



# EEAC

SPECIAL MEMORIAL ISSUE, 2012

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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## BARRY WEINBROM



April 2012



This newsletter finds us all saddened with the passing of our former Vice-Chair and Program Chair, Barry Weinbrom. Barry was a vital part of this organization, as an active participant at steering committee meetings, planning many of our off-site programs and as a spokesperson for EEAC whenever the opportunity presented itself. He was a “fixture” at EEAC field trips and events. Ever since I joined the organization and steering committee more than 10 years ago, I was aware of Barry’s presence and contributions. For me, an event was never complete if I didn’t run into Barry to hear about a new environmental game.

Barry was EEAC’s representative to Green Horizons, a hands-on environmental career day for middle-school students, for at least the last 12 years. He made sure EEAC was known to the teachers and guidance counselors participating and helped organize the educators at the event. When Barry got involved with something, he gave 120% of his enthusiasm and energy. He will be missed and, to be honest, never truly replaced.

To honor Barry’s memory, I suggest taking some students outside and showing them the wonder of the natural world. Sparking students’ enthusiasm for the natural world is the best memorial we can give in Barry’s memory.

Sincerely,

*Betsy Ukeritis, Chair, EEAC*

## EEAC NEWS.....

### Steering Committee Meetings

Meetings are held monthly. All are invited to attend. Please refer to Page 7 of this newsletter to see the next meeting schedule for date, time and type of meeting.

### Newsletter Deadlines

If you would like to submit an article for the newsletter, please email it as a Microsoft Word attachment to [lmiller296@aol.com](mailto:lmiller296@aol.com). The newsletter deadlines are the first Monday in April, July, October and January. We would love your ideas!

### Newsletter Committee & Contributors

Kim Estes-Fradis  
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Joy Garland  
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Betsy Ukeritis



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 website at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), email [educationoffice@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:educationoffice@dep.nyc.gov) or call (718) 595-3506 for information about DEP's education resources for students and teachers.

*Thanks to all the contributors and to Mike Zamm for coordinating this Special Issue.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

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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.

### EEAC Officers

Betsy Ukeritis, Chair  
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\* Affiliation for identification purposes only

### GET CONNECTED!

The EEAC listserv has migrated to a new home at [EEAC-NYC@googlegroups.com](mailto:EEAC-NYC@googlegroups.com). If you are a member of EEAC and would like to join the listserv contact Carol Franken at [carolfranken@gmail.com](mailto:carolfranken@gmail.com)



A couple of years ago, I had the good luck to team up with Barry Weinbrom on a project at Washington Irving and Marta Valle High Schools in the Union Square and Lower East Side sections of Manhattan respectively. Barry had engineered a small grant from DOE to do a science/ee piece with science classes in those schools. He asked me to provide a hands-on service project. We not only planned the project, but worked together in the classroom with four classes in each school.

This was a real treat- an opportunity to work directly with one of my EEAC colleagues on actual classroom and fieldwork. I had collaborated with colleagues for years on organization building, e.g., the effort to infuse environmental concepts into the state syllabus and curriculum and our current Teacher Environmental Education Preparation (TEEP) project, but had done most of my direct ee with kids with my staff or alone.

So to cooperate with Barry was an opportunity I relished and I wasn't disappointed. Barry had an intuitive grasp of how to get kids excited about science and environmental issues. He was comfortable working in any teaching style. We worked with the Marta Valle and Washington Irving students in groups and as a whole class; we did hands-on activities such as water testing, cooperative learning around map exercises, and question and answer sessions from the front of the class.

Barry had a wonderful blend of warmth and excitement. He and I fed off each other's enthusiasm. He carried the same qualities into the field where he could lead or support. The Marte Valle students weeded the area around the Kossuth-Tilden statues in the Riverside Park island at 112th-113th streets and set up an erosion-control fence around that part of the island which was still there the last time I looked. The Washington Irving youths removed the invasive species, mugwort and multiflora Rose, from a 16,000-square foot slope, which joins the Soldiers and Sailors Monument at 88th street and Riverside with the walkway along the Hudson River below. The Parks Department has since planted on the site. The students tested Hudson River water for dissolved oxygen and pH and submitted the results to the Riverside Park Fund.

