



# The Current

South Branch Watershed Association, Inc. Established 1959

... published quarterly at the Hermia Lechner House

## Award for HCRHS Student Environment Alliance Club

By Tom Southard, Neshanic Project Manager



SEA President Georgia Crowther receives the Proclamation from Bill Kibler as teacher/advisor Bonnie Berenger looks on

On October 7, 2009, the Hunterdon Central Regional High School (HCRHS) Student Environment Alliance Club (SEA) received a NJ State Proclamation honoring the club for achieving the SBWA 2009 Environmental Excellence Award. SBWA Executive Director Bill Kibler and Tom Southard, SBWA volunteer advisor to SEA, presented the Proclamation to the SEA students, science teacher advisor Bonnie Berenger, School Superintendent Lisa Brady and Principal Chris Steffner. The Official Proclamation recognized SEA for their efforts to develop a "River Friendly" plan for the 72 acre campus which has a pond and two streams that drain directly into the

South Branch just beyond the school boundary. Further, the Proclamation recognized the students for developing and implementing a campus-wide recycling program that has become hugely successful. When SEA began recycling two years ago, the school recycled a small amount of paper equating to about one four-yard dumpster every 10 days or so. Through the efforts of SEA, the latest recycling estimate is a 30- yard compacted dumpster every week with recycled materials paper, plastic, cans and glass.

SEA was also recognized for its plans to design and plant a Rain Garden this fall. The rain garden will be outside the Library, a spot that has particular problems with storm water drainage.

After reading the Proclamation, Bill Kibler stated that "SBWA is proud to work so closely with SEA" and "I Congratulate the students and Bonnie Berenger for their enthusiasm and efforts to make the campus of HCRHS a greener and more environmentally friendly place". He noted, "If Hunterdon County could follow SEA's lead it could quickly move from having the worst recycling record in the state to one of the best".



Proud SEA Students

**VOLUME 49 No. 4**  
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SBWA is a proud member of Earth Share of New Jersey

Please check out our web site.  
[www.sbwa.org](http://www.sbwa.org)


**SBWA's 50th Anniversary**  
**1959 – 2009**




## The Emperor's Clothes

By Bill Kibler, Executive Director

I'm celebrating a happy anniversary. As of November 4<sup>th</sup>, I'm beginning my fifth joyous year as executive director of the South Branch Watershed Association. Thank you for your enthusiastic support of SBWA, your belief in our work, and your love of the South Branch! I share your pride in our 50 years of leadership in protecting water quality in New Jersey.

SBWA has been a leader in the environmental movement in New Jersey since 1959. We meet monthly with other state environmental leaders each month in Trenton as part of the Association of New Jersey Environment Commissions' Environmental Summit. I proudly serve as the co-chair of the policy committee of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition and on the Steering Committee of the Raritan Basin Coalition. In the past year, I've been excited by the efforts of the Sustainable Raritan River Coalition begun by Rutgers University. I represent our interests as a co-chair of the Balance Committee.

I need your help with a question that has been nagging at me since I started in this job. The "powers that be" in Trenton keep telling me that we need to embrace the concept of "Sustainable Growth." But I'm confused. From what I can tell, sustainable growth is like the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland*—everyone knows what one looks like, but nobody has ever seen one.

New Jersey has a number of environmental challenges, and from what I can see, a great number of them are directly related to having a large number of people in a very small space. Our dense and diverse population is one of our strengths, but it also creates issues that we all seem to be aware of, but refuse to acknowledge.

Earlier this year Eileen Swann, the Executive Director of the New Jersey Highlands Council, presented a public briefing on the impact of the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP). There are 183 subwatersheds in the Highlands. Presently, 114 of those 183 subwatersheds are in deficit. That is, there is not enough water to support the population that relies on those subwatersheds for water. Ms. Swann presented three scenarios which addressed the impact of the RMP on water quality and quantity. Under the most conservative scenario, which assumed that all 88 municipalities in the Highlands region opted into the plan, there remained a water deficit. In other words, if the RMP works perfectly, there will not be enough water in the long term to meet the needs of Highlands communities.

Clearly, we have a fundamental problem. How can this sort of growth be sustainable? Under the very best scenario that the Highlands Council's scientists can imagine, the majority of our watershed can expect to face significant water shortages in the future. Why? Because our leadership in Trenton refuses to address the impact of continued development in our state, both in the Highlands and in the half of our state that relies on the Highlands for clean water.

What's to be done? First and foremost, we need real leadership in Trenton who will stand up and say "enough is enough." Our problems are a direct result of too many people. We must stop pretending that the solution to our problems is more people. "Sustainable growth" is a myth. Too many people in such a small state has led to traffic congestion, high taxes, and the persistent erosion of our environment. Our environment and our economy are inextricably woven together and we simply cannot cure our economic and environmental ills by adding more people to the mix. Additional development in those areas of the state that rely on Highlands water will have a deleterious effect on our water supply just as development within the Highlands does.

We need to preserve our quality of life, improve our economy, and protect our environment.

