



Jump In, the Water's Fine!



As I walked deeper into the woods the silence was startling. The thick layer of last fall's leaves crunched under my feet, but that was the only sound. By contrast, the raucous, frenzied chatter and "quacking" of the hundreds of wood frogs in the vernal pond was spectacular! I was a witness to the spring ritual of wood frogs hopping across the ice and diving into the water, then paddling around my legs as I stood in the middle of the frenzy. One can hear them 50 yards off as you approach, then silence as you enter their space. Gradually, after about 10 minutes, they forget about me and return to their courtship behavior, their sides ballooning out as they sing, lunging at anything that might be a mate, including the leg of my tripod. Their energy rejuvenates me and as their frenzied calls fade into the distance and the silence of the forest envelopes me, my senses are heightened.

It is during these moments, when I am alone enjoying the wonders of the outdoors, that my thoughts turn to YouthCaN. My students were not with me on that day, but we had been here as a group in previous years. When I read about and witness "nature deprivation," I feel even stronger about the importance of the work we do.

Although YouthCaN seems complicated, it is really quite simple. The project just follows the mission of the American Museum of Natural History:

"To discover, interpret, and disseminate knowledge about human cultures, the natural world and the universe."

YouthCaN is a collaboration between the American Museum of Natural History and the International Education and Resource Network (iEARN). The Museum provides the physical space for the group and the events as well as instructional and field support and equipment. iEARN provides the online discussion spaces and the international network of teachers and students. YouthCaN is an ecology club and a global online community. It is a local NYC conference presented by and for students, mostly middle and high school students from New York. Over the years, student groups in other locations have joined in, hosting their own annual conferences in Miami, Lebanon, Egypt, Taiwan, Senegal and other places. Iran joined in last year and other locations have hosted some events.

Our NYC YouthCaN group functions as a club. It consists of about 12-15 mostly high school students from around the city. They meet every Friday evening at the Museum to plan hikes in the Hudson Highlands, habitat protection days with our friends at Gateway National Recreation Area, expeditions to see the horseshoe crabs laying their eggs, and other activities based on the interests of the students.

They share these experiences with students in other countries via iEARN's Internet "web forums." Our New York students join in discussions about their environmental experiences and interests with students from around the world. This discussion and interpretation of their discoveries strengthens and refines their understanding of the topics.

As the year progresses, the students work with their online collaborators to develop local gatherings. They select an environmental theme that will be highlighted at the various events, and coordinate schedules so that some of the events can be connected via video conference. Then they get to work planning these local events. Our team hosts a large conference at the Museum, usually in April. They solicit youth groups to present workshops about their environmental projects. These presenters are mostly from New York, but some come from Florida and places as far away as Russia. The presentations take various formats—from slide programs to theatrical performances to hands-on workshops—and cover a range of topics from reviews of global environmental issues to school gardening projects to environmental science investigations. All of the workshops are presented by youth, for youth. This year there will be about 25 workshops and about 900 students participating.

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UPCOMING EEAC EVENTS.....

Steering Committee Meetings

EEAC Steering Committee members meet on the third Wednesday of every month (except August). Upcoming EEAC Steering Committee meetings are May 16, June 20, July 18 and August 15. 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. Steering Committee meetings are open to anyone interested in learning about environmental education in New York City and sharing information about special programs and projects.

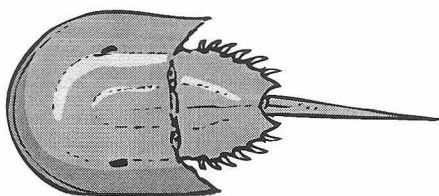
Meetings are occasionally held at New York City sites associated with our members. Please be sure to contact an EEAC Steering Committee member or visit the EEAC website at www.eeac-nyc.org to confirm meeting location and schedule.

Newsletter Deadlines

The Newsletter deadlines are the first Monday in April, July, October and January. Send articles as Microsoft Word attachments to lmiller296@aol.com.

