


NARROW RIVER NOTES

Newsletter of the Narrow River Preservation Association

Summer 2001

2001-2002 Membership Drive

On September 1, 2001, the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) will begin its thirty-first year of working to protect the Narrow River and its Watershed. Rather than clutter your mail-box with an extra mailing, this year we are using the summer newsletter to kick off our annual membership drive. NRPA's Board of directors and staff would like to sincerely thank you for your past support, and strongly encourage you to continue. If you are a current member, we urge you to renew your membership. If you are not presently a member, we hope that you will seriously consider joining our Association and helping us to preserve our own local environmental treasure.

As we look ahead to the next year, our organization's conservation mission has been well served. Your membership dues support our programs of public and youth education, water quality, habitat restoration, and land development oversight. Some of the programs that NRPA will be able to perpetuate and expand with your support include:

- the River Watch program, now in its tenth year of monitoring water quality in Narrow River;
- educational programs, including the *Active Watershed Education (AWEsome)* program, science fairs, youth environmental achievement awards, and college scholarships;
- review of all proposals for new development in the Watershed.

NRPA needs your support; our members are our greatest asset. We look forward to your participation as we all work towards the goals of restoration and preservation of the Watershed over the upcoming year.

We ask for your assistance on two levels—financial and personal. First, please send in your membership dues; they provide major support for our programs. Don't let it stop there. If you make a United Way donation, please consider designating a portion of your gift to NRPA (donor option number 6239). Find out if your employer has a matching-gift policy, and double the "bang for your buck."

E-Mail Addresses Needed

We are looking into the possibility of putting our newsletters on the NRPA web page. What do you think of the idea? Would you rather get a printed newsletter in the mail, or an email message saying that the new issue is now on-line? Both? Send us an email at nrpa@netsense.net to let us know what you think. At least, please fill in your email address on the membership envelope. We promise—no spam.

Secondly, please become involved in some aspect of NRPA that interests you. Check off an area of interest on your membership envelope when you send in your contribution. We would love to have more members actively participating. The continued strength of our Association depends on your financial support and your membership voice. Thank you. —Richard Grant

Celebrate Rivers Day

Join in the fun on Saturday, June 16th for the 2nd annual South County Rivers Day. An array of activities are planned in and along the River. See the enclosed flyer for details.

2001 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

NRPA announces the winners of its 2001 scholarships. Alison Marshall (Narragansett High School), Ryan P. Murphy (South Kingstown High School) and Timothy J. Smith (North Kingstown High School) each received a \$500.00 scholarship. Scholarship applicants are judged on four criteria: participation in environmentally-oriented activities throughout their high school careers, a science teacher recommendation, the relevancy of an original essay about the impact of human activity on the Watershed and their academic achievement in science courses.

These students were very active environmentally during their high school careers. Alison Marshall participated in two environmental groups at Narragansett High School. She learned about environmental issues and competed against other high schools for two years with the Envirothon team. She also participated in the high school's environmental group (LEAF) for a year and assisted in local beach clean-ups. Ryan Murphy chose to focus his Boy Scout Eagle project in the Watershed. He organized a day-long litter clean-up and he stenciled storm drains and distributed pamphlets to educate the community about the hazards of pouring wastes, such as car oil, down stormdrains. For two years, Timothy Smith participated on North Kingstown High School's team for the National Ocean Sciences Bowl, a national oceanographic competition.

College Scholarships are a component of NRPA's Environmental Youth Achievement Program. The program was created to: 1) recognize environmentally-oriented activities conducted in the Watershed by young people from kindergarten through high school and 2) promote academic achievement of young people in the sciences. —Melissa Hughes

The President's Cove

We are very sorry to relate that Teresa McKinley, our Executive Director for the last three years, will be leaving us within a short time for southern California. We have been extremely fortunate to have a person of her caliber and talents as the first NRPA Executive Director.

Her successes over the past three years have essentially defined the role for all future holders of the position. Though NRPA had never before had a full-time staff or a real office, through trial and error, and hours of effort above and beyond what was expected, Teresa figured out how to make it all work, and work well.

She became the most visible part of NRPA—the Association's interface with the membership and the public, and did so with extraordinary charisma.

As a resident of the Watershed, she also had a personal stake in preserving the quality of life we have come to enjoy here, and responded accordingly to any perceived threat to the River.