Barry made many effective interventions during these projects which reinforced the connections between classroom and field. In a note to Barry after one of the projects was completed, the Marte Valle HS teacher said: "Thank you so much for the wonderful experience that the students and I had on Monday's field trip. I believe that the students had a chance to truly experience a lot of the concepts that we have been discussing in class."

Recently, I was thinking of doing other joint projects with Barry. Unfortunately I won't have that opportunity, but I am grateful for the time we worked together.

*Michael Zamm*



The entire environmental community has felt the loss this year of one of its "super heroes", Barry Weinbrom. Barry was a friend and mentor to both young and old.

Those who were touched by him were blessed and enriched by his life and his commitment to making the world a better place for all of us. Barry Weinbrom's life demonstrated that our life is more than our work and our work is more than our job. His contributions here on Earth will never be forgotten.

*Marcia Kaplan-Mann*

# *A Brilliant Day With Barry, When We Were Young – John C. Muir*

*John met Barry in 1982, and they enjoyed 30 years of friendship and collegiality. Barry worked part-time in varying roles at Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment for 18 years, where John was founder and director. During that period, John was the President of EEAC for two terms and introduced Barry to the group. He tells us that his noteworthy memories of Barry would fill a book, and he wanted to focus only on the events of a single day in 1982, the year that Barry served as the very first Board of Ed Sabbatical Teacher.*

It was a gorgeous October morning, filled with Brooklyn sunlight and deep shadows that were perfect for photography, and which seemed to invite discovery. Charles Monaco and I, the two regular environmental center employees, had planned an excursion to the Williamsburg district in anticipation of bringing our new “Neighborhood StreetScapes” program to the elementary schools there. Because Barry Weinbrom was training to teach the new program in the cold weather months to come, he fortuitously tagged along. It proved to be a brilliant day, from start to finish.

We came to Williamsburg with the youthful spirit of three chums native to the city, setting out to apply the newly fashionable “discovery methods of learning” to an unknown city environment – and to have a good time doing it. The trip had been preceded with a good deal of local historical and environmental book learning – not so easy to find in those pre-google days – but we were prepared to look as for the first time, to employ our “noticing eyes” to the city (something we always tried to teach our students). Barry, who was only a couple of months freed from his classroom duties, jumped into this free-wheeling approach with typical Barry enthusiasm. He eagerly started “modeling student outcomes”, and like a curious kid he learned to spot and record new species of colors and shapes and patterns in the streetscape, and whooped with pleasure at each new discovery.

Because it was a very old city neighborhood, he learned to spot “sign of the times” -- old buildings of unusual materials and styles, sometimes aged but classy landmarked buildings and sometimes ordinary brick hulks, with old advertising signs showing through on older walls. Old untended gardens appeared with weed trees grown as high as the buildings, and enigmatic manhole covers with “Town of Williamsburg Water” in raised letters. Barry seemed to revel in these finds.

We were armed with 35mm cameras and Kodachrome film, and aided by the brilliant daylight we recorded hundreds of first class images that for years later would be projected as slides by dozens of StreetScapes instructors in the classrooms of Williamsburg. We had also brought along with us Xerox prints of a couple of dozen historical street photos we had found in dusty archives, and went in search of each location where an image had been made a century or so earlier.

Barry could not resist the challenge to “find where the old photographer stood” for which the essential equipment, besides our cameras, was an old empty picture frame. I can see Barry a couple of months later with a class of fourth graders in tow, on the street in front of their school (Williamsburg had some wonderful old school buildings) holding that picture frame in one hand and an old photo print of the school in the other, everyone squinting and framing and finding the exact spot to photograph, with a Polaroid, the exact same view in the present day. Back in the classroom he would lead them to study and compare their newfound “field data” to discover how their school building had evolved over time.