Newsletter Committee

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Kim Estes-Fradis
Michelle Fufaro
Joy Garland
Jane Jackson
John Lancos
Regina McCarthy
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Lenore Miller, Newsletter Editor
Betsy Ukeritis



Horseshoe Crab Walk – May 31



The Environmental Education Advisory Council (EEAC) would like to acknowledge the support of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for helping to produce the EEAC newsletter. Visit the DEP Web site at www.nyc.gov/dep, email educationoffice@dep.nyc.gov or call (718) 595-3506 for information about DEP's education resources for students and teachers.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

c/o Teresa Ippolito
Environmental Education Coordinator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
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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 quality environmental education.

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GET CONNECTED!

If you are a member of EEAC and want to be part of information sharing and on-line discussion on the EEAC listserv, contact:

Cfranken@schools.nyc.gov

From the Editor...A Sustainable New York

At the beginning of 2007, residents of New York City received a detailed brochure in their mailboxes, outlining Mayor Bloomberg's initiative to plan ahead for our city's future. Called Plan 2030, it listed 10 ambitious goals and called for input from the citizens of the city on how to accomplish them.

Of the 10, four were specifically environmental: "reduce global warming emissions by more than 50%, achieve the cleanest air of any big city in America, clean up all contaminated land, and open 90% of our waterways for recreation by reducing water pollution and preserving our natural areas." Of the remaining six goals, I think we can see that the rest....improving mass transit, creating affordable housing, upgrading and adding parks, improving water delivery systems, and providing cleaner energy....all fall within the realm of environment, too.

Where does EEAC come in? As the foremost environmental education organization in the city, we represent the vital education sector. It behooves each and every one of us, as individuals, but more importantly, as a group of experts, to provide that input. We know just how important it is to have an environmentally literate constituency. How can citizens be expected to protect and improve the environment if they do not possess the basic knowledge and understanding of how the natural world works? That's where EEAC comes in.

We must participate, as an organization, in the formulation of sustainable policy. We must impress upon those who are looking ahead to a better, greener future that the KEY to having an environmentally intelligent citizenry is EDUCATION, and that's what we do.

Unfortunately, important meetings to gather input have already taken place and as far as I know, EEAC was not a party to any of these. Our voice should be heard, our organizations supported, our ideas promoted. It's an opportunity we can't afford to miss.

Visit the website www.nyc.gov/planyc2030 for further information and to see what others have proposed.

Lenore Miller

Obed Fulcar Named Ezersky Award Winner for 2007 *by Joy Garland*

The Dr. Eugene Ezersky Award has been awarded to Obed Fulcar. The award honors the memory of a founder of the Environmental Education Advisory Council. It recognizes a teacher who demonstrates a passion for teaching and for the environment. Excerpts from letters in support of this nomination follow:

"As a teacher of Global Learning through Observations of the Environment [GLOBE], Obed led an after-school EE program with his class. He is currently the Environmental Science Facilitator at MS 319 in Washington Heights"..... Jay A. Colon, A.P., MS 319.

"Mr. Fulcar's dedication to enhancing the community's awareness of environmental preservation is laudable in every respect...and he is a constant advocate for environmental issues at community meetings. It is through Mr. Fulcar's leadership that we are creating a new generation of environmentalists in Washington Heights-Inwood." ...Martin Collins, Chair of Community Board 12 in Manhattan

Lastly, Jane Jackson, Director of Programming at the New York Restoration Project (NYRP and EEAC member), writes that after taking the environmental education course at Columbia University, it was, in part, Obed's idea to launch an environmental center at Sherman Creek on the Harlem River where NYRP had been working for years. "In 2005 he successfully applied for an Environmental Fund grant to involve students in a variety of projects at Sherman Creek. These include planting native vegetation and water quality and weather monitoring. Obed puts a great deal of his own time into student activities and serves as a wonderful mentor...Obed's dedication and long-term commitment to his local community and the environmental well-being of the world at large are an inspiration for not only his students but all of northern Manhattan!"