(Continued on page 4)



## Come Discover the Health of the South Branch Raritan River

On Saturday, November 14, 2009, we will present the results of the 2009 river monitoring season and reveal the health of the South Branch Raritan River using 16 years of our monitoring data, which included two new sites this year. This annual Volunteer Biological Monitoring Conference will be held at Echo Hill Park Lodge on Lilac Drive in Clinton Township, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be provided. A special presentation, "Stressor Identification – Putting the Pieces Together" by Bill Honachefsky, Section Chief in the NJ DEP's Bureau of Freshwater and Biological Monitoring, will be the highlight of the event. Please join us to learn more about the river that flows through your community. For more information about the conference, or about becoming a volunteer monitor, please call Nicole Rahman, Program Director, at 908-782-0422 ext. 14.

## Hold These 2010 Dates

Please mark these dates on your calendar for 2010. More information about these events will be published in later issues of *The Current*.

- March 26 — Annual Member Meeting and Dinner
- April 24 — Annual Spring River Clean-up
- Annual Ride for the River Fundraiser — May 15
- Volunteer Monitoring Training — June 5
- Treasures of the South Branch — June 12

## MARK YOUR 2009—2010 CALENDAR

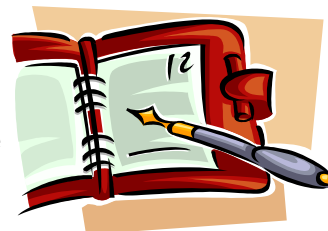
**Community Well Testing** — Please check our web site for dates and locations.

**Annual Volunteer Monitoring Conference** — November 14, 2009. See article above for more information.

**Shopping, Self-Indulgence, and Support for SBWA** — December 6, 2009. 3 - 5pm at the Lechner House (our office located in Echo Hill).

Hunterdon County Green Table Forums — Please check our web site for dates and topics.

Visit the Calendar page on the SBWA web site at [www.sbwa.org](http://www.sbwa.org) for dates of other meetings and events throughout the year.



Mark your day to volunteer at SBWA. Please check the SBWA web site for a list of opportunities.



## Out and About

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The SBWA staff participated in the following local, regional, state, and national events throughout 2009:

Princeton Community Works - Princeton University – January 26 (attendee)  
ANJEE Conference - Princeton University – January 29-31 (attendee and volunteer)  
Schuylkill Watershed Congress - Montgomery County Community College – March 7 (attendee)  
Stanton Church Women's Breakfast – April 18 (exhibitor)  
Basil Bandwagon Earth Fair – April 18 (exhibitor)  
Hunterdon County Parks and Recreation Earth Day at Deer Path – April 25 (exhibitor)  
NJ Envirothon – School of Conservation – May 9 (aquatic station test grader)  
Flemington Jewish Community Center Environment Fair – May 20 (exhibitor)  
Buffalo Watch at Readington River Farm – May 23 (exhibitor)  
Readington Community Day – May 25 (exhibitor)  
National River Rally - Baltimore, MD - May 29 – June 1 (attendee)  
Somerset Patriots Environmental Conservation Night – June 1 (display)  
Public Presentation on Dam Removal at Mt. Olive – July 8  
Alexandria Twp Environmental Commission – Presentation on SBWA & Watershed – July 28  
Presentation on SBWA Education Program to Schering-Plough – August 10  
Tour of Walnut Brook with Congressman Lance – August 21  
Hunterdon County 4H Fair – August 19 – 23 (display)  
ANJEC Environmental Congress – October 17 (display and attend)  
NJ DEP Volunteer Monitoring Summit – November 18-19 (present and attend)

**NJ Envirothon  
Aquatics Station  
Team 2009**



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## The Emperor's Clothes, continued from page 2

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Packing more bodies into an already overcrowded state is not the answer. Real sustainability means addressing the fundamental causes of our malaise, not simply selling out our future by pretending that any growth can be sustainable. We need a sustainable economy, a sustainable environment, a sustainable state—not the illusion that a larger population is a panacea.

Developers' lobbyists continue to try to drive the agenda in Trenton. The recent gubernatorial election will change the political landscape in New Jersey; for better or worse remains to be seen. We will work to ensure that our elected officials put the interests of New Jerseyans first and that our governor, our legislature, and our state agencies do not compromise our clean water, our quality of life, and our future to developers. Your voice is more important than ever. We need your support to be your voice to protect our watershed!



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS *August 15 to October 15, 2009*

Rick Alderman  
Carl Andres  
Myron Bednar  
James Celentano  
David Dunne

Deedee Eisenberg  
Young S. Hahn  
Christine Hamill  
Keith Harney  
America Lopez-Luis

Theresa Luksa  
David Maslankowski  
Brett Melworm  
Juan Reinoso  
Richard VanSickle

It is always a pleasure to welcome new members. Please call us if you need information or have a concern about water quality or potential threats to our watershed.

Also, please stop by our office to learn about volunteer opportunities. We want you to help us continue our important work.

