



# NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River and the Watershed

Summer 2007

## 20th Annual Road Race

NRPA's 20th annual Narrow River Road Race on May 19th was a big success. The weather was cooperative, though a little threatening, and everyone loves the new course we created last year—from the Narragansett Town Beach to Treaty Rock Park in South Kingstown and back. Crossing the new Middle Bridge over Narrow River is an exhilarating sight and was enjoyed by runners and walkers alike.

NRPA would like to express our sincere thanks to Citizens Bank for another year as our Presenting Sponsor. We also thank all of our other sponsors for their cash, gift certificate, or in-kind donations, including A Quick Tire/Auto Service, AAA Southern New England, Abbott Action, Advanced Auto Body, All Outdoors Power Equipment, All That Matters, Alternative Food Co-op, American Express Financial Advisors, American Power Conversion, Amica Mutual Insurance Company, Applied Science Associates, Arnold Lumber, Atlantek, Inc., Aunt's Attic, Avery Piano Co., Avery-Storti Funeral

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*(continued on page 3)*

## 2nd Annual Turnaround Swim

The weather was beautiful—dry and sunny—for the second annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim on Saturday, June 23rd, although almost anything would have been an improvement over last year's weather! We had 125 swimmers participate—the maximum allowed by the insurance policy's limit (we'll increase that limit for next year!). Water temperature was just about 70°F. The combined sound and picture was memorable—the “swoosh” of many arms churning through the water and a herd of bobbing orange swim caps—moving out from the beach at the URI Campanella Rowing Center off Walmsley Lane in North Kingstown, RI, around a buoy half a mile down the River, and back to the start. It looked as though a school of a new species of fish had been released in Narrow River. There was a breeze coming out of the north, so the homeward leg of the Swim was a bit tougher than the outbound leg, but the cheering of spectators on the shore and in boats was helpful.

*(continued on page 5)*

## NRPA 37th Annual Meeting October 2nd, 2007, URI Bay Campus

NRPA invites our members to our 2007 Annual Meeting—our 37th. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 2nd, in our usual meeting room—Room 108 in the Center for Atmospheric Chemistry Studies (CACS) on the URI Bay Campus. Refreshments will be served at 7:00 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 7:30.

We are doing things a little bit differently this year. After several years of low turnouts, the Board decided to dispense with a large, formal annual meeting. We hope to have a different fun and social (and “summery”) function for the membership in the middle of the winter. However, we still need to provide our members with

the opportunity to hear what we've done for the last year, vote on the 2007-2008 budget, and elect Board members and officers. So we're planning to dedicate the first part of our usual monthly meeting to that annual meeting business. We hope that you will join us. In fact, NRPA members are always welcome at our monthly Board meetings—on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

The URI Bay Campus is at the end of South Ferry Road in Narragansett. The CACS building is number 11 on the campus map (<http://www.gso.uri.edu/aboutGSO/campusmap.html>), on the left-hand side as you drive in. There is plenty

of parking in the big lot just left of the entrance road. Room 108 is the conference room on the right just inside the front door of the building.

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

President's Cove Update:	Pg 2
“Row & Glow” on Narrow River:	Pg 2
An AWESome Class!:	Pg 3
NRPA Science Fair Awards:	Pg 4
NRPA 2007 Scholarships:	Pg 4
A Win-Win-Win for the Environment:	Pg 6
Carl W. Otto Bequest:	Pg 7

# The President's Cove

I would like to speak to you candidly.

The annual membership drive is underway at NRPA. At the beginning of each year NRPA lines up our programs for the coming year. Volunteers sign up as River Watch monitors and take the training classes, with many folks renewing their participation year after year. The testing data from this program is the basis for many of the improvements that have happened along the River. The AWESome teacher-training course at URI happens in the Spring semester, taking time by quite a few of the NRPA Board members to organize. This program has now reached out to over 2200 students, with the numbers growing every year. Our College Scholarship program, Science Fair Awards program, newsletters, fund-raising activities, and reviews of CRMC development applications all require a substantial time commitment by many individuals. Your participation as a member is also essential.

