



EEAC

SPRING 2004

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Chair's Message



On a recent walk, I stopped and glanced at the plant growing around the base of a lighted sign for the Midtown Tunnel. The traffic light was against me so I looked at the plant again, and I noticed that there were small purple flowers on it. Truly, I did not notice them the first time; but I did when I took a second look. I was amazed. How could I not have seen the flowers the first time! Well, clearly, perception is key. I needed my brain to be more engaged. I didn't really look at it the first time.

And I thought (I really did!), "Isn't changing perception and vantage point a big part of environmental education?"

I overheard a colleague recently explain to a reporter that yes, there are millions of trees in New York City. I thought, "how could this person not know about all the trees in New York?" One reason could be that the reporter does not live here. Another reason might be point of view; if the only view of the world I had was the one I have at work, from the 26th floor of a building, well...I might think that too! There aren't too many trees visible from this vantage point. But if I take a walk around town with someone who opens my eyes to the variety and importance of trees in the city, I start to notice them, perhaps learn more about them and eventually care about and for them.

Many of us have shared a new view by working with young children: grass is just green spiky stuff until you get on your hands and knees and examine it through a hand lens. Stream water is clear and lifeless until you view it under a microscope. Rocks are things you walk over until you find out they are different depending on what they're made of and how they are formed.

Providing opportunities for students to get a different perspective: educators do that in general and environmental educators do it in particular. We provide students with a variety of ways to look at the world. We help them see it from several points of view.

Our work in EE continues to grow in importance. We know how important it is to empower people of all ages to see the world through the eyes of an environmental steward.

This year marks the third decade of EEAC. The efforts of many have produced more than a generation of students who have been encouraged to be environmental stewards.

Yet when we look into the future, no matter what our vantage point, we see that there is still so much to do!

Terry Ippolito, EEAC Chair

UPCOMING EEAC EVENTS.....

Steering Committee Meetings

EEAC Steering Committee meetings are always the third Wednesday of every month (except August).

Upcoming Meeting Information:

Steering Committee meetings are held at New York University, Pless Building, 32 Washington Square Park East and Washington Place in the 5th floor Conference Room. Upcoming meetings will be on February 18, March 17, and April 21.

Newsletter Deadlines

The Newsletter deadlines are the first Monday in April, July, October and January. If possible, please E-mail articles to solocoot@aol.com and send longer articles as an attachment in Microsoft Word or on a floppy disc in MS Word. Contact the editor at the number below for mailing address for materials.

Newsletter Committee

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The Environmental Education Advisory Council (EEAC) would like to thank the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for supporting the publication of this newsletter. For information about DEP's education resources for students and teachers, visit the DEP Web site: www.nyc.gov/dep or call (718) 595-3506.

GET CONNECTED!

If you are a member of EEAC and want to be part of the information sharing and discussion on the EEAC Listserve contact:

Cfranken@nycboe.net

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

c/o Jay Holmes
Education Department
American Museum of Natural History
Central Park West at 79th Street
New York, NY 10024
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This newsletter is a publication of the Environmental Education Advisory Council (EEAC), a voluntary organization of educators, classroom teachers, administrators and other professionals in active support of environmental education. It is available free upon request.

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Barry Weinbrom, Vice-Chair for Programs
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*Affiliations for identification purposes only.

Exceptional People with Exceptional Devotion

On November 19, 2003 at the EEAC Annual Members' Meeting, six people whose contributions to the field of Environmental Education have had a profound and lasting impact were recognized. The following biographies of these Lifetime Achievement Award recipients provide a brief snapshot of who they are and the gifts they've given—gifts we all share in one way or another as environmental educators.

CLARE BECKHARDT

by Ariff Hajee

Clare Beckhardt's efforts to improve the relationship between humans and the environment go back to the '60s when she initiated advocacy for a new kind of playground in Central Park's Upper West Side. Working with the non-profit Council on Parks and Playgrounds, Clare spearheaded the effort to establish this playground at 67th Street that today is known as the Adventure Playground. Having organized the community to obtain private funding and City support for the new playground, Clare became the Executive Director of the Council, now simply known as The Parks Council.

Continuing her work in environmental enhancement and stewardship, Clare became the Regional Director of New York State Parks in New York City in 1975. While there, she initiated many projects that enhanced the environment for City residents. She was perhaps most notably involved in the following projects:

- The development of Fulton Ferry State Park on Brooklyn's waterfront;
- The design and construction of Riverbank State Park on 145th Street in Manhattan;
- The coordination and assembly of land-parcels for the development of Clay Pit Ponds State Park in Staten Island.

