



EEAC

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1995/1996

A New Challenge for Environmental Education

by Rebecca Gratz

NYC Department of Environmental Protection



I hear a lot of discussion among members of the environmental education community about including minority communities in our outreach. On the other hand, there is not a lot of discussion about reaching out to the deaf or blind communities or about making it possible for a student in a wheelchair to be able to participate in a field trip.

Until recently, I never noticed this absence.

Last summer I was approached by teachers from the Lexington School for the Deaf in Jackson Heights, Queens. The fourth and fifth grade summer session class was focusing on the New York City water supply system for the six week session. The teachers were requesting my expertise and participation in bringing water supply education into the classroom.

I had never worked with a school for the deaf before, so my first meeting at the school was intimidating. I met with the two classroom teachers - one of whom is deaf, the computer teacher, the Elementary School director and the guidance counselor. I didn't know who could hear and who couldn't -- but I came to understand that it didn't matter. Everything I said and everything said to me was translated into sign language and/or spoken. Not only is this so that hearing people don't exclude deaf people, but so deaf people don't exclude hearing people who don't know sign language.

I outlined the services and information DEP could offer--background materials, an in-class presentation for the students, technical expertise for individual research projects and field trips.

I began to notice that we in the environmental education community had been, in many ways, excluding a whole population from our outreach without even noticing. Or at least I didn't - maybe others did. I do know other educators who sign, but not many.

Three days after my first meeting at Lexington, I went to the school to conduct an in-class presentation and slide show overview of the water supply system. In two years as an environmental educator at DEP, I have never been so nervous. I was worried that I would say

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UPCOMING EEAC EVENTS.....

Steering Committee Meetings

EEAC Steering Committee meetings are held from 4-6pm on the third Wednesday of every month. Please arrive promptly at 4pm!

All EEAC members are invited to attend and participate in the discussion. For information on the location of the meetings, contact Millard Clements at (212) 998-5495.

Upcoming meeting information:

Steering committee meetings are held at New York University, Press Building, 32 Washington Square Park East in the Anderson Room. Upcoming dates and locations are: January 17, February 21, March 20, and April 17.

Newsletter Deadlines

Material should be submitted to the Editor on the first Monday of May, August, November and February. If possible, please submit on a floppy disc in WordPerfect 5.1 format.

Newsletter Committee

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Therese Braddick, Newsletter Editor
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Cornell Cooperative Extension, one of the primary supporters of Operation Explore, was mistakenly omitted from the article on OPEX in our last issue. We apologize for the omission.

Special THANKS to Con Edison for supporting the publication of this newsletter.

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 environmental education. It is available free upon request.

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*Affiliations for identification purposes only.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

"READING BETWEEN THE LINES"

The following is an excerpt from the writings of EEAC member Bob Ortner:

Have you ever tried to understand or interpret an environmental news story from the media? Well, environmental news stories can best be interpreted by a few brief terms. The first category of terms can be described as "Oops". The term "Oops" can readily be used for descriptions of stories like major oil tanker leaks or chemical leaks of various types. The second category is "Uh-Oh". This is usually a bit of terminology that can best be used as an afterthought. Stories of rain forest destruction, ozone depletion, or topsoil erosion fall into this category. Another example of an "Uh-Oh" is a nuclear reactor meltdown as in Chernobyl, or Three Mile Island in this country. The third category can be described as "Oh (expletive deleted)" - you may fill in the expletive as your choice but this is a PG-rated article! That usually refers to a problem so catastrophic that no one seems to know what to do or how to handle it. An example of this is widespread drinking water contamination, ocean pollution or a situation like the garbage barge, all of which make us ask, "What do we do now?"

So you see environmental stories are easy to understand....

Most of you know Bob. After a distinguished five year stint as an environmental educator at the Caumsett Environmental Education Center coordinated by Queens College, Bob became a member of the staff of the Council on the Environment of New York City (CENYC) Education Program. He practiced CENYC's Training Student Organizers (TSO) program in urban education outposts like George Washington and Walton high Schools, amongst others. He distinguished himself in TSO for his nifty project ideas, his ability to communicate complex issues to youth and the sensitive way he related to students, teachers, administrators and co-workers.

Over five years ago Bob was diagnosed as having multiple sclerosis. He continued to work for CENYC, TSO part-time. He produced three environmental education units on water supply, the marine environment and solid waste, intended for youth and adults seeking an introduction to ecology and the environment. They are now available from CENYC. Bob produced the first draft of several other units as well.