Not all of us can find the time to work on NRPA programs, but everyone can become a member. Membership fees provide a lot of the necessary income to run the programs, in fact they are one of the most vital elements of our fund-raising campaign. The Narrow River Road Race, the Turnabout Swim, and the Kayak Raffle generate donations that provide further funding, but annual membership is the engine that makes it all work. Without the support of Watershed residents and friends of Narrow River, our work to improve conditions for all the communities of life in the Watershed would not happen. We count on your support. It could be your way of participating.

During the past year our membership has grown, but we would still love to see every household in the Watershed represented. Our income from the Narrow River Preservation/John Elder Dick Endowment, managed for us by the Rhode Island Foundation, also grew. We had a sizable donation from the Otto family, which we have added to the endowment fund. Other donations through corporate matching funds and United Way similarly increased in 2006-07.

Thirty-six years of effort by NRPA and its members is paying off. Your membership dues make the programs happen. It is one way that you can contribute to the success of NRPA.

I look forward to hearing from you through your membership participation.

—Richard B. Grant



## MISSION STATEMENT

The Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) works to preserve, protect, and restore the natural environment and the quality of life of all the communities within the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River Estuary and Watershed.

[www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org)

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## "Row & Glow" on Narrow River

NRPA and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) are co-sponsoring an evening paddle on the Narrow River to experience bioluminescent comb jellies (Mnemiopsis) on Friday, August 24, 2007 starting at 8:00 pm. Little is understood about these weakly swimming animals that appear in the Narrow River, as well as other estuaries and coastal waters, in the late summer and emit light as fireflies do on land. However, when it is very dark on a still night, paddlers are rewarded with the sight of small, glowing orbs in the water, swirling away from their boats with each paddle stroke.

NRPA and WPWA are teaming up for this event to highlight some of the special features of estuaries in Rhode Island. Participants will learn a little about natural bioluminescence, as well as about Narrow River, Pawcatuck River, and their watersheds. They will also enjoy a pleasant, 90-minute paddle on a summer night.

(continued on page 8)

# 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

## An AWESome Class!

In the spring of 2007, a 35-hour teacher-training course at URI, Watershed Science for Educators (NRS 591), was conducted for NRPA. Funding for this course was provided in part by a grant from the Chace Foundation. NRPA contracted with Denise Poyer, Program Director of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association and watershed educator, to provide instruction. NRPA also provided teachers with the updated edition of



Identifying animals caught in the seine  
(all 3 photos by V.M. Berounsky)

the Narrow River Active Watershed Education (AWESome!) curriculum guide, topographic maps, GIS maps, and other materials.

Twenty-two teachers and one administrator took the workshop. Twenty of the participants received three graduate-level credits through URI's College of Continuing Education, and one retired teacher received continuing education hours. The teachers taught in grades ranging from kindergarten to high school science and had different backgrounds in science. (continued on page 6)



**Rhode Island Rivers Council**  
Working together to protect and restore  
Rhode Island's rivers and their watersheds

## 20th Annual Road Race (continued)

Food For Thought, Foxwoods Golf and Country Club, Fred Smith Auto Dealers, Gallup Marine Service, Inc., Gates Insurance Agency, Inc., Gates, Leighton & Associates, Geaber's Liquors, Gerald Mosca, Gillette's Home & Garden Centers, Goodrich-Blessing Agency, Gooseberry Dockbuilding Inc., Hal's Garage, Hera Gallery, Highland Farm, Leeson Associates, Nardolillo Funeral Home, New England Runner, Newport Appraisals, Ocean State Blueprints, Picture This, Pier Fuel, Pierce Imports, Ram Point Marina, RB Grant & Associates, RI Auto Dealers Association, Roch's Fresh Foods, Ronald and Holly Fiore, Ryan's Market, Silver Spring Marina, SmithCo Oil Service, South County Garden Club, Sweenor's Chocolates, The Dunes Club, The Kayak Centre, Town Meats, Twin Willows, Uncle Sam's Army/Navy, Van Couyghen & Lally, Wickford Factory Outlet, Wilson's Of Wickford, and Yankee Travel.