As Regional Director of New York State Parks, Clare was also instrumental in creating collaborations with other agencies, providing NY State support for Operation Explore, a partnership project that exposes NYC youth to hands-on environmental educational activities.

Today, while in retirement, Clare Beckhardt is very active on the board of the NYC League of Conservation Voters, Council on the Environment of New York City, the High School for Environmental Studies and other environmental concerns.

ELLIOTT AND ROSE BLAUSTEIN

by Joy Garland

Rose and Elliott Blaustein are stars in the firmament of environmental education. Elliott is the author of *Name That Fern*, an illustrated book of northeastern ferns. He taught biology in junior and senior high schools in New York City. The annual Saturday Science staff development day each November is named "The Blaustein Conference" in their honor.

Rose was the Director of the Fireboat House Environmental Center on the East River at 90th Street for about 10 years. The Center served elementary and junior high students and teachers from District Two in Manhattan. She was an adjunct instructor in science at Hunter College and is known affectionately as "Mother Rose" to the many teachers who were taught by her and regard her as the Teachers' Teacher. Rose served as President of the Elementary School Science Association and is a life member of EEAC. The City Gardens Club of New York honored Rose with its Melville Award for her outstanding contribution to the field of environmental education.

Now retired, Rose and Elliott are actively involved with their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.



SAMUEL S. HOLMES

by Ruth Eilenberg

The impressive career of my esteemed colleague and dear friend, Sam Holmes, began with his work as a United Press reporter and as a photojournalist. That might explain his wonderful ability to see the big picture and develop his ideas with precision and elegance.

In the early stages of Sam's involvement in environmental education, he was a consultant and a staff professional for the National Park Service. Ultimately Sam served as Chief of Interpretation, Recreation and Cooperative Activities at Gateway National Recreation Area. He was the right man, in the right place, at the right time and the impact of his creativity and imagination is still felt. Following are just a few of the outstanding achievements of this pioneering giant.

Together with Dr. Eugene Ezersky, Sam convened a group of formal and informal educators who were interested in the environment to act as an advisory group to the New York City Board of Education. Yes, Sam was among the founders of EEAC at the Mohonk Mountain House Conference in the early 70's. We are the beneficiaries of that major accomplishment.

During the same period, Sam worked long and hard to assure the creation of Gateway National Recreation Area. Established by an act of Congress in 1972, it was a part of the National Parks Service program of "bringing parks to the people." One of Sam's goals in implementing that mission was to bring the school children of New York City and their teachers to Gateway's 26,000-acre outdoor classroom. Then, as now, Sam believes that we have to get children out into the natural world for a day or overnight to enjoy that "sunburst of experience that will not be forgotten."

Thanks to Sam's efforts and those of his counterpart in the school system, Gene Ezersky, Gateway Environmental Study Center was created as a joint venture to bring students and teachers outdoors to study and enjoy the marine environment and to spend overnight tent-camping in the "wilds" of Floyd Bennett Field and Breezy Point. The two bureaucracies have continued to work together and tens of thousands of urban children and their teachers have reaped the benefits.

Sam has always valued and encouraged interagency cooperation and another long-lasting program he created is Operation Explore (OPEX), which combines Gateway visits with upstate residential camping. This extension of the basic partnership added New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, and New York City Department of Environmental Protection. OPEX is still going strong.

There are so many other programs and initiatives that are the result of this remarkable man's ability to dream and make dreams into reality. Community gardens at Floyd Bennett Field, City Gardeners Harvest Fair and Ecology Village camping program come to mind. I was privileged to work with Sam from 1974 until his retirement in 1987.

Sam and his wonderful wife Kate are residents of Sag Harbor where they operate Beach Plum Gardens, a landscape design business that keeps them very busy during the growing season. Sam was recently appointed to the Citizen Advisory Committee of Southampton Town representing the village of Sag Harbor. As an Eastender, I am glad that his voice will be heard on the issues of ground water and land preservation.

THERESA LATO

by Michael Zamm

Theresa Lato is the founder and former president of the Bronx Council on Environmental Quality (BCEQ). For three decades Theresa spoke out at every community board meeting, every hearing, every gathering of Bronx parks or environmental devotees, advocating for a greener, healthier, better preserved and remembered Bronx.

