in May.

In addition to the awards presented by NRPA to this year's Science Fair winners, Patrick T. McDonald, Senator from the 24th District, also presented Senate Citations to the selected winning students.

~Veronica Berounsky

Science Fair Winners selected to date:

South Kingstown Junior High

Kristen Bannon: *"The Effects of Pollution on a Tidal Marsh."*

Honorable Mention: Becca Orchardo & Courtney Durkin: *"How Does Temperature Affect the Feeding Rate of Oysters?"*

Davisville Middle School

Tony Moniz: *"Are There Any Illegal Chemicals in Golf Course Ponds?"*

Honorable Mention: Steven Belanger: *"How Does Pollution Affect Plants?"*; Alex Bruder: *"The Effects of Acid Rain on the Growth of Tomato Plants."*; David Delahunt: *"Which Grass Grows the Fastest?"*; Ben Webster: *"Desalinization"*

Msgr. Matthew Clark School

Tyler Scowcroft: *"How Much Environmental Waste Does a Monsignor Clarke Student Produce in a Lunch Period?"*

Honorable Mention: Brendan Toupin: *"Are You Polluting the Narrow River?"*; Brenden Dublois: *"What Makes the Narrow River So Unique?"*; Alice Philbrick: *"What Fish are Found in Narrow River?"*; Lauren Lawson: *"What Makes Up the Narragansett Bay Salt Water Ecosystem?"*

Reconnecting With The River

We meet by chance. He is fishing, intently casting into a deep, dark pool. I'm floating along in a canoe. We're probably about the same age. We exchange greetings and I can almost predict what he'll say: "It's great to be out here again, isn't it?"

I see this man every year and, early in spring, I'll see him a dozen times along the river. Along every river. This man is almost every person I meet on the water. He isn't always fishing; often he is canoeing or kayaking or walking along the bank or standing in some special spot and just looking. Sometimes he is much younger, sometimes older, sometimes he is part of a group, sometimes he isn't a he. What is the same each time is an obvious sense of enjoyment, a deep appreciation of being at the river. For many of us, the lure of a river is almost irresistible.

A river is alive, always moving, always in a hurry. It sweeps around bends, darts around boulders, leaps over smaller rocks. Sometimes, after heavy rains, it can get too lively, too wild—a flooded river can be very dangerous—but when it settles back down to "normal," it is a thing of beauty.

Outwardly, people are drawn to rivers for different reasons. Many come to fish. They

may sit on the bank and casually dangle lines in the water, or they wade around in the current, deftly casting into promising eddies or beneath overhanging branches. Others come to ride the water. They launch canoes or kayaks and go with the flow, where the currents take them; in essence, they become part of the rivers. Still others come to walk along the shores, to listen to the gurgling and splashing, to see the shimmer of sunlight on the water, to feel the vigor of a river, the timeless power and might of water rushing onward.

Moving water is what opened this country and drove it. Water was our ancestors' means of travel and later their source of power. It determined where they built towns, how their industries progressed, even what they grew and ate. Now, some of our needs for rivers have changed—fortunately, we're removing more dams these days than we build—but we still want to be near water. We still cherish rivers, both the fast-flowing and the slow and steady.

Wandering by foot along rivers is therapeutic—sometimes I think every river should be flanked by walking paths—but even more, I like to move on the water. I

find it hard to be content with remaining in one place as the water rushes past; maybe that's one reason I've never been a good fisherman. I want to see what's around the next bend; I want to explore every cove, float over the rocky riffles, maneuver past the big boulders. I need to experience the river again, to learn what changes were wrought by the winter storms, to make certain that landmark trees and exhilarating chutes and the sandbars where the raccoons hunt are still where they are supposed to be. So each spring, I haul out the canoe and go paddling.

There is immense satisfaction in the season's first trip on a river, seeing, feeling, how the canoe responds to every move. The canoe and I become part of the river, a log floating easily with the current. When I'm lucky, the other creatures on the water regard me with no more interest than they would a log.

Wild animals, and peeking in on their activities, are always integral parts of a river's allure for me. For others, it is more the fishing or the canoeing and kayaking. Most of all, I think, reconnecting with the river may be the important thing. The man with the fishing rod would understand. ~Ken Weber

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NRPA's 13th ANNUAL NARROW RIVER RUN

NRPA recently celebrated 13 years of "running along the River" with our annual Narrow River Run held on May 13th. This year we celebrated the alewife run in the River and our race shirts depicted a school of these fish making their way up Narrow River to the pond behind Gilbert Stuart. The weather was touch and go, with a pounding thunderstorm at the start of registration, but the rain stopped shortly, leaving a cool, overcast day perfect for running a 10K.