Her high level of energy and formidable sense of direction and purpose have pushed our volunteer Board of directors, and the programs they oversee, to a new level. NRPA's programs in the areas of education, water quality, and land use have become much broader and deeper through her astute leadership and unending dedication to every aspect. Our membership has grown, all of our programs are more solid, our fund raising has increased, and our position locally, and in some cases nationally, has been pushed a little further to the forefront due to her involvement.

Teresa McKinley will be a hard act to follow.

—Richard Grant



DONATION NEWS

NRPA is pleased to announce that we have received a generous new gift from Mrs. Jane S. Nelson, a Life member since 1979. Over the years, she has given gift memberships in NRPA to friends and family members living in the Watershed. This year, she has earmarked a donation in honor of the Winston family, for NRPA's River Watch Program.

This gift will be used to help fund our program which monitors the water quality of Narrow River. We thank Mrs. Nelson for her generous support over the years.

Please call our office at 783-6277 for more information on gift memberships or program donations to NRPA.

—Teresa McKinley

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Narrow River Notes

Published quarterly by Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA)

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WHAT'S UP WITH THOSE "DAMMED" FISH?

John Elder Dick's article in the last issue of *Narrow River Notes*, concerning the spring fish run up Narrow River and Gilbert Stuart Brook ("Which fish?" you might ask and that's what we're here to figure out), stirred up a veritable hornet's nest of controversy. Okay, maybe not a whole nest—just one hornet. Well, actually just one relatively tame e-mail from fellow NRPA board member Steve Hale: "FYI (regarding the last NRPA newsletter), according to Arthur Gaines' article, the local nickname for the alewife is 'buckey,' not 'buckeye.' Buckeyes are in Ohio." Gaines, who had written his thesis on Narrow River while a URI student, wrote the introduction to a special 1991 issue of *Maritimes* devoted to the River. In his article (which can be found on NRPA's home page: www.narrowriver.org), he says: "During the decade I spent in Rhode Island (1964—1974) I knew the last of the river men (Thad Holburton, the Yoman brothers, Eban Carr and especially Bill Lacey), whose lives and livelihoods were closely connected with the River. They caught fish and blue crabs, oystered (pronounced 'ice'ted'),

rented boats and kept vegetable gardens. Their cottage industry, smoking the migratory river herring (alewife or buckey), gave rise to the local appellation 'Buckeytown' for the Bridgetown area of the River."

So which is correct? And are there really buckeyes in Ohio?

The second question is easier to answer. Buckeye is also the common name for five species of large shrubs or trees found in the southern and western U.S. They are related to the horse chestnut, a European tree frequently planted here as an ornamental, and all produce large, shiny, brown, chestnut-like seeds said to resemble the eyes of deer (Aha! It's beginning to make sense now.). The Ohio or fetid buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*) is apparently such a common tree there that the Ohio State University football team is nicknamed the "Buckeyes," which frankly doesn't sound very intimidating or athletic to me (though naming a team for some little fish, which can get fairly fetid themselves, would not be much better). Your intrepid crew of newsletter editors had already wrestled with the first question—our local name for the fish known to scientists (continued on page 3)



SCIENCE FAIR 2001 WINNERS

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

An Award 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, its watershed, and its communities as a unique, dynamic, and fragile ecosystem. This year, the students receiving the NRPA Science Fair Awards were presented with a certificate and a \$50 U.S. Savings Bond at a reception at the June 5th NRPA Board of Directors' meeting. Up to four Honorable Mentions are also given to students in each participating Watershed school in recognition of the student's participation in an experimentally designed, 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. The projects should follow the scientific method: an 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.

The judges also take into consideration each school's instructions for undertaking projects and their criteria for judging the projects.

The 2001 Winners are:

At the **North Kingstown Senior High**, North Kingstown, science fair held on January 22, the NRPA Science Fair Award was given to Dan Murphy for his project entitled: "What are the Short-Term Effects of Marine Engine Pollution on Marine Life?". Honorable Mentions were given to Stephanie Evans for "Milfoil Behind Bars", to James Polites for "Effects of Acid Rain on Minnows" and to Erik Unstal for "Bacteria in Ponds"

At the **Davisville Middle School, 8th grade** fair, held on January 26, in North Kingstown, the NRPA Science Fair Award was given to Gina Bessacini for her project: "Water Impurities and Plant Growth". Honorable Mentions were given to Kristin Ballou for "How Does the Amount of Oxygen in a New Aquarium Affect the Relaxation and Breathing Patterns of a Newly Purchased Pet Fish?", to Lindsay Gunther for "How Do Earthworms Affect the Growth of Plants?", to Ryan Maxwell for "Affects of Acid Rain on Freshwater Algae", and to Megan O'Dell for "How Does the pH Level of Water Affect the Germination Rate of Plants?"