He currently resides at Waterview Nursing Care Center, 119-15 27th Avenue, Room 305B, Flushing NY 11354, phone (718) 539-0255. He continues to write about the environment and environmental education. His wry sense of humor, insight, and courage in the face of a daily struggle inspire his friends, family and colleagues. Bob is an avid reader of the EEAC newsletter and stays abreast of our activities and policy concerns. He sends regards to all.



Environmental Resources

by Kenneth Kowald

Timely

Some time ago, the Chancellor's Task Force on Environmental Education issued its report and it was "accepted" by the Board of Education in 1991 (or was it 1992? It is really difficult to remember all the players who have been in 110 Livingston Street). The recommendations of the Task Force have not been implemented (in case you did not notice), but one part of the report has a life of its own. It is one of the appendices, *"Environmental Education Resource Guide for New York City Teachers and Youth Leaders"* and William F. Hewitt, Director of Public Affairs for Region 2 of the State Department of Environmental Conservation has been the "keeper of the flame," updating it a couple of times over the years and making it available to teachers. Copies may be obtained by writing to Bill at 47-40 21st Street, Long Island City 11101. And, if you have more current information, let him know. Many members of EEAC were on the Task Force and this appendix was the work mainly of Bill Hewitt and Samuel Holmes, a past Chairman of EEAC and now an honorary member of the EEAC Steering Committee, with some help from the author of this column.

Update: In last Spring's Newsletter we mentioned "**Look Around New York**," published by the New York City Audubon Society. As those who followed up on the item learned, this publication is now available only via a subscription to "Audubon Adventures," which may be obtained through the National Audubon Society--and well worth it!

The Year Five Report of the Urban Forest & Education Program (UFEP), sponsored by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, has been published and contains much optimistic and informative material, including a section on Environmental Education by Mary Leou, EEAC's Vice-Chair for Programs and a member of the Newsletter committee. To learn more about UFEP's activities, you may contact the staff by calling (212) 360-2744.

The City's Department of Environmental Protection has published "**The State of the City's Waters: The New York Harbor Estuary**." As Commissioner Marilyn Gelber notes: "Among the report's many heartening findings is that the Harbor waters are now cleaner than they have been in 60 years." In the Summer of 1995, for the fourth consecutive year, all New York City beaches were open for swimming. To obtain a copy of the report, write to the Department, 59-17 Junction Boulevard, Corona 11368, or call (718) 595-6565.

In the Fall 1994 issue of the Newsletter, we told you about Science City, the all-weather exhibit, created by the New York Hall of Science, on and around Herald Square and West 34th Street in Manhattan. Now what is being called a "satellite" has been set up on Queens Boulevard in Kew Gardens, in front of Borough Hall, with a special kiosk on the mezzanine level of the Union Turnpike subway station at the Kew Gardens end. We're told that this exhibit will be there until about September, but then, we were told the Manhattan exhibit would be gone by May, 1995 and when last seen (in mid-October), at least parts of it were still around. In any case, whether in Queens or Manhattan, this splendid view of what makes New York tick underground is worth a trip from anywhere.

Two Imax films will be on view through February 28 in the American Museum of Natural History. In "**Titanica**," an American, Canadian and Russian expedition is shown exploring that famed shipwreck. "**Destiny in Space**" is an accurate title for the other film. Together, they run about two hours. To find out more, call (212) 769-5650.

Bronx Green-Up, a program of the New York Botanical Garden, has moved to new office space on the NYBG grounds, to rooms over the Mill Restaurant. The new telephone number is (718) 817-8026. A new brochure about the program has been published and may be obtained by calling that number or writing to Bronx Green-Up, NY Botanical Garden, Mill Offices, Bronx 10458-5126....On September 30, Terry Keller, who founded BGU eight years ago, retired and, while she will continue for a time as a

consultant to the program--generally considered the country's most acclaimed botanical garden outreach--she will be greatly missed in the "greening community," where she has been an informed and active presence for many years. She has helped establish more than 300 neighborhood gardens through BGU. This is by way of a small tribute to a very fine person. Terry, we will miss you! And, we hope you will be here when we need you!