Theresa moved to Israel to live with her son and family a number of years ago. She is still, at around 90, active on environmental issues and frequently writes to members of EEAC, to the Council on the Environment Staff and to BCEQ'ers.

JOAN ROSNER

by Andrea Kominski

Joan Rosner is a dichotomy of a soft and gentle, yet truly vibrant and enthusiastic being. When I think of my last meeting with Joan a few months ago I think of how I was drawn in by her eyes. When she speaks, you can see in those eyes a belief that caring about the environment and education is worth it, and you can do what you want to make the world a little better... and then *a lot* better.

As we've seen with the groundbreaking of the Alley Pond Environmental Center, she speaks for all that is silent and precious in this world saying, "Don't hurt this land, let it stand."* Joan Rosner can and has overcome great obstacles and challenges and persistently pursues her passion from whatever point on the map she resides. On the occasion of receiving this award, she won't send a written statement, but make a video of herself stating her message - making it all the more personal so that you can't help but take interest. She may have been born with many traits, but it's a lifetime and beyond of work that has been so successful it glows through her physical being completing and individualizing each sentence and action.

I cannot speak of her many accomplishments in detail, because for most of the time I have known her I was too young to take serious note. However, I have watched her and continue to watch her fearlessly lead. I have walked away imprinted with her strength, courage and dedication as something to strive for. If she has impacted me as such an impressive role model then in all her work I can only imagine how many lives she has and will touch, and how very deserving she is of EEAC's recognition with a lifetime achievement award.

*Elizabeth Kominski's words while reminiscing of her experience with Joan.

Book Buzz

by Regina McCarthy

The changing of the seasons is often a major theme in early childhood classes. These events can have far-reaching applications for lessons throughout a student's school career. As our planet spins through space around the sun, where and how it is positioned affects life on earth. The ancients marked these heavenly events on earth clocks such as Stonehenge, which marks both solstices. In Ireland at Newgrange, a circular stone structure pre-dates Stonehenge and the pyramids of Egypt were built so a single ray of light would enter a chamber within on the dawn of the winter solstice. It is the coming of light that is celebrated with many ancient cultures that pre-date our modern Christmas celebrations.

An enduring book that has been part of my collection for years is *The Reason for Seasons* by Linda Allison, published by Little Brown. It was part of a series developed in the mid-70s called the Brown Paper Bag Books. The series comes from people who, "believe learning only happens when it is wanted: that it can happen anywhere and doesn't require fancy tools." I am pleased to see that they continue to print this book, and after 28 years that is a testimony in itself. It is filled with seasonal facts and ideas for projects. Did you know that if you drag a magnet along the ground and pick up particles, about 20% of them will be from meteorites in outer space whose particles have reached earth? Sundials, water clocks, body clocks and how to navigate the earth are some of the activities. Plant a garden clock! Tell time by when plants bloom. It is an incredible resource for anyone who loves the earth and all that makes it tick. Each season has its own related activities that are interdisciplinary in nature and offer something for everyone with a sense of wonder. Although for upper elementary school, anyone could enjoy the activities.

A more recent publication that deals with cultural celebrations throughout the world is *The Spring Equinox* by Ellen Jackson and illustrated by Jan Davey Ellis from Millbrook Press. In the ancient world, after the long cold winter and the scarcity of food that must have plagued them in January and February, the extended daylight and the spring Equinox in March was indeed a reason to celebrate. This book describes a variety of cultures: Iran, Ancient Mayans and Romans, Christian and Judaic traditions and how these Spring events are celebrated. In closing, the book describes the creation of Earth Day as a modern day Spring event on April 22. Other books by this author dealing with seasons are: *The Winter Solstice*, *The Autumn Equinox* and *The Summer Solstice*. These books are for elementary school students.

For older readers and adults two books are recommended as seasonal journeys throughout the year. For those interested in the marine environment, I recommend *The Year of the Crab: Marine Animals in Modern Medicine* by William Sargent. This book chronicles the year in the life of a horseshoe crab and describes its importance for modern medicine. If you live on Long Island you will love a recent book by Dennis Puleston, *A Nature Journal*, with its colorful illustrations and simple text that chronicles the natural year in this area. Both of these books are from W.W. Norton and Company.