At the **Davisville Middle School, 7th grade** fair, held on February 2 in North Kingstown, the NRPA Science Fair Award was given to Katie Henderson for her project: "Which Type of Water Makes Plants Grow Fastest?"



Honorable Mentions went to Derek Maroni for "How Do Different Soils Effect a Plant's Growth?", to Amy Plowman for "What Effect Does Salty and Soapy Water Have On Plants?" and to Ryan Twardowski for "Will Trees Grow Thicker With More Light?"

At the **South Kingstown Junior High**, South Kingstown, a science fair was held on February 7. The NRPA Science Fair Award was given to Kristen Bannon for her project: "Are the Waters in South County Healthy?" Honorable Mentions went to Mike Gobel for "Does Sediment Rate Affect Clam Burrowing Rate?", to Gregory J. LaPointe for "How to Clean Oil Out of Water", to Soliare Lazar and Allan Wang: for "Colored Lighting Environments - In What Colored Light Does a Bean Seed Grow Best?", and to Catherine Spirito and Minna Zhang: "How Does the Color of Light Affect Plant Growth?" This is the second year that Kristen Bannon received the NRPA Science Fair Award for an environmental science fair project, she also won last year when she was in 7th grade.

At elementary schools with science fairs, NRPA "Science Fair Participant Award" certificates are given out to students with appropriate environmental projects. Certificates are given in recognition of the quality of the student's work and its relevance to NRPA's mission. The science fair held at the Hamilton Elementary School in North Kingstown on May 17 was reviewed by NRPA Board members and 26 certificates were awarded.

The students from Hamilton Elementary that received a Certification of Participation in recognition of an appropriate environmental science project were: Miranda Amitrano, Charles Baker, Joshua Boyer, Alex Brown, Austin Brunero, Chiara Comolli, Emily Feeny, Leslie Govalet, Tom Green, Jacqueline Hurteau, Kristin Kruse, Graham Maione, Meredith May, Megan McGovern, Kate Miller, Haley Nixon, Drew O'Connors, Andy Paolucci, Allison Stasiuk, Sarah Steele, Christina Schmoeger, Chad Unger, Kaitlyn Vigue, Connor Walsh, Amanda Whaley, Bret Zimmerman.

For more information on these awards, or to let us know if your school is planning to hold a science fair next year, contact NRPA at 783-8437 or e-mail: nrpa@netsense.net or call 783-8437 for Veronica Berounsky, Science Fair Awards Coordinator.

"DAMMED" FISH?

as *Alosa pseudoharengus* or alewife, and to local people in other areas of the northeast U.S. and Canada as bigeye herring, branch herring, freshwater herring, gaspereau, grayback, gray herring, kyak, river herring, sawbelly or white herring. Everyone agreed on the pronunciation (buck'-ee, not buck'-eye); it was the spelling that we weren't sure about. The dictionary was no help, just sending us back to Ohio. To what authority could we turn?

Referring to the official Rhode Island state map, one can see that the outlet stream from Watchaug Pond in Charlestown into the Pawcatuck River is called Buckeye Brook, and it passes under Buckeye Brook Road. Both of these, I feel certain, were named for the fish and not some nutty bush in Ohio.

So no less an authority than the Rhode Island Department of Transportation has ruled in favor of "buckeye" over "buckey." I trust by this time you are building a clear mental image of a somewhat warped version of the courtroom scene from "Miracle on 34th Street"—a parade of RIDOT road workers wearing boots, hard-hats and fluorescent orange vests over grimy T-shirts, marching in carrying sacks of Buckeye Brook Road signs.

Case closed? I think so! Don't agree? Take it up with RIDOT. Now you know why we scientists stick to the Latin names—*Alosa pseudoharengus* doesn't seem quite so cumbersome any more, does it?

—Robert Kenney



NRPAs 14TH ANNUAL NARROW RIVER RUN



Citizens Bank presents a \$3,000 Narrow River Run sponsorship check to NRPAs. From left: Pat Terra (Citizens), John Maciel & Lesa Meng (NRPAs), Meg Healy (Citizens).

sors for making this a very successful event: **Citizens Bank**, our presenting sponsor, and Pierce Imports and AMICA Mutual Insurance Company, our benefactors.