Around and About

Speaking of the **New York Botanical Garden**, its **Forest Project** publishes a quarterly newsletter with environmental activities and information especially for children. To receive a free subscription, send your name and address to: The Forest, Watson 304, NYBG, Bronx 10458-5126....And, while you're at it, find out about the Teacher Enhancement Program of the Garden, offering hands-on opportunities for teachers to incorporate outdoor science and environmental education into studies of plant sciences. To find out more, call (718) 817-8545.

The New York City Department of Sanitation continues to produce materials about recycling. The latest is a poster-sized publication, "**What Happens to My Recyclables**," which may be obtained by writing to P.O. Box 156, Bowling Green Station, New York 10274-0156, or calling (212) 219-8090....And the Department and the City can use every citizen's help in fighting a new form of crime. With the increase in prices paid for recyclables, especially newsprint, thieves have begun stealing the bundles before the Sanitation people can get to them. The law stipulates that once newspapers are placed at the curb, they belong to the City and may legally be removed only by the Department of Sanitation. If you see such thievery, report it by calling (212) 788-4057.

Looking Ahead: Central Park's Belvedere Castle is scheduled to reopen in May as the **Luce Learning Center**, with exhibits and programs centered on the park as a natural habitat. Currently the castle, on a rock outcropping overlooking the Delacorte Theater near West 79th Street, is undergoing a \$340,000 rehabilitation, as part of \$3,000,000 in education

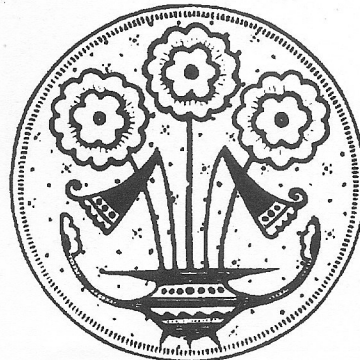
grants from the Henry Luce Foundation and the Lila Wallace-Readers Digest Fund. The Luce Learning Center will coordinate its programs with the Charles A. Dana Discovery Center in the Harlem Meer area in the Northeast area of the park.

King Manor Museum, a 19th century manor house, once the home of Rufus King, a signer of the Constitution, is now open to the public on weekends from 12 Noon to 4 p.m. It is located in King Park, Jamaica Avenue and 153rd Street in Queens. For information, call (718) 206-0545. A small admission charge is required. It's operated by the City's Department of Parks & Recreation.

There is no admission charge at the **Queens County Farm Museum**, 73-50 Little Neck Parkway, Floral Park, where the hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. For information, call (718) 347-3276.

It is unlikely that our reservoirs will be at "normal" levels by the time you read this and, considering that drought conditions hit us every few years, it's good to know that we can grow **plants that are drought-resistant**. To get a list of them, send a stamped self-addressed business-size envelope to Xeriscape, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County, Building J, 1425 Old Country Road, Plainview 11803-5015.

Did you know that the City's Department of Transportation has programs to clean up and even beautify our highways? To learn more, write to **Adopt-A-Highway**, 8th Floor, 2 Rector Street, New York 10006.



An Inter-generational Garden Grows in Brooklyn

submitted by Barry Weinbrom

Brooklyn School for Global Studies

The Brooklyn School for Global Studies and the John Jay Annex, which last year founded the Warren Street Community Garden, organized a Halloween Celebration on October 30th that united the resident members of the area. It was a fantastic experience for all partners involved in the event. The garden is located on Warren Street in the Cobble Hill section of Brooklyn between Smith and Court Streets.

Resident members of the one year old community garden, second graders from PS 261, pre-schoolers from Jules D. Michaels Daycare, and college students from New York City Technical Community College worked with John Jay High School students and middle school students from the Brooklyn School for Global Studies at the garden for the celebration. Events included a tour of the garden, a visit to the pumpkin patch, storytelling, face-painting, pumpkin science -- which included questions related to the size and shape of the pumpkin, pin-the-tail-on-the-black cat and student interviews.

The college students under the guidance of Professor Laura Scanlon interviewed the guests, took video footage and photographed the event to include in the documentary on the Warren Street Community Garden that they produced last year.

A great day of meeting new friends, sharing and caring was had by all. Everyone got to see that pumpkins do grow in Brooklyn, but more importantly, the garden demonstrates how schools can forge partnerships within the community that enrich the learning experiences of their students.

EEAC Membership Programs



In October, our membership program at Audubon's National Headquarters was attended by 40 EEAC members and friends. The program was informative and gave us an opportunity to learn more about environmental concerns as they relate to the work setting. On behalf of EEAC, I'd like to thank Talbert Spence, Director of Education at Audubon and Steve Bosak, Coordinator of Public Programs, for making the program possible.