Celebrate Earth Day in Queens!

by Andrea Kominski



The City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation will be holding its Third Annual Earth Day Celebration hosted by Queens Recreation in Bowne Park, North Flushing, Queens this year. The event will take place on Saturday, May 1st (rain date Sat., May 8) from 12 – 4 p.m. As coordinator, I am once again reaching out to the environmental field for your participation and support. Members of EEAC have in the past volunteered services using their vast experience individually or through their affiliated organizations. Such help gives this recreational event an environmentally conscious atmosphere. I encourage anyone interested to be creative and use an interactive display that educates and supports our cooperative causes. Please feel free to contact me for more information and pass the word on. I look forward to seeing many of you there!

Bowne Park, 32nd Ave. & 159th St, (718) 939-2428

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES *by Kenneth Kowald*

Tours of **New York City Hall** and the **Tweed Courthouse**, now the home of the Department of Education, may be made by calling 311 and making an appointment. You can sometimes do the two together, which takes a little over an hour. Tours are usually scheduled for Friday afternoons, beginning at 2 p.m. Call (212) 788-6865 for more information.

New York City's 2004 **"It's My Park!"** day will be held on Tuesday, May 18. For information about it, call the Partnership for Parks at (212) 360-1310, or log onto www.itsmypark.org.

The 9th Annual Green Horizons conference will be held on Staten Island during the first week in October. Announcements about the date and place should be in the mail by late winter or early spring. Green Horizons is sponsored by EEAC, New York ReLeaf and the Magnolia Tree Earth Center.

The Neighborhood Open Space Coalition/Friends of Gateway has restored the greenhouse at Floyd Bennett Field and has turned it into the Gateway Greenhouse Education Center. Not only are trees propagated in the building, but it is being used for educational activities. To learn more, call (212) 352-9330.

The New York State Marine Education Association will hold its Annual Conference at Southampton College from Friday through Sunday, June 4-6. For details, contact Lisa Breslof at (212) 769-5169 or Meryl Kafka at (718) 265-3452.

There will be three more Tuesday Seminars, presented by the **Hudson River Foundation**. They are scheduled for March 16, April 6 and May 4. For topics and times, call the Foundation at (212) 483-7667. The Foundation is located in Suite 915, 17 Battery Place, New York 10004.

Something to look forward to: **A new entrance of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden**, designed by James Polshek of Polshek Partnership Architects, is scheduled to open this summer. The entrance is not only more user-friendly, but is an interesting work of art as well.

You have until March 30 to apply to pilot test *the Environmental Science: Understanding Our Changing Earth* curriculum of the American Geological Institute. This is for experienced science teachers in grades 9 through 12. To find out about it, write to the Institute, Education Department—HSES, 4220 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22302-1502.

April 4 is the closing date for the exhibition, **"Children at Risk: Protecting New York City's Youths, 1653-2003,"** in the New-York Historical Society, Central Park West and 77th Street.

The Urban Horticulture Institute at Cornell University has published **"A Tree Identification Guide for Common Trees in New York State,"** which you can find about by calling (607) 255-1791.

The Council on the Environment of New York City and INFORM have published a manual on **"Waste at Work: Prevention Strategies for the Bottom Line,"** which is available for free by calling (212) 788-7900.

"New York Chinatown Travel Guide, second edition" is full of information about this fascinating community. You may obtain it from the Asian American Business Development Center, (212) 966-0100.

You may have heard of the **Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)**, which places adults in volunteer positions in New York City, but did you know that these people are available to help in schools? Call (212) 614-5563 to learn more.

The Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) continues its slow but steady devastation of trees in our area and the Federal government has come up with a flyer which gives updated information. To obtain copies, call the USDA ALB Hotline at (866) 265-0301.

The Alliance for Downtown New York, Inc., is a source of much information about the history and culture of the area. The Alliance is located in Suite 3340, 120 Broadway, New York 10271, or call (212) 566-6700.

The third edition of the **"Guide to New York City Landmarks,"** published by John Wiley & Sons is in bookstores now. It contains entries on more than 1,100 landmarks and 79 historic districts.

The Sony Wonder Technology Lab has been newly renovated. It is located at 550 Madison Avenue at 55th Street. To learn about opening hours and other matters, call (212) 833-8100. Entry is free, but reservations are advised.

Between now and its scheduled opening in June, 2006, you can watch the progress being made on building what is claimed to be **New York City's first environmentally friendly building**—the headquarters of the Heart Corporation at 8th Avenue between West 56th and West 57th Streets. The 42-story stainless steel and glass tower, designed by the English architect Norman Foster, is rising from the interior of the six-story masonry structure the company has occupied since 1928. The builders are hoping that the new structure, which they expect to be an architectural standout, will also be the first building in the City to win the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design award from the United States Green Buildings Council, which is pressing for environmentally thoughtful development.