We deeply thank all of the runners and walkers plus the innumerable volunteers. It's your support that has kept us working and caring for the Narrow River the past thirty-five years. We also thank John James Audubon for painting the osprey picture on the t-shirt, even if it was over a century and a half ago.



The start of the 10K at the Narragansett Town Beach (photo by R.D. Kenney)

The men's overall 10K winner was Keven

O'Neil of North Kingstown, who finished in 32:47. The women's overall 10K winner was Claire Gadrow, who finished in 40:57. In the 5K race, the men's top finisher, in 18:54, was Patrick Quinn of Wakefield, and the top woman finisher was Andrea Brayman of Jamestown, with a time of 19:34 (22 seconds faster than her first-place time last year!). First-place finishers in each age class were:

- Men's 10K, 60-69, Fred Thorne, Warren, 44:57
- Men's 10K, 50-59, John Brennan, North Kingstown, 38:31
- Men's 10K, 40-49, Martin Tighe, Providence, 35:49
- Men's 10K, 19-39, Keven O'Neil
- Women's 10K, 40-49, Jodi Hall, Wakefield, 47:34
- Women's 10K, 19-39, Claire Gadrow
- Men's 5K, 60-69, Richard Geisler, Saunderstown, 26:58
- Men's 5K, 50-59, Gary Rose, Cranston, 22:19
- Men's 5K, 40-49, Patrick Quinn
- Men's 5K, 19-39, Bill Retelle, Warwick, 20:17
- Men's 5K, 1-18, Mason Burton, Wakefield, 19:37
- Women's 5K, 60-69, Kathleen Kelly, North Kingstown, 35:40
- Women's 5K, 50-59, Lynne Hale, Saunderston, 31:02
- Women's 5K, 40-49, Paula Whalen, Wyoming, 26:21
- Women's 5K, 19-39, Andrea Brayman
- Women's 5K, 1-18, Mollie Anderson, East Greenwich, 23:04

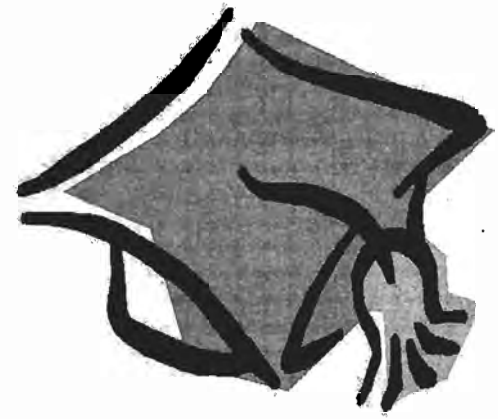
All of our available photos of this year's race have been uploaded so that anyone can get copies for themselves. Simply go to <http://www.gso.uri.edu/~rkenney/photos/roadrace/> and click on any file name to open the picture.

—Richard B. Grant

# NRPA Science Fair Awards

In order to encourage the curiosity of young scientists and to help them gain respect for the environment, we have judged high school and middle school science fairs in Narragansett, North Kingstown, and South Kingstown for NRPA Science Fair Awards since at least 1989. One "Award" is given to a 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. "Honorable Mentions" are given to students in each school in recognition of the student's participation in a well-done, environmentally oriented project with relevance to our goals. We also visit elementary school science fairs to present "Participant Award" certificates to students with appropriate environmental projects.

Students receiving the 2007 "Narrow River Preservation Association Science Fair Award" received a certificate, a \$50 U.S. Saving Bond, and an NRPA membership, and



## NRPA 2007 College Scholarships

For the 15th year, NRPA awarded scholarships to seniors graduating from high schools in the Narrow River Watershed. The 2007 NRPA Scholarships were awarded to Brett Cook of Narragansett High School and Catherine Coupland 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 the Narrow River Watershed, their participation in environmentally-oriented activities in and out of school, a science teacher's recommendation, and academic achievement in science and math courses.

