

# NARROW RIVER NOTES

Newsletter of the Narrow River Preservation Association

Summer 2003

## Annual Meeting: Sept. 9, 2003

The Narrow River Preservation Association's (NRPA) 33rd Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 9, 2003 in the Coastal Institute auditorium on the University of Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay Campus. The evening starts at 7:00 pm with refreshments, raffle ticket sales, and exhibits. The meeting will begin at 7:30. On the agenda will be a review of the year's activities, a budget summary, up-dates on important water quality and land-use issues, election of officers and board members, presentations of special awards, and a keynote speaker. The evening will conclude with the drawing of the winning ticket in this year's Kayak Raffle.

Our keynote speaker will be Kevin Cute, a Marine Resource Specialist with

the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council. Mr. Cute has been invited to speak on the topic of developing a "recreational boating plan" for Narrow River.

This year's experiences with the issues of regulating PWCs and opposing the amendment to the Narrow River SAM Plan point out the substantial differences in the planning process between land use and waterway use. There apparently is no waterway in Rhode Island with an existing recreational boating plan, so learning more about how to develop such a plan should be helpful to all NRPA members and Watershed residents.

—Robert D. Kenney &  
Melissa Hughes

## 2003 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

For the ninth year in a row, NRPA has awarded \$500 college scholarships to two seniors graduating from high schools in the Narrow River Watershed. This year's NRPA Scholarships were awarded to Kyle Marshall of Narragansett High School and Lindsey Casagrande of South Kingstown High School.

Applicants for the scholarships were judged on the quality of an original essay about the impact of human activity on a watershed, their participation in environmentally-oriented activities in and out of school, a science teacher's recommendation, and academic achievement in science courses.

Kyle and Lindsey were very active in environmental programs during high school. Kyle participated on his school's Envirothon team for two years, in addition to volunteering for Earth Day and Narragansett Beach clean-ups for many years. Lindsey volunteered many hours with the University of Rhode Island's Learning Landscape and Greenshare Programs, in which young children learn about the wellness of the environment and how that affects the organisms in it.

College scholarships are an important component of NRPA's Environmental

Youth Achievement Program. The program was created to: 1) promote academic achievement of young people in the sciences and 2) recognize environmentally-oriented activities conducted in the Watershed by young people from kindergarten through high school.

—Melissa Hughes

*Dear Narrow River Preservation Association,*

*I am honored to have been chosen the recipient of your scholarship. I am glad you were able to acknowledge the work I have done and the interest I have in the field of environmental sciences and preservation. I plan to take a volunteer internship this summer at URI's Bay Campus researching ichthyoplankton and other organisms. This experience will be invaluable to me as I enter the field of environmental sciences at the University of Rhode Island this fall. Thank you for your consideration.*

*Sincerely,  
Lindsey Casagrande  
(South Kingstown High School)*

## PERSONAL WATERCRAFT UPDATE

At the time of this newsletter, none of the three Watershed towns has moved forward on banning, or at least more strictly regulating, personal watercraft (PWCs) on Narrow River. The Town Councils in both Narragansett and South Kingstown have declined to take action, instead favoring operator education and stepped-up, but limited (only on some week-ends) enforcement of existing state regulations. The Town Council in North Kingstown, while seemingly supportive of a ban, also elected to take no action, apparently feeling that it would be ineffective without a coordinated policy by all three towns.

Given the situation, Watershed residents and visitors are encouraged to do all they can to keep the issue on the front burner:

- Contact your Town Council members and encourage them to support a ban on PWCs on Narrow River.
- If you see any violations of state regulations (e.g., travel at more than minimum speed within 200 feet of shore, swimmers or moored boats; wake-jumping; reckless or unsafe operation) or are disturbed by excessive noise, report it to the police. Try to get the registration number, and photos or video can be especially helpful. Give us a call at 783-6277, or send us an e-mail at [nrpa@netsense.net](mailto:nrpa@netsense.net), documenting your complaint and telling us how it was handled (e.g., did the police take your name and the complaint, or just tell you that they didn't have a boat on the River that day?).

Police phone numbers:  
Narragansett: 789-1091  
North Kingstown: 294-3316  
South Kingstown: 783-3321

## The President's Cove



With so much discussion going on about real estate revaluation, property taxes, and protection of our natural environment, it is easy to see that conditions within the Narrow River Watershed are important to everyone in one way or another. If there was nobody there to keep watch and to help in protecting the River and the Watershed, it would become increasingly more polluted which would negatively affect land values for everybody. It is in everyone's best interest to have the levels of all forms of pollution decreasing, not increasing. The best way of fortifying a program of watershed protection is to pay attention, look at every issue, and do something about it when anything comes up that could negatively impact our environment. That is NRPA's mission—to be the beacon that spot-lights areas of concern and strongly advocates for the River, the Watershed, and all of the homeowners and residents in the Watershed and surrounding areas of Narragansett, North Kingstown, and South Kingstown. Your values are our values, both financial and environmental.