Back on the street, we three were not prepared for what happened next. Across the street the door of an old rowhouse opened, and a strange-looking old guy came out with a wrapped bundle in his arms. Barry, who had the gift of being able to talk with anyone, introduced himself and told him what we were up to. In a minute, he was chatting away with the strange man as if they were reunited relatives. It turned out the old gentleman had been born in the house, and learned from his parents to carefully watch and record the world outside the windows.

His house stood on an odd piece of streetscape, not a city square but a triangle, with a tiny piece of neglected parkland at the center. Within an old cast iron fence was an old ornamental fountain. The old gent reached into his bundle and drew out a large and ancient photo of the same site. It showed a celebratory cluster of top-hatted officials admiring a plume of clear water rising above them from the same fountain.

Another photo showed a close-up of a rectangular brass or bronze plaque set near the base of the fountain, marking the event as the “Inauguration of the new central water supply of the Town of Williamsburg”. Barry bounded over to the fountain, pointed at a rectangle the same size, engraved in the stone, and shouted out, “I found it! It’s here!” I think he had been transported up into a crazy spiral of urban time travel, and did not notice at that moment that the plaque of valuable metal was long since removed from its spot. But he saw it fresh. Certainly we were all excited to find so enduring a piece of the streetscape, but Barry was over the moon. Taken up in the spirit, the old gentleman who had collected his bundle of views as seen from his windows, handed it over to Barry. It was willingly loaned by him for the length of the project, and they were added to the upcoming Neighborhood StreetScapes presentations at the very same neighborhood school from which the Old Gentleman had graduated three generations before.

By that time it was late afternoon, and the shadows were long. We walked a few blocks to Bamonte’s Italian Restaurant (“Since 1900”) for a good meal and a bottle of wine. It had been a good day – one of the best, and only one of many. Barry, you were always fun to be with, and I miss you.

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## A REMEMBRANCE OF BARRY



*by Joy Garland*

When I first came to an EEAC Steering Committee many moons ago, I remember Barry's warm and enthusiastic welcome. I was impressed with his energy and sense of mission to share his love and concern for the environment through science with teachers, students and their families. When Solar One, a brand new environmental center along the East River at East 23rd Street opened, Barry helped to initiate an afterschool program about the estuary for elementary students. As Chair for EEAC Programs in 2009, Barry took members to the General Theological Seminary in Manhattan to learn about their new geothermal energy system for heating and cooling, following up at a later date with a visit to the National Audubon headquarters in Manhattan. Barry was always there to lend a helping hand. Despite his bouts with serious illness, Barry's spirit showed through. He will be sorely missed, and never forgotten by those whose lives he touched.



## Barry Weinbrom: A Man of all Seasons

*by: Charles Monaco*

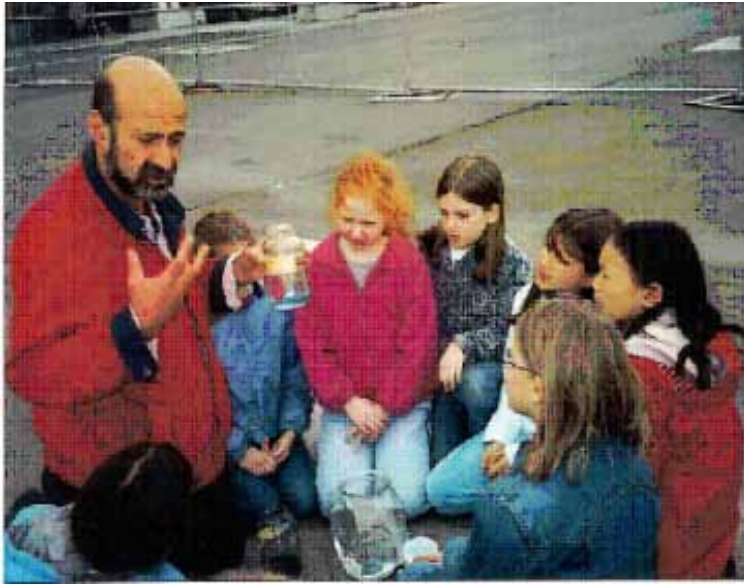
Spring is here, the parks are green, and it is hard to imagine that Barry, who loved the outdoors so much in every season, is no longer with us.