Brett and Catherine were active in environmental endeavors during high school. Brett participated in the Rhode Island Envirothon from grades 10 through 12 and was also a member of Narragansett's National Ocean Science Bowl team in grades 11 and 12. In addition, he was a water-quality monitor on the Narrow River in 2006. Catherine holds a position at the Graduate School of Oceanography assisting with nutrient sampling, the Coastal Hypoxia Research Program, and EPA's National Coastal Assessment program.

—Melissa Hughes



Winners of the 2007 NRPA Science Fair Awards for outstanding environmental science projects (left to right): Caitlin Downing, Hayley Feaster, and Victoria Gu (photo by V.M. Berounsky).

took part in a reception at a Board of Directors' meeting. They will also be recognized at the our Annual Meeting in October. Students receiving "Honorable Mentions" were recognized at that Board of Directors' meeting, and will be again at the Annual Meeting.

At North Kingstown High School, the winner was Caitlin Downing of Jamestown, with the project: "Do time of day, water temperature, and air temperature affect the dissolved oxygen levels in bay water?" The two Honorable Mentions were Kelsey Evans for "Does temperature have an effect on water's dissolved oxygen?" and Julia Heinzmann for "How will the runoff of a restaurant affect the pH of a stream?"

At Curtis Corner Middle School in Wakefield, Hayley Feaster and Victoria Gu, both of Wakefield, worked together on the winning project, entitled "Save our skies."

### There were four Honorable Mentions:

- Rob Cruz – "Global warming and the affects of increased CO2 levels on plants."
- Tony Kern and Chandler Dupré – "Salty situation."
- Jacob Sargent – "If the acid rain falls."
- Jordan Towle – "Which is cleaner? Indian River or Saugatucket?"

If you know of any schools in the Watershed planning science fairs next year, please let us know at: Narrow River Preservation Association, P.O. Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874, 783-NARR, [nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org).

—Veronica M. Berounsky



## 2nd Annual Turnaround Swim *(continued)*

One of the event co-chairs, Mick Westkott, the URI swimming and diving coach, noted “Our real purpose is to bring more awareness to people and show them that Narrow River is a place that is safe for open-water swimming.” That was definitely accomplished, with such a large field of swimmers from throughout New England. The other co-chair, Narragansett Elementary School physical education teacher Paul McCaffery, noted “We felt it was a good time to show how much the NRPA has done for Narrow River. They’ve been instrumental in cleaning the river and have done a great job.” Over \$3700 was raised, which will be used to help fund NRPA’s education, preservation, and protection programs, including the Active Watershed Education (AWESome) program used in local schools and the River Watch water-quality monitoring program, now in its 16th year.



*125 swimmers starting off the 2nd Narrow River Turnaround Swim (photo by Elizabeth Lee).*

Youth again prevailed, as it did in the first Swim last year, with teenagers capturing the top two places. The first finisher was Christine Kaufmann of Belmont, Massachusetts, with a time of 23:30. The second finisher, and first male, was Luca Spinazzola of Narragansett (last year’s top swimmer) with a time of 24:00. The top ten was rounded out by Fred Bartlett, Narragansett; Robert Glenn, Haddonfield, New Jersey; John Bailey, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Bruce Novis, Jamestown; Graham Eve, North Providence; Thomas Gleason, Middletown; Ellen Ramsey, Belmont, Massachusetts; and Kathryn Haron, North Kingstown. The hometowns of the top ten finishers were indicative of the field as a whole—swimmers came from as close as Walmsley Lane and other locations in the Watershed to as far as Maine and New Jersey! Complete Swim results can be found at the NRPA web site; [www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org), search on “swim” and click on “2007 results.”