Other major donors included: Banner Oldsmobile-Buick-GMC Truck Inc. Buck-ley Heating & Cooling · Charlie O's Tavern on the Point · The Dunes Club · Dunkin Donuts · Metalluxet Improvement Association · RI Automobile Dealers Association · South County Hospital. Contributors supporting the Race included: Belmont Fruit Company · Camire's Athletic Soles · Lecson Associates, Ltd. Mews Tavern · Ocean State Blueprints · Photo Plus · Pier Fuel Service Auto Body · River Bend Athletic Club · Stop & Shop Supermarket · Van Couygen & Lally Attorneys at Law.

Our Friend of the River thanks go to: Abbot Avon Packaging Corp · All That Matters · Applied Science Associates · At My Uncles · Bagelz · Birdwatcher's Nature View · Bonnet Shears · Bonnet Video Cabinet Connection · Casey's · Coast Guard

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. Special thanks also go to Seniors Helping Others and NRPAs many volunteers for their assistance with the Race and throughout the year. We are grateful to the Deluca and Dunkin families for providing water tables for over a decade for the runners. Thanks also to John Scott and Paul Stroup for providing assistance with traffic and timing. —*Lesa Meng & John Maciel*

NRPAs Annual Meeting — Fall 2001

Look for an upcoming announcement on our web site at www.narrowriver.org for the date of NRPAs 31st Annual Meeting, to be held this Fall on the campus of the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography.

PROTECTING ROME POINT

tion efforts in the upper reaches of the Narrow River watershed by the town of North Kingstown, the Narrow River Land Trust and the North Kingstown Land Conservancy, the 230 acre Rome Point parcel provides a valuable link in the creation of an open space corridor. Home to many species of wildlife and a large variety of plant life, Rome Point extends west from the shores of Narragansett Bay through deep woods and streams. Undisturbed corridors of open space

improve water quality and provide important habitat for wildlife. Since the headwaters of Narrow River border this corridor, NRPAs would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to Narragansett Electric for this generous gift.

As you reflect upon Narragansett Electric's donation, please take a moment to consider ways you may assist NRPAs in its mission to restore, preserve and protect Narrow River. —*Suzanne Vetromile*

NRPAs recently celebrated 14 years of "running along the River" with our annual Narrow River Run held on May 12th. This year we celebrated the ospreys that make their homes along the River and our race shirts depicted one of these majestic birds of prey in flight. The weather was hot and sunny and many runners took advantage of the free Citizens Bank water bottles available at the finish line. A record number of participants turned out, with over 475 people completing the race.

Glen Guillemette of West Warwick was the first male over the 10K line with a time of 34:26. Melissa Perkins-Banas of Norwich, CT was the first woman and 8th overall with a time of 38:41. The men's 5K race was won by Fred Bartlett of Narragansett with a time of 17:46. The women's 5K was won by Jessica McGarry of Massachusetts who was 4th overall with a time of 18:50. First places in the 5K all went to E.J. Otis of Narragansett (35:03) and Insa Wood of Barrington (38:17). First place winners in each age group for the 5K Run were: 0-18 yrs, Patrick Craven, North Kingstown (23:17), Alison Marshall, Narragansett (25:17), 19-39 yrs, Robert Corsi, John-son (18:22), Jessica McGarry, Massachusetts (18:50); 40-49 yrs, Fred Bartlett, Narragansett (17:46), Judith Thompson, Rumford (21:58); 50-59 yrs, Dennis McGarry, Wakefield (21:22), Linda Usher, Upton, MA (23:02); and 60-98 yrs, Michael Donnelly, Kingston (31:43), Jeannine Olsen, Providence (37:17).

The recent donation of Rome Point by Narragansett Electric, a subsidiary of National Grid USA, can serve as an inspiration for others to support land protection efforts. In this era when economic development often entails the loss of open space, Narragansett Electric's magnanimous decision to preserve Rhode Island's quality of life by protecting the health and economic viability of our communities. Combined with ongoing land protection

NRPAs thanks all of the following sponsors: Greenwich (42:29); Eter (57:04); and 60-98 yrs, Fred Tanner, E. Brownfield, ME (37:43), Deidre Robinson, Ex-Warwick (48:57), 50-59 yrs, Bob Reilly, West Warwick (34:26), Linda Austin, West-lich, CT (38:41); 40-49 yrs, Glen Guillemette, Valley (36:26), Melissa Perkins-Banas, North-derstown (59:39); 19-39 yrs, Steve Nerl, Hope North Kingstown (47:10), Eleni Gesch, Saun-10K Run were: 0-18 yrs, Bronson Venable, Olse-