NRPA's River Watch water testing program, which has now been running for thirteen years, continues to show where the bacterial pollution "hot spots" are along the River. In most cases those hot spots are where the highest densities of homes are located. Most of the pollution does not come from single identifiable sources, but comes from entire developed areas of houses and lawns (so-called non-point-source runoff). However, there may be at least two hot spots on the River with high coliform bacteria levels that might not be from non-point-source runoff: in the Mumford Brook and Middle Bridge areas. Those areas are under study at this time by RIDEM.

The new stormwater detention pond program, with its first phase nearing completion at Circuit Drive in Narragansett, attempts to attack the problem of runoff. I encourage you to take a drive down Wampum Road to look at that detention pond and see your NRPA programs at work. Another detention pond is being planned for Mettatuxet Beach. However, even with these major improvements being built and put into operation, it is still important that every household be aware of caring for the Watershed by being careful with lawn fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides, animal wastes, motor oil, and anything else harmful that, if it goes on the ground or into a storm drain, *will* eventually end up in the River.

How we care for the River will affect the value of all the property in the Watershed. The River and the surrounding land are fragile. The way that we treat the Watershed affects everyone who lives, works, or plays nearby. Don't forget, NRPA's long-term advocacy is a major reason why we still have extensive areas of open space along the River, instead of development as far as the eye can see. That sort of vigilance does not come without cost and effort—volunteers do much of our work, but for issues like the petition to amend the SAM Plan (see "CRMC Hearing" story on page 3), we need to pay significant amounts for attorneys and expert witnesses.

Step up to the challenge—join NRPA and support the volunteer work of our Watershed protection programs. Partner with NRPA's efforts by contributing at whatever level is comfortable. As little as renewing or reactivating your NRPA membership will be helpful. Contributing in any other manner, such as through a matching gift program at work, or by a major donation through a trust fund, or by giving your time and/or advice as a volunteer, will help us to strengthen the water quality, land use, and education programs of NRPA.

— Richard B. Grant

# 6239

NRPA is part of the United Way Workplace Campaign. This is our donor option number

If you plan to make a United Way donation, please consider designating a portion of your gift to NRPA.

### NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

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#### *Narrow River Notes*

Published quarterly by Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA)

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## PLEASE JOIN US OR RENEW

(see membership envelope enclosed with this newsletter)

*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.*

## NRPA OFFICE STATUS AND FUTURE GOALS

NRPA's Executive Director, Tony Lachowicz, resigned effective in June in order to pursue other opportunities. After initially beginning a search for a new Executive Director, the NRPA Board of Directors decided to suspend the search and take some time to re-evaluate the organization's structure, finances, and long-term goals. During this interim period, NRPA president Richard Grant and the Board have made a commitment to the residents of the Watershed and friends of Narrow River to maintain the organization's present level of activities. Our goal is to ensure that NRPA remains a strong and effective advocate for environmental protection issues involving the Watershed.

At the present time, we are undertak-

ing a full evaluation of NRPA's goals, programs, organizational structure, and fundraising capacity. We have begun discussions with a group of outside professionals who are skilled and experienced in working with grassroots non-profit organizations to assist them in achieving their goals. The specific goal of this project is to retain NRPA as the leader in effective environmental protection for the Narrow River Watershed and to create a stronger self-sustaining organization with a more solid financial base. This will enable NRPA to be a stronger advocate for a healthy River in the face of increasing residential development pressure, population increases, and stress from documented pollution

sources.

During this period of self-study and restructuring, the NRPA office at 750 Boston Neck Road in Narragansett will remain open. Our Program Coordinator, Jeremy Doak, has taken over responsibility for all of the office functions. However, Jeremy only works part-time for NRPA, so the hours when the office is staffed have been reduced. If you have stopped by the office and found nobody there, or if it took longer than you expected to get a response to your phone call or email, you now know why. We ask for your continued patience during this transition period.

—Richard B. Grant &  
Robert D. Kenney

## CRMC HEARING ON WALMSLEY LANE DOCKS

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) received a petition in February 2002 from six residents along Walmsley Lane to amend the Narrow River Special Area Management (SAM) Plan. The SAM Plan currently prohibits the construction of docks in all areas designated as "lands of critical concern," even adjacent to Type 2 waters where docks would otherwise be allowed. Walmsley Lane is located on the west side of Narrow River, north of Lacy Bridge, in both South Kingstown and North Kingstown (the name changes to River Road in North Kingstown). Because it lies within designated "lands of critical concern," docks are not allowed, although some properties there do have docks, since they already existed when the SAM Plan was first approved. The petitioners are arguing that prohibiting them from having docks, while some of the neighbors in the same area have them, is unfair and discriminatory. They also argue that it is inappropriate to regulate waterway usage based on land-use classifications.