Obed will receive a check from EEAC for \$100, a certificate of recognition and a year's membership in EEAC. Congratulations, Obed!

National and International EE News

John Lanco

Envirolink - One Stop EE Shopping

An excellent resource for educators looking for the latest information on environmental topics, issues, and links to resources is Envirolink. Created in 1991 and based in Pittsburgh, Envirolink is a non-profit online community connecting hundreds of environmental organizations and volunteers in more than 150 countries. The site links to everything from educational resources and general information, to publications, links to organizations, jobs, volunteer opportunities, and actions you can take for the environment. You can find them on the Web at www.envirolink.org.

Genetics Video Series

"Secrets of the Sequence," a series of 50 five-minute videos on genetics topics for secondary students and educators, is available for download from the Center for Life Sciences Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. Each video comes with a lesson plan and activities. Visit www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/secretsofthesequence.

New Biodiversity Curriculum

Project Learning Tree (PLT) has a new secondary curriculum module, "Exploring Environmental Issues: Biodiversity." This module uses biodiversity as a window through which secondary students investigate the environment, and was developed in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund. Educators can download the 35-page module from the PLT Web site at www.plt.org. Just click on "curriculum," and then on "biodiversity" in the left-hand navigation to access the module.

MAD—Make a Difference about Global Warming

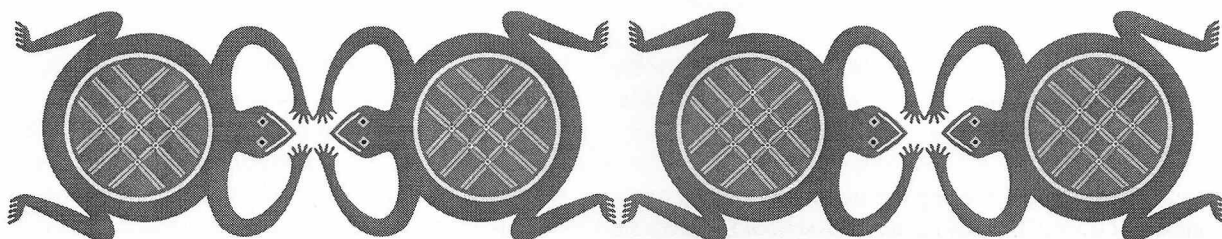
After School Activity Programs (ASAP) offers your school an exciting 90-minute program for parents, students, teachers, principals, and other administrators about what we all can do to Make a Difference (MAD) about Global Warming. This program is presented in partnership with Green Games, a worldwide educational leader in environmental board games, and Shaklee, a global trendsetter for businesses truly concerned about environmental education. MAD consists of the following:

Introduction – "Strange Days on Earth", National Geographic's new 30-minute documentary, followed by a brief discussion

Breakout Workshops - **Green Games Elementary** students play *Watergame*, a board game that teaches water conservation. **Middle school students** play *Energy Hogs*, a board game that helps them develop strategies to conserve energy at home and at school. **High school students** play *Clean Up*, a card game that explores global environmental problems and their solutions.

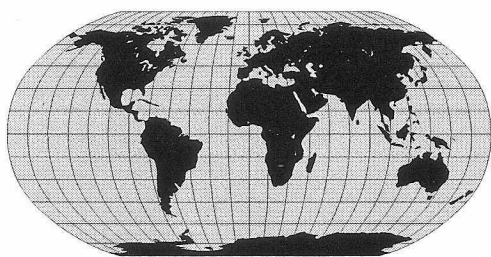
The Arctic Field Trip - Students travel online with Mr. Will Steger—the Jacques Cousteau of the Arctic—and Inuit hunters on a 1200-mile dogsled expedition across the Canadian Arctic's Baffin Island. This real-time expedition offers a rich interdisciplinary K-12 curriculum to be used by the teacher in the classroom or the parent at home to discover the effects of climate change on Arctic life.