### To All Our Members: Are your friends and neighbors members?

We can help you convince your friends and neighbors that membership in SBWA means helping to preserve a healthy watershed for the future. Recruit five new members for 2009 and get your next annual membership fee free. We have membership kits for prospective members that we can send to you or directly to your friend or neighbor. Please call us at 908-782-0422 or e-mail us at [info@sbwa.org](mailto:info@sbwa.org).

### Free SBWA Water Bottle

Get your free SBWA reusable water bottle when you join as a first time member or upgrade your membership when you renew your membership. Special thanks to Garden State Laboratories, our independent water testing lab and co-sponsor of these handy blue bottles. Please tell your friends and neighbors about this offer.



### Help Us Go Green!



SBWA members can receive newsletters and other correspondence electronically rather than in print through snail mail. To request this service, send an email to [lynnbecker@sbwa.org](mailto:lynnbecker@sbwa.org) with "SBWA News" as the subject. Please be sure to include your full name. Rest assured — we will not share our list or overwhelm you with spam!

**SBWA STAFF:** Bill Kibler, Executive Director; Nicole Rahman, Program Director; Tom Southard, Neshanic Project Manager; Lynn Becker, Director of Development and Member Relations; Dee Ely, Office Manager; Mary Licetti, Finance Director; Jeremy Carlson, Americorps Watershed Ambassador; Alan Rennie, Kandi Kaczetow, Marie Comerford, Tom Southard, Harold Blackstone, Harold Cattle, and Antoinette Boccuzzi, Environmental Educators.

**2009 OFFICERS:** *President:* Fred Puelle; *Vice President:* James Hill; *Secretary:* Skip Jonas; *Treasurer:* Ken Jagel.

**2009 TRUSTEES:** Randy Block, Dave Clapp, Karen Elbert, Amy S. Greene, Nick Romanenko, Kay Serebrakian, Christopher Trofimov, and John Williamson

Contact SBWA at 908-782-0422 or e-mail us at [info@sbwa.org](mailto:info@sbwa.org).



### In Memory and Gratitude

Dennis Kephart was a member of the SBWA board of trustees for more than 20 years. He left the board about five years ago to spend more time with his family, especially his two grandsons and granddaughter. Everyone who served on the board with him, who volunteered for our annual fundraising events with him, or just participated in the events, knew him.



Dennis rode the complete 100 mile Watershed Wheeling route for all but one of the years this event was held. He rarely took his bicycle out of his garage before the race to get in shape, but Watershed Wheeling volunteers never had to rescue him en route and he raised a ton of money, arm twisting friends for sponsorships.

When Watershed Wings replaced Watershed Wheeling, Dennis drove the SBWA World Series of Birding team in their van on their 24 hour, northern New Jersey to Cape May marathon with only one request—COFFEE! And, again friends and family “anted up” to sponsor the Birding team.

Ride for the River, the SBWA motorcycle poker ride, followed Watershed Wings and Dennis took over the lunch preparations, grilling hotdogs and hamburgers on his own half metal drum grills and making sure participants had warm baked beans, coleslaw and, of course, COFFEE.

Dennis was a stalwart, fun loving, committed SBWA member, on the board or off. He died on August 20, 2009 of complications of esophageal cancer. He will be very much missed.



### Special Thanks

- Jackie Parrinello – binding all of the Waterways Stewardship Project student booklets for the fall.



### Wish List...

- \$235 Donation to purchase SBWA logo vests for our school programs
- 10x10 easy pop-up canopy for use at events.
- Digital postage scale.

**Please call first to see if our need has already been met. Thanks!**



### Other Ways to Help ...

- Order holiday goodies from Tastefully Simple products through the SBWA website. SBWA will get a commission.
- Donate a car or motorcycle to SBWA and get a tax deduction. Go to [www.vehiclemanagementservices.com](http://www.vehiclemanagementservices.com) or call 888-395-3955.
- Use GoodSearch.com as your search engine and designate SBWA as your cause.
- Contribute through giving programs at your workplace.



### SBWA is Still Celebrating Its 50th Anniversary!



As 2009 is winding down, we are reflecting on how quickly our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year has passed. However, the celebration is not over! You will be receiving your Annual Appeal soon and we hope that you will help us continue our celebration by making a generous contribution to SBWA. Your contribution will make a difference in our ability to continue the great work that has been done for the past 50 years to keep your water clean. We would love to have an increase in our River Watch Club members as a "present" to SBWA. River Watch Club members are those donors who have given at a level of \$150 or more.

The theme for this year's annual appeal is Optimism for the Future of our Watershed. We know that you share that optimism. Hermia Lechner, SBWA's founder, always said that "We must conserve and utilize our natural resources in the right way, or future generations will have nothing of pure water left." Let us take her words to heart and make the future a bright one for the next 50 years in our watershed.

### Donate On Line

Good news! You can now donate to SBWA through our website and save time, effort, and trees! Just hit the Donate Now button on our home page at [www.sbwa.org](http://