In January, the program committee is planning an evening at Con Edison. Peter Lanahan, Jr., Vice President of Environmental Affairs, will discuss Con Edison's commitment to environmental excellence. As part of this commitment, Con Edison would like to develop and maintain open communications on environmental issues with regulatory agencies, environmental groups, customers, and its employees. It is a unique opportunity for EEAC members to participate in this dialogue designed to bring about better understanding of environmental issues and their impact on the urban environment. I look forward to seeing you there.

Mary J. Leou
Vice-Chair of Programs

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Date: January 31, 1996

Place: Con Edison

4 Irving Place

New York, N.Y.

Time: 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP by January 19, 1996.

Call Mary Leou at (212) 360-2745.

Continued from cover

something wrong or that I wouldn't be able to relate to the students. I didn't need to worry. The students were well prepared and attentive. They had many excellent questions and had been keeping up with recent stories about the water in the newspapers. It was a wonderful workshop. After the presentation, the students gave me a name sign: They combined the first letter of my name, R, with the sign for water. I was so pleased that when I got back to my office, I showed all my co-workers.

The 15 students and their teachers then began a raindrop-to-faucet tour of NYC's water supply system. At the Croton Lake Gatehouse the students saw the start of the Croton Aqueduct. The following week on a tour of the Jerome Park Reservoir in the Bronx, the students saw where that aqueduct empties out. The students also came to DEP's offices in Queens to visit our water quality laboratory. At their school in Jackson Heights, the students took a survey of the water distribution system with the custodian.

As a culminating project, each of the summer school classes developed an interpretive museum exhibit about the subject of their summer study. I went to the opening of the Lexington Science Museum and was impressed with the work of all the groups. This class of fourth and fifth graders built the most incredible scale model of NYC's Croton water supply system. Accurate in every detail, the model traced the flow of the water from mountain stream to NYC faucet. Interpretive signs explaining each part of the system reflected a deep level of understanding of the subject matter. I was honored to have been part of their research.

This experience, working with a group of 15 fourth and fifth graders and their teachers, has ultimately changed my perspective. In September I began taking American Sign Language and am now in Level 2. The work we do as environmental educators is so important that we must not forget to share it with everyone. Each one of us has the power to make a difference for the environment, and each one should be given the opportunity to learn how to do so.

Urban Woodland Ecology Workshop Series for Teachers

The Urban Forest & Education Program of the City Parks Foundation and the Central Park Conservancy present this series of hands-on science workshops for educators. Using the diversity of the North Woods in Central Park, professional environmental educators assist teachers in learning how to use woodland environments as outdoor laboratories to extend and enrich curricula.

March 16—9am - 3pm

Inquiry Approach to Nature Education

March 30—9am-1pm

Ecology of Urban Woodlands

April 20—9am-1pm

Birds in City Woods

May 4—9am-3pm

Geology: Reading the Rocks

June 1—9am-1pm

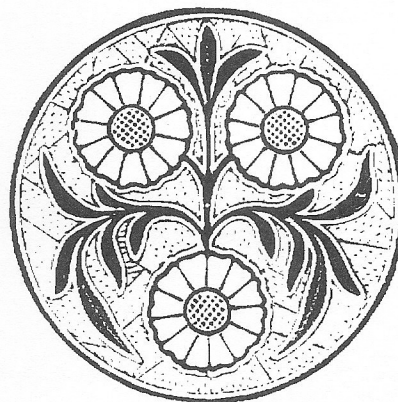
Woodland Tree Identification

Sessions appropriate for teachers of all grades. New teacher credit available.

Meeting Location: Charles A. Dana Discovery Center.

Fee: \$10 per session; entire series \$40.

To register please call: The Education Registrar at 212 360-2720.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

_____ New Member _____ Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: () _____

Affiliation: _____

Title/Position: _____

Address: _____

Phone: () _____ Date: _____

Select either a \$15 dues payment to cover the cost of membership in EEAC for a calendar year, OR, a \$150 Life Membership. A membership entitles you to receive EEAC newsletters, program information mailings, and conference announcements.

Membership dues are tax deductible. Make all checks payable to EEAC.

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

Ruth Eilenberg
Treasurer
196-32 53rd Avenue
Flushing, New York 11365

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