Where do we go from here? Contact Barry Weinbrom, ASAP (After School Activity Programs) phone 718-965-9814, or email baw441@aol.com for a presentation



Join EEACers as we Explore the Beach for Mating Horseshoe Crabs
THURSDAY, MAY 31, 2007, 4:00 - 6:30 PM—FOR TEACHERS, STUDENTS and PARENTS.

PLUMB BEACH—Gateway National Recreation Area
Led by ALAN ASCHER, SCIENCE EDUCATOR



Make Earth Day Everyday!

By Michelle Fufaro

Hurrah for Earth Day 2007! It seems as though we focus more on how we can be eco-friendly at home but not so much at the workplace. Many people spend at least 40 hours per week in the office, and that could be an understatement for a lot of other people. For this issue's Earth Day Everyday tips, we'll look at how we can practice being "green" in the office!

How Big is Your Office Footprint! Have staff members take the quiz that determines the size of their eco-footprint. The quiz takes just a few minutes, you can find it at www.ecofoot.org. Make it an office contest to see who can make the biggest footprint reduction!

Seek out Sustainable Products: Be sure to tell your suppliers that you want to buy sustainable, recycled, reused and refurbished products. Sometimes, cost should not be the only factor to consider when buying supplies.

Try Not to Fly: If possible, use teleconferencing instead of traveling for meetings. If traveling is necessary, keep track of the mileage and buy back "carbon offsets" from a non-profit. For more information go to <http://www.carbonfund.org>.

The Eco-Friendly Commute: Ask your employer to provide parking privileges for car pools; make bike racks available to encourage the bike commuter; offer transit passes for bus and train commuters. When appropriate, consider having employees work from home.

Start a "Green" Committee: Gather your fellow environmentally conscious coworkers and start a committee that works to create an eco-friendly work environment. Start an office recycling program, host an Earth Day event sponsored by your company or simply provide information and tips for staff on how they can help to make the office environment green!

We can work to make our home away from home an eco-friendly environment!

The Boy Who Drew Birds: A story of John James Audubon

By Jacqueline Davies,
Illustrated by Melissa Sweet

2004 Houghton Mifflin Co.,
Recommended for grades 3 thru 6.

By Regina McCarthy

John J. Audubon is probably the first naturalist/artist to have made a significant impact on the study of wildlife in this country. The only other artist who comes to mind with equal influence is Roger Tory Peterson. This delightful children's book is based on many aspects from the artist's life that we know about because he kept a journal while traveling throughout the country.

Jackie Davies has woven together a delightful story that is illustrated by Melissa Sweet. This book gives us a window into the early life of this naturalist and highlights the important science skills that he developed at that period. Sadly, as mentioned in the book, Audubon destroyed his artwork each year on his birthday. "He hoped some day he would make drawings worth keeping." They would have been a wonderful addition to this book. Like young Theodore Roosevelt, he kept his own 'musee' in his room. Many pages of the book are filled with pictures of naturalist/artist objects: pallets, bones, feathers, drawings, eggs, nests, berries and seeds. Collecting and recording are activities that develop important science skills. Parents and teachers often overlook the value of collecting, whether it's baseball cards or sea shells. Collections involve research, organization and classifying skills.

The book relates the "erroneous beliefs" about birds that existed at that time and traces John J. Audubon's own early observations which led him to understand more "scientifically based" decisions about their lives. One of these early "wonders" for John J. was about "homing", when birds return to the same place each spring after migrating. He was the first known person in the country to band birds (with thread), proving that birds did indeed return to the same territory. He later wrote about this in his book, *Ornithological Biography*.

This book is a welcomed addition to any child's or classroom library. It will encourage students to begin keeping their own journals or records of nature. Most importantly, it teaches that through our own observations and recording, we can learn meaningful lessons about the natural world.