NRPA and the Turnaround Swim committee would like to thank the swim sponsors, the press, and the many volunteers who contributed to the success of this event. Business sponsors included Graphic Expressions, Wakefield; Varsity Swim Shop, North Reading, MA; URI Rowing; Christopher and Regan Insurance, North Kingstown; Big Fitness, Pawtucket; Hill’n’Harrier Track Club, East Greenwich; Roch’s Fresh Foods, Narragansett; Ryan Center, Kingston; White Rose Real Estate, Narragansett; WalMart, North Kingstown; Dave’s Marketplace, East Greenwich; Picture This, Wakefield; and DB’s Pizza, Wakefield. Individuals who donated to the swim include: Carla Andronowitz, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Choquette, Marlene Dufault, Richard & Gloria Limbird, and an anonymous donor. Local news coverage was provided by both the *South County Independent* and the *Narragansett Times* with results posted in their newspapers the week after the swim. NBC Channel 10 highlighted the swim in their Watershed Report that aired on June 21st.

On the weekend of the swim, there were numerous volunteers who participated as lifeguards, safety kayakers, safety boat operators, course setters, and others who manned the registration table, the food table, and the NRPA information table. RiverWatch volunteers took water samples on a previous day and URI Watershed Watch Program Director Linda Green and Program Coordinator Elizabeth Herron made sure the samples were run in time to affirm the River was safe for swimming. The Swim committee (Paul McCaffrey, Mick Westkott, Felix Sarubbi, Jason McNamee, Lori Pugh, Shelagh Donohoe, Perry Moylan, Richard Grant, Pat Gannon, Karen DeQuattro, Owen Devine, and Veronica Berounsky) worked hard before, during, and after the Swim.

We plan to hold the 3rd Annual Turnaround Swim on Saturday, June 21st, 2008! Mark your calendar now!

—Veronica M. Berounsky

## An AWESome Class *(continued)*

Most teachers taught in schools from the Narrow River Watershed towns of North Kingstown and South Kingstown.

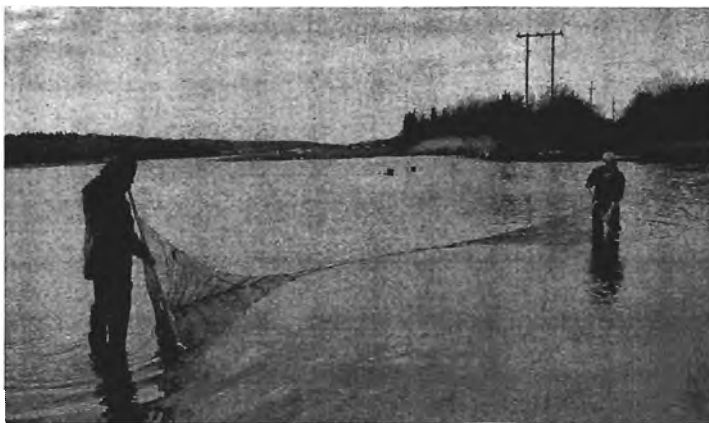
Other teachers came from Central Falls Middle School, Chariho Middle School, and Cole Middle School in East Greenwich. In addition, four private or charter schools were represented:

The Compass School in South Kingstown, Quest-Montessori School and Nuweetoon School in Exeter, and Kingston Hill Academy in North Kingstown.

Besides a digital presentation of the Narrow River Watershed by Veronica Berounsky, two other guests were invited to speak during the course. David Miller, a graduate student in Soil Sciences from the URI Dept. of Natural Resource Sciences, gave a talk on soils, followed with hands-on activities for the teachers. Annette DeSilva, NRPA River Watch Coordinator, gave a presentation on volunteer water-quality monitoring in Narrow River and recent results.

Grades were based on three factors: participation in discussions during the course, a 15-minute oral presentation on a watershed-related topic of their choice, and a final paper on a lesson plan to be used as an extension to their existing curriculum based on information from the course. The oral presentations included Golf Course Impacts to the Environment, Landfills and Watersheds, Waste Water Treatment Plants, Upland Invasive Species of the Narrow River Watershed, Purple Loosestrife, Hunting Hermes (anaerobic bacteria) in the Narrow River Deep Ponds, How Fish Ladders Work, Canonchet Farm Master Plan, *Phragmites*, Public Survey of Dams, Colonial History of Narrow River, Fish Populations of Queen River, Effects of Recreational Activities on the Watershed, River Ecology and Human Impacts in Three Areas of Narrow River. All of these presentations demonstrated a high level of understanding of new topics presented during the course and creative ways to present the topics. One 4th grade teacher wrote a book about *Phragmites*' effect on the Narrow River Watershed from the perspective of the wildlife.