Over a year passed while CRMC staff reviewed the petition, collected information, studied the issues, and so-

licited comments from interested parties. The NRPA Board voted to submit a letter recommending that the petition be denied and docks not be allowed. Other commenters included land trusts and both towns. The written comments received by CRMC were unanimous in opposition to the petition amending the SAM Plan. Many comments suggested that such an amendment for the benefit of a handful of residents could lead to excessive development along the River and an accompanying degradation of environmental quality. Although the SAM Plan deals primarily with land use, a major objective of the Plan was the protection of Narrow River. In addition, some of the properties also have conservation easements strictly banning any activity or development in a 200-foot buffer zone along the River or in the adjacent waterway. The CRMC staff report concluded that amending the SAM Plan as requested has the potential to impact many other areas along the Narrow River shoreline, as well as areas adjacent to the salt ponds in southern Rhode Island. This staff report strongly recommended denial of the petition.

A CRMC subcommittee, composed of chairman Mike Tikoian, Sue Sosnowski from South Kingstown, and Harry Beckwith from North Kingstown, began holding a formal hearing on the matter on June 30. At the hearing, witnesses for either side can present sworn testimony on the issues and be questioned by attorneys for both sides. NRPA has filed a "petition to intervene," which gives us legal standing to participate in the hearing process and act as an advocate for Narrow River. NRPA has hired an attorney to oversee our case, and an expert witness to testify on our behalf. Board member Julia Randall Sharpe has taken the lead for organizing and planning our case. After the first session, the hearing was continued to July 24 and then to August 7, with the possibility of continuing for additional sessions.

Once the hearing ends, the subcommittee will prepare a final report and recommendation. Their report will be submitted to the next full CRMC meeting, and the petition will be put on the agenda for decision at the following CRMC meeting.

—Robert D. Kenney

## KAYAK RAFFLE

NRPA is raffling off a kayak donated by *the Kayak Centre of Wickford*. Tickets are only \$2 each or 3 for \$5  
 ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTLY BENEFIT NARROW RIVER  
 The drawing will take place on September 9, 2003 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.

## NRPA'S 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NARROW RIVER RUN

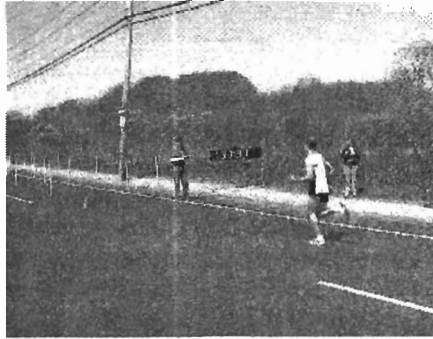
NRPA recently celebrated 16 years of "running along the River" with the 2003 Narrow River Run presented by Citizens Bank on May 10<sup>th</sup>. The weather was perfect for running, with blue skies and warm temperatures for both the 10K and 5K runs and the 5K walk. Kevin D'Amanda of Newport, RI was the first male over the 10K line with a time of 37:06. Jeni Thompson of Saunderstown, RI was the first woman overall with a time of 44:05. Our men's 5K race was won by Andrew Palumbo of Narragansett, RI in 18:03. And the winning time in the women's 5K was 23:36, by Shelly Dipietro of Narragansett, RI.

The first place winners in each age group for the 5K Run were:

0-18: Andrew Palumbo, Narragansett (18:03); Alyssa Gaglione, Cranston (24:00)

19-39: Scott Magilton, Narragansett (21:55); Majurie Muller, Providence (24:26)

40-49: Fred Bartlett, Narragansett (18:05); Shelly Dipietro, Narragansett



*2nd place overall winner Ken Kirejczyk crossing finish line.*

(23:26)

50-59: William Moran, Springfield, VA (22:24); Deborah Molnar, Cranston (28.21)

60-98: Buddy Ekno, North Kingstown (42:36); Marilyn Joblanski (36:05)

First place winners in each age group for the 10K Run were:

19-39: Ken Kirejczyk (37:51); Jeni Thompson, Saunderstown (44:05)

40-49: Kevin D'Amanda, Newport (37:06); Diane Gaglione, Cranston (46:07)

50-59: Don Baker, Cranston (40:42); Shirley Masessa, Deluth, MN (49:11)

60-69: Armenio Ferreira, Cranston (38:58); Gretel Kelly, Warwick (68:46)

70-98: John McGowan, Warwick (49:57)

NRPA wishes to say a particular "Thank You" to the folks at Citizens Bank, who have been the presenting sponsor of the Narrow River Run for the last six years. We would also like to thank: the URI Bay Campus, the Narragansett Police Department, the Narragansett Recreation Department, and the South Kingstown Police Department for assisting us with this event. Special thanks also to Seniors Helping Others, and to NRPA's many other volunteers for their assistance with the Road Race and throughout the year.

*—Lesla Meng & John Maciel  
 Race Co-Chairs*

*Construction on the Middle Bridge replacement was proceeding as expected in June 2003.*



*Digital photo-montage by Jon Boothroyd*