Dress casually. Old sneakers are recommended. You will be walking approximately 3/4 mile round trip. Limited facilities at site.

DIRECTIONS: Plumb Beach is located along the eastbound Belt Parkway between Knapp Street and Flatbush Avenue. Bus transportation is available on Knapp Street. You can also walk the bike path from Knapp Street or Flatbush Avenue. We will meet in the parking area in front of the round building.

FOR REGISTRATION (INCLUDE YOUR NAME, SCHOOL OR AFFILIATION AND A DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER) OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, LEAVE AN E-MAIL MESSAGE AT aascher@schools.nyc.gov

Professional Development ... a Step Outside of NYC

By Betsy Ukeritis

We all live busy lives and we often tend to focus on local issues, but sometimes, taking a step outside of NYC can open our eyes to a world we have not seen before. Or it can allow an old idea we left behind to return to the forefront.

At the end of March, I attended the Second Annual Interpreting World Heritage Conference. This conference is sponsored by the National Association for Interpretation (NAI)—the US-based professional organization for people who call themselves interpreters. First, what is meant by “interpreter”? An interpreter is a person who employs a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and meanings inherent in the resource (official NAI definition). But what exactly does that mean? An interpreter is someone, who, by giving a program or talking with the visitor, conveys an approved message and connects the visitor with a historical or natural resource. An interpreter provokes listeners to think about something related to the natural or cultural resource that he or she is talking about.

Now, about the conference! It was held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. While it was a lot of fun, and networking and meeting interpreters from all over the world were definitely worth the price of admission, the workshops were informative and diverse as well. How many times do you get to eat sushi with beluga whales?! Or hear two men from Malawi, Africa, talk about using traditional methods to educate their public about ways to prevent HIV/AIDS and malaria or how they are trying to encourage people to plant native crops that can survive drought instead of crops they have been planting that are devastated by drought? And what about the fact that when we heard about how these Africans have to share one car among five national museums that are not even close to one another, the problems we face in our own positions seemed minor in comparison.

Not only did I meet the amazing Malawians, I attended a workshop given by a Scotsman to learn about how communities can pool together under one local icon to bring more tourism into their area. I listened to the man who wrote the book on interpretation (literally!), Sam Ham, talk about what he has seen working in the US, Canada, and Australia. I also learned graphic design tips from an American and interpretive writing tips from a Canadian.

But it wasn't only about having fun and learning new things. I met people high up in the world of interpretation—you know, the names you hear of constantly?—including Tim Merriman, the executive director for NAI and aforementioned Sam Ham, author of *Environmental Interpretation: Practical Guide for People with Big Ideas and Small Budgets*. All in all, the

conference was worth taking the step (or flight) out of NYC. We have a tendency to get so focused on what we have to do that we forget there are others out there doing the same things we do and facing challenges similar to ours. We can learn just as much as from what they have done — both successes and failures — as we can from creating our own way. Not to mention how nice it is to enjoy the comfort that we are not alone in the struggle to get people to think about the resources—natural and cultural.

For me, taking the time to attend this international conference taught me much that I can use here in NYC (especially to be aware that others have it much worse than I do). And it showed me that sometimes you have to schedule in some time for yourself to grow and learn in order to continue teaching others. We have a tendency to take our own professional development for granted—especially if we do professional development for others!

I will resume my usual activities column in the next issue. But in the meantime, I highly recommend you explore the two professional organizations for those interpreting or teaching about the environment:

National Association for Interpretation (NAI)

www.interpnet.com offers:

- certifications in interpretation—for managers, interpreters, guides, hosts, trainers, and planners.
- regional, national, and international conferences on interpretation.
- books and materials at their store.
- Green Pages, a listing of companies and organizations that provide a wide range of interpretive products and services.
- the “Definitions Project” to standardize definitions for commonly used words <http://www.interpnet.com/definitions/>

North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) www.naaee.org:

- initiated the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education which developed a series of guidelines that set the standards for high-quality environmental education. <http://www.naaee.org/programs-and-initiatives/guidelines-for-excellence/>
- offers national conferences.
- offers resource reviews which add another element in their initiative to build a “culture of quality” in EE, to emphasize a consistent process to design educationally sound EE materials and programs. www.naaee.org/programs-and-initiatives/resource-review
- offers books and materials through their on-line store.