Steve Neri was the first male over the 10K line with a time of 34:28. Madalena Boudreau of Fall River was the first woman for the second year in a row and 10th overall with a time of 38:21. Our men's 5K race was won by Robert Corsi of Johnston with a time of 17:35. The women's 5K was won by Sarita Pfahl of Wakefield, who was fifth overall with a time of 19:05. First places in the 5K Walk were E.J. Otis of Narragansett (33:37) and Catherine Mamahon of Narragansett (36:50).

First place winners in each age group for the 5K Run were: 0-18 yrs, Bronson Venable (20:43), Kristen Bannon, Wakefield (25:57); 19-39 yrs, Robert Corsi, Johnston (17:35), Sarita Pfahl, Wakefield (19:05); 40-49 yrs, Drew Hamilton, Jamestown (17:57), Carol Choche O'Brien, Wakefield (27:41); 50-59 yrs, Brian Phillips, Wakefield (21:45), Toni Lemoine, Block Island (32:44); and 60-98 yrs, Dale Cordy, N Kingston (41:20), Chris Ayars, Portsmouth (36:56). Complete results are posted on the NRPA web page.

First place winners in each age group for the 10K Run were: 0-18 yrs, Josie Griffin, E. Lyme, CT (54:15); 19-39 yrs, Steve Neri (34:28), Madalena Boudreau, Fall River (38:21); 40-49 yrs, Dan Hartnett, Wakefield (36:12), Terri Martland, Newport (40:07), 50-59 yrs, Howie Mackey (38:36), Deirdre Robinson (53:33); and 60-98 yrs, Richard

Silva, Johnston (41:48).

NRPA thanks all of the following sponsors for making this a very successful event: Citizens Bank, our presenting sponsor; and Pierce Imports, AMICA Mutual Insurance and M & M O'Neill, our benefactors.

Our other majors donors included: Banner Oldsmobile-Buick-GMC Truck Inc., Charlie O's Tavern on the Point, The Dunes Club, Mettatuxet Improvement Association, Dunkin Donuts, Leeson Associates, Ltd., RI Automobile Dealers Association and South County Hospital. Contributors supporting the Race included: At My Uncles, Belmont Fruit Company, The Coast Guard House, Camire's Athletic Shoes, Dunkin Donuts, Educators Publishing Service, R.B. Grant & Associates, The Kayak Centre of Wickford, Ocean State Blueprints, Ro-Jacks Supermarket, Service Auto Body, Shaw's Supermarket, Stop & Shop Supermarket and Van Couygen & Lally Attorneys at Law. Our Friend of the River thanks go to: Abbot Avon Packaging Corporation, All That Matters, Applied Science Associates, Bay Realty, Birdwatcher's Nature View, Bonnet Video, Cabinet Connection, Casey's, Coffee

Connection, Country Delite Restaurant, Crazy Burger, Critter Hut, Damons Hardware, Eastside Printers, Feet First, Food for Thought, Gabriela's Restaurant, Gillette's Agway, Hallberg Realtors, Kingstown Camera, Larchwood Inn, McDonald's, Mews Tavern, Narragansett Disk, Dr. Allan Olson, Pancho O'Malley's, Mr. & Mrs. C. Charles Paolino, The Picnic Basket, Pier Market, Diana Pilkington Massage Therapy, Pier Fuel, Quattro Grill, River Bend Athletic Club, Ro-Jack's Supermarket, Running Times, Ryan's Market, Schartner Farms, South County Hospital, Sweenor's Chocolates, Tony's Pizza, Twin Willows, Watershed, Wilson's of Wickford and The World Store.

We would like to extend special thanks to: GSO-URI Bay Campus, Narragansett Police Department, Narragansett Recreation Department and South Kingstown Police Department for assisting us with this event. A special thank you also goes to Seniors Helping Others for their assistance in preparing all of our Road Race mailings and newsletters throughout the year. ~Lesla Meng & John Maciel



Citizens Bank presents NRPA with a Narrow River Run sponsorship check. From left, Lesla Meng, NRPA Run Director, Meg Healy, Manager at Citizens Wakefield Office, and Richard Grant, NRPA President.

KAYAK RAFFLE

NRPA is raffling off a kayak donated by *the Kayak Centre of Wickford*.

The kayak will be on display & tickets will be available at the following locations:

Narragansett Art Festival June 24-25 Wickford Art Festival July 8-9 NRPA Annual Meeting Sept. 12

ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT PROGRAMS
THAT DIRECTLY BENEFIT NARROW RIVER

Tickets are only \$2 each or 3 for \$5

Return ticket stubs to NRPA with your name, address and telephone number, along with a check made payable to NRPA. The drawing will take place on September 12, 2000 at NRPA's Annual Meeting, held on URI's Bay Campus. You do not need to be present to win.

The winner will be contacted promptly after the drawing.