I met Barry in 1982 after his JHS class had participated in a tour of Prospect Park. From the very beginning, Barry had a propensity for creating dynamic learning for his students. He also had a welcoming direct style that encouraged dialogue, and an authentic manner that allowed the best of connections to begin. The next school year, Barry took his sabbatical with the Prospect Park Environmental Center. John Muir and I were so fortunate to have Barry join us. Barry helped us develop and teach the Brooklyn Bridge Centennial Program. His enthusiasm and his energetic style were a perfect fit. Barry was willing to try and do anything! He even learned the guitar so he could play and sing songs with me about the building of the Great Brooklyn Bridge!

Barry was always a positive and expressive person and educator. As part of his sabbatical, he helped research, develop and teach the Neighborhood Streetscapes of Williamsburg. There was so much joy as we shared the excitement of discovery, exploring the history and architecture of that community with the participating students from Community School District 14. Barry had an unstoppable manner and attitude throughout his life as a science teacher, in his work with PPEC and the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment, and in his myriad other activities. As a Man of all Seasons, he was able to do so many diverse things, he was hard to keep up with. As an educator, he blended games and fun with learning. He also jogged Prospect Park, played tennis and golf, created and taught dynamic and creative science lessons like Marriage of the Elements, and developed a wide range of unique after-school programs which he coordinated at BCUE. Every year, under his leadership, hundreds of children enjoyed learning and experiencing outdoor video making, art in the park, the enchanted rain forest, sound of music, hands-on science, and so many other programs that it would be nearly impossible to list them all. Barry's capacity to make connections was extraordinary. He even befriended Richie Havens who came to the steps of the Tennis House in Prospect Park to play and sing for us!

I was fortunate to have Barry as a friend and colleague for 30 years. He lived a life that demonstrated an ongoing expression of enthusiasm, resiliency and commitment. Those who knew him were greatly blessed. Barry lived so fully, fitting as much as he could into every day, evening and night. His loving wife, Lenore and daughter, Sarah and his family, friends, students, neighbors and all the people he came in contact with—are the beneficiaries. So many communities, so many people young and old, were helped by him. Whether he was teaching about or promoting water conservation, inquiry science, recycling, nutrition, exercise, or environmental awareness, our world is a better place because of Barry. He will be missed, but most importantly, he and the lessons he gave all of us in all Seasons of his life, will be remembered and live on.





## Barry

This should be professional; it is not, it is personal because I lost a friend. What comes to mind is Langston Hughes' poem:

*"I loved my friend  
He went away from me  
There's nothing more to say  
The poem ends,  
Soft as it began-  
I loved my friend."*

I remember first meeting Barry at Greenwich Audubon. Greenwich Audubon, supported with scholarships by the NYC Gardens Club for NYC teachers, was the "rite of passage" for budding science and environmental educators. I remember

running with Barry and his wife, Lenore --something we shared in those days, over 30 yrs ago. The most significant thing I learned from him in those days, was that he was about to do his sabbatical at BCUE --Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment. In its early days, it was called PPEC, Prospect Park Environmental Center. He did their "Streetscapes" program for them. There is where I see him best in my mind's eye, with students and teachers on the streets of Park Slope, although I know he was so much more to that community.

I took Barry's idea of a sabbatical at an informal resource and did the same at Gateway Environmental Study Center soon after. It was an exciting time for all of us in the environmental education movement in NYC. During my sabbatical, I became involved in the EEAC steering committee. That was the early 80's and Barry joined the steering committee soon after me.