I am a member of both organizations so please feel free to email me at baukerit@gw.dec.state.ny.us if you have questions about either organization.

Happy Spring! -Bets



The students in the Museum YouthCaN group share this whole experience at a number of professional conferences in New York and around the world. They have presented at the American Association of Museums Conference, at the World Summit on Media for Children and many iEARN teachers' conferences. This March they presented at the Celebration of Teaching and Learning sponsored by Channel 13 and WLIW. To see the excitement in their eyes after these presentations is wonderful. They even returned to the Teaching and Learning conference on their own to attend some workshops and help in the exhibitor booths! They really develop a sense of belonging to the education community.

These YouthCaNers are following in the tradition of the Museum "to discover, interpret, and disseminate knowledge about human cultures and the natural world" through their local explorations of environmental issues, their online activities with students around

the block and around the world, and their conference and other presentations.

You and your students can join the discovery in a variety of ways. Your students can join the YouthCaN group at the Museum and become part of the projects and planning of the conferences. You can join the dialog online, or share your projects by presenting them at the Museum conference in New York City. Our students are always looking for others to join them on their hikes, so contact us if you have students who would like to join the exploration.

That "vernal pond" of students that forms every spring under the whale in the Hall of Ocean Life is a raucous place of chatter and sometimes quacking sounds. It is a place where the youth are voicing their concerns, telling their stories of protecting habitats, discovering nature and themselves, interpreting their world, taking action in response to what they discover, and celebrating. It may look a little muddy, and the first time you stick your foot in you may want to jump out, but it is fertile and what comes hopping out of there are excited young people who are engaged in their world.

Jump in! The water's fine.

Related links: YouthCaN's student-created web site: www.youthcanworld.org

American Museum of Natural History: www.amnh.org

International Education and Resource Network: www.iearn.org

Jay Holmes, YouthCaN Coordinator, Senior Educational Supervisor, American Museum of Natural History, jholmes@amnh.org

From the pen of EEAC founding member HELEN ROSS RUSSELL

Journey Through the 20th Century: A Memoir

Travel on a journey through life with one of EEAC's most distinguished members, Dr. Helen Ross Russell, as she shares her recollections and philosophy of teaching, learning and the world of nature. Her memoirs provide a glimpse into the early years as the study of nature evolved into what we call environmental education. Dr. Russell was at the forefront of that movement.

Many EEACers accompanied Dr. Russell as she led workshops delving into aspects of botany or entomology or ornithology. Her books fill many home and school libraries. Here are just some of them:

City Critters • Winter Search Party • Ten-Minute Field Trips • Foraging for Dinner

You can order at a discounted price: \$20 paperback, \$25 for hard cover (covers shipping & postage). Enclose a check and send to: Dr. H.R. Russell 44 College Drive Jersey City NJ 07305

**Watch for her newest book GOLDEN FLOWERS OF THE SUN: DANDELION
Coming SOON!**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2007

☐ 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 ☐ \$ 50 Sustaining Organization ☐ \$200 Individual Life Membership

Please make checks payable to **EEAC**. Thank you! EEAC is a 501-c3 organization.

I would like to become involved in a committee.

Please provide me with information about the following committees:

☐ Exhibits ☐ Programs ☐ Website/Listserv ☐ Technology ☐ Remembrance Fund
☐ Membership ☐ TEEP (Teacher Environmental Education Preparation)

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

Teresa Ippolito, Environmental Education Coordinator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2,
290 Broadway, 28th Floor, New York, NY 10007-1866



ENVIR

c/o Teresa

Environmental Education Coordinator

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