The New York Botanical Garden is building nearly an acre of eight growing zones in two steel-framed glass buildings with peaked roofs that will open to the sky. They will house more than 150,000 plants grown each year in the Garden. The work should be completed in the spring of 2005. One section of the Nolen Glasshouses for Living Collections will be used for public exhibitions and demonstrations.

Dr. Eugene Ezersky Outstanding Educator Award

Each year, EEAC recognizes an outstanding environmental educator by presenting the Dr. Eugene Ezersky Memorial Award to a K-12 teacher.

Selection Criteria:

The award will be given to a New York City public or private school teacher who has demonstrated leadership in affecting positive change in environmental education and practice with students and/or personnel within the school or the community. Examples may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Organizing a new environmental project with students and/or staff
- Taking initiative to infuse EE across the curriculum
- Creating a new EE curriculum unit
- Organizing a student environmental club
- Organizing a school environmental task force to affect and monitor change
- With students and staff, organizing a community environmental event
- Creating an environmental newsletter for educational outreach
- Helping students to identify and solve an environmental problem in the school or community

Individuals may nominate themselves or school personnel, or students may nominate a teacher. The cover letter should include the name, address, phone, or e-mail of the individual, plus the school's address and phone. Indicate the subject and grade(s) taught by the nominee and the number of years the nominee has taught environmental education.

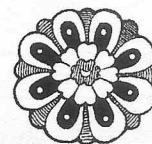
Attach a letter, not exceeding one typed page, with details of the nominee's achievements including dates, goals, results, and who took part. Please include two letters of support—one from the nominee's principal/supervisor and another from someone who was affected by the nominee's work either in the school or community. Documentation in the form of photos and press clippings is welcome, but no tapes or videos should be sent. The EEAC Selection Committee may request further information. Stamped self addressed envelopes should accompany any materials you wish to have returned.

The selected candidate will receive a check for \$100, a Certificate of Recognition at an EEAC Steering Committee meeting, and be featured in the EEAC Newsletter.

All materials should be sent in one package to Barry Weinbrom, 441 5th Street, Brooklyn NY 11215.

Materials must be postmarked no later than March 31, 2004.

Notification will be sent to the winner of the award by April 15, 2004 and presentation of award will take place at the EEAC Steering Committee Meeting on April 21, 2004.



NATURE JOURNAL COURSE

Earn 3 G-Credits!

**Gateway Science and
Environmental Study Center**
(Bldg. 272, Floyd Bennett Field)

Ft. Tilden/Breezy Point

Ft. Wadsworth, Staten Island

Great Kills, Staten Island

Prospect Park

Inwood Hill Park

The American Museum of Natural History

(all sites except Study Center subject to
change)

**To register, e-mail:
naturejournals@aol.com**

Cost:

\$135 + \$30 to ASPDP, certified check or money order (\$30 pre-registration fee to ASPDP is non-refundable), plus \$25 materials fee (can be personal check, payable by first class).

Walking on a variety of terrains will be necessary at most sessions.

March 14, 21 and 28

April 18 and 25

May 2, 9 and 16

Sundays, Noon to 3:45 p.m.

Eight sessions only, no absences permitted (except under approved ASPDP circumstances).

First class will be held in bldg. 272
at Floyd Bennett Field.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2004

☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt. _____ Zip Code _____-____

If sustaining Organization, Name of Contact Person _____

Business Phone () _____ Home Phone () _____

Affiliation (for categories other than Sustaining Organization): _____

Title/Position: _____

Address (for categories other than Sustaining Organization): _____

E-mail address: _____

Please check the appropriate calendar year membership category:

☐ \$ 20 Regular (2004) ☐ \$ 50 Sustaining Organization (2004) ☐ \$200 Individual Life Membership

Please make checks payable to EEAC. Thank you! EEAC is a 501-C-3 organization.

I would like to become involved in a committee.

Please provide me with information about the following committees:

☐ Exhibits ☐ Newsletter ☐ Programs ☐ Technology ☐ EEAC Commemorative Fund
☐ TEEP (Teacher Environmental Education Preparation)

Please complete the application and mail it, with your payment, to:

Jay Holmes, EEAC Treasurer, c/o Education Department, American Museum of Natural History,
Central Park West at 79th Street, New York, NY 10024



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