Participants rated the field trips and hands-on activities the highest. All indicated they will use, or have already started using, information and material from the course in their classrooms. One teacher commented: "This has been one of the better professional



*Seining near Sprague Bridge*

development courses that I have taken in some time. All topic material addressed in class was done so in a professional manner. The materials provided and opportunities presented in class were much more than what was expected. The course also provided the opportunity to network with other teachers at different levels. This is an excellent program which has a lot to offer to not only educational professionals, and individuals who live in the communities directly linked to the Narrow River...but to individuals who live in other watershed areas and in this state!!"

— Denise Poyer &

Veronica M. Berounsky

## A Win-Win-Win for the Environment

In an effort to balance the State's budget earlier this year, the Governor proposed selling Camp Pastore, on the north side of Watchaug Pond in Charlestown. Such a sale would open up about 50 acres of mostly undeveloped, wooded, waterfront land for residential or commercial development. Since the land had been taken by the State originally under eminent domain for open space purposes, environmental organizations across the state strongly opposed the sale.

Charlie Vandemoer from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, manager of the Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuges, made a proposal to the State that would preserve the Camp Pastore property as open space and protect an additional property in the Narrow River Watershed, while at the same time helping out with the State's budget problems. He proposed that the Fish & Wildlife Service would purchase, at fair market value, a 70-acre parcel in South Kingstown that is presently owned by the State. That property lies within the defined boundary of the John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge, on the western shore of Pettaquamscutt Cove and downhill from the Oliver Stedman Government Building on Route 1. In return, the State would

*(continued on page 7)*



*Testing a water sample*

# Environment

(continued)

agree to permanently preserve the Camp Pastore property as undeveloped open space.

This solution would be even better than a win-win; it's a win-win-win. The Chafee Refuge would grow by 70 acres, protecting the wildlife and habitats known to be there. The Camp Pastore property in Charlestown would also be protected, safeguarding the resources there and nearby in Watchaug Pond, the Burlingame Management Area, Audubon's Kimball Wildlife Refuge, and the Kettle Pond tract of the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge. And the State would be paid the market value of the South Kingstown land, helping to balance the budget.

The last we knew, the Camp Pastore sale was still included in the budget, but the Governor was now opposed to the sale, and Charlie's proposal was on the table. Stay tuned.

—Robert D. Kenney

# Carl W. Otto Bequest

[Carl William Otto, a resident of Middlebridge Road in South Kingstown, passed away on November 8, 2006. According to the obituary in the Brown alumni magazine, he was a member of the American Chemical Society for 56 years, and enjoyed gardening and playing poker. He loved the Narrow River, and in his will he left more than \$12,000 to NRPA to help us protect the River and the Watershed. We have added his generous bequest to our endowment at the Rhode Island Foundation, where it will generate income in perpetuity. We received the following note from his sister.]

Carl was born in Providence on November 25, 1923. He went to Brown for one semester, when he was drafted into the Navy. He was in the Navy for three years. He returned to Brown on his discharge and graduated in 1950 with a B.Sc. degree in chemistry.

He worked at the U.S. Rubber Company, but left to keep his sisters company while they attended New York University. He went looking for a job in New York, and ended up working for the Air Reduction Company, and was sent to their Pure Carbonic Division as an engineer. He worked for the same company—now the British Oxygen Company—until his retirement in 1982. When he was forty he decided that he would get ready for retirement by growing flowers and herbs for his sisters.

We bought the property on the Narrow River in the late 60's. We built the house there, which was ready to move into during a snow storm on April 1st, 1970.