Attending conferences, trips, workshops in both the science and environmental education world was the air we breathed. The "gift" I received from being around Barry was his inspirational optimism about all that he did, even though that was NOT my feelings about the world at that time in my life. With time, and whatever spirit blessed me, his enthusiasm began to affect me. I will miss that spirit of optimism, often hard to find in educational circles. Barry was unique in this and brought it to the table in all that he did.

We both had ups and downs in our careers, and when we could, we supported one another. He was always available to do a workshop for me. I would review his grants and help him when I could with the bureaucracy of the Board of Ed (now DOE). Later, as our years at the DOE began to come to an end, we both looked forward to working outside the system when we retired. Then, things changed and science was no longer a priority with the new "centralized" system. In spite of this, Barry kept going with new ideas and connections.

For both of us the world of science and environmental education that had captivated us when we were younger became harder to pitch. I will confess my energies really became limited, but Barry still kept plugging away, even if at a slower pace.

One of the activities I admired greatly that he did, was his volunteering at a senior center. He had done this for years. He had struggled with various health issues over this last 15 yrs starting with Lyme disease, something we shared getting, unfortunately. My health never fully recovered, but Barry seemed to bounce back. Then, Barry had an undiagnosed illness that had him at death's door about 6 years ago. It was Celiac Disease, treatable, and something Barry approached like everything in his life, with a passion. Not only did he rigorously become involved in his own recovery through diet, he became involved with celiac support groups. How like Barry to do this. His health improved drastically.

When he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, I thought he would pull through this, too. What I did not realize is that this is not a disease that you recover from. It is the cancer you do not want to get. He should have had more time. He's gone. I have lost my friend and one of the inspirations in my life. He will be in my heart always, my dear friend. I know he's up there (or wherever we go) with good company. Wonder if he does a "Heavenscapes" program now?

I'm sure he's planting gardens and playing poker. How lucky I was to share this time on the planet with him!

Farewell, my dear friend.



*EEACers See Geothermal Green Energy in Action at General Theological Seminary*

While I didn't know Barry for as long as some in the environmental and educational community, he certainly made quite an impact on me. When I retired, Barry, in his excited and upbeat way, always had a proposition for me: selling "green games", working in a special school program, just to name a few. He approached everything with optimism and a great sense of humor and hope. When my mother passed away this past January, Barry made a condolence call to my house, between his "treatment" and his Friday night poker game. That was Barry. What more needs to be said? He was quite a guy, and his exuberance rubbed off on all who knew him.

*Gail David*

## **Special Program Newtown Creek!**

**Wednesday, June 20th 5-7pm**

Join EEAC for a special program at Newtown Creek.  
We will have a presentation about NYC's wastewater treatment process  
and a tour of the digester eggs.

### **Visitor Center at Newtown Creek**

329 Greenpoint Avenue  
Greenpoint, Brooklyn NY, 11222  
(Enter at the intersection of Greenpoint Avenue and Humboldt Street.)

Directions:

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/environmental\\_education/newtown\\_directions.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/environmental_education/newtown_directions.shtml)

Contact: Judith Hutton at [judithhutton@gmail.com](mailto:judithhutton@gmail.com)

To learn more about Newtown Creek visit

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/environmental\\_education/newtown\\_visitors\\_center.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/environmental_education/newtown_visitors_center.shtml)

## **OTHER EEAC NEWS**

### **Tour of the Highline for EEAC members and their friends**

Saturday, June 16th from 9 AM to 10 AM.

Please RSVP to Judith Hutton at [judithhutton@gmail.com](mailto:judithhutton@gmail.com).

### **June Meeting**

Our June Meeting will be at Newtown Creek Visitor Center  
Wednesday, June 20th from 5 PM to 7 PM.



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2012

☐ 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed form and check to:

John Pritchard, Treasurer 72-35 Metropolitan Ave. 2C Middle Village, NY 11379

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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-(c)3 organization.

I would like to become involved in a committee.

Please provide me with information about the following committees:

☐ Communications ☐ Programs ☐ Membership

☐ TEEP (Teacher Environmental Education Preparation)



## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

c/o Teresa Ippolito

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