Carl had a wonderful mind for figures, and managed to make lots of money in the stock market. He gave most of his assets to non-profit organizations on his death.

—Edna Otto



Gray skies and rolling surf at the Narragansett Town Beach on the day of the Narrow River Road Race (photo by R.D. Kenney)

## PLEASE JOIN US OR RENEW!

Narrow River Preservation Association welcomes your support:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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Benefactor \$500 or more       Family \$50       Student \$10  
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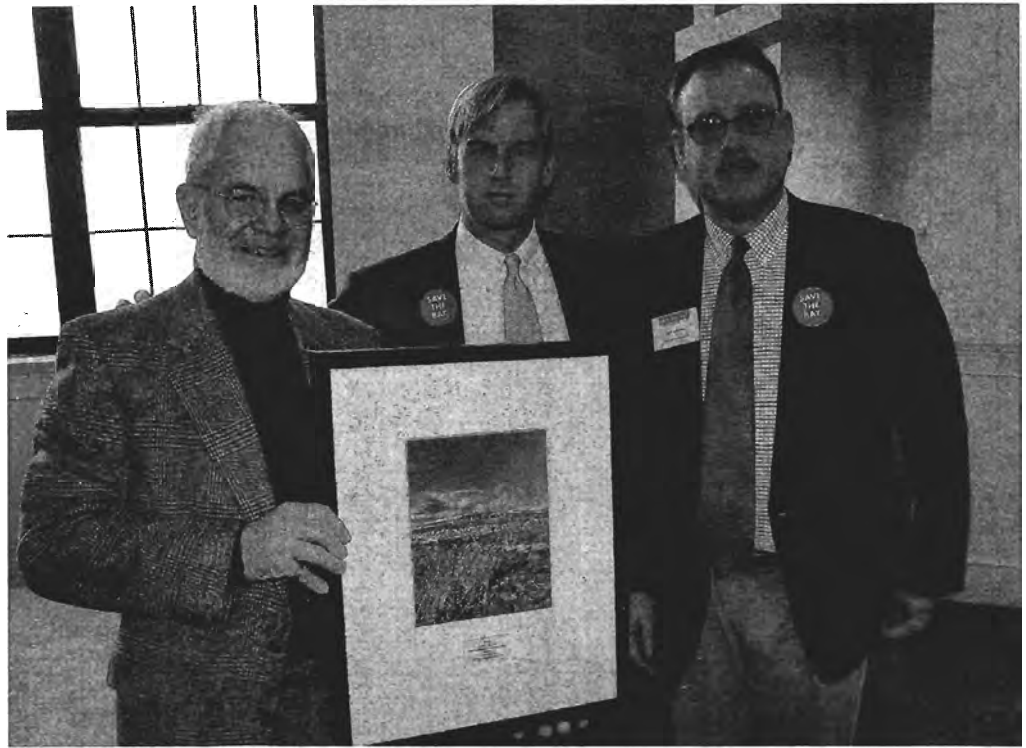
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The Narrow River Preservation Association is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

# "Row & Glow"

(continued)

Pre-registration is required, as space is limited. Pre-register no later than August 22nd by calling Denise Poyer at 401-539-9017 or emailing [denisep@wpwa.org](mailto:denisep@wpwa.org). We will provide you with directions about where to meet. A donation of \$10 (\$5 for members of NRPA or WPWA) is requested. All proceeds will benefit NRPA and WPWA and go towards programs that protect the rivers. Paddlers should bring their own boats, life jackets, and flashlights. A limited number of single kayaks may be available for rent.



NRPA President Richard Grant (left) accepting Save the Bay's Lifetime Environmental Achievement Award at their annual meeting on April 1st. Kurt Spaulding (right) and Alden Anderson (center) presented the award, stating: "For 36 years Richard has manned the helm of NRPA, guiding the course of conquering non-point pollution and managing those who pull the oars of success each year. He has been commended by the DEM for 13 years of water-quality testing to bring the river up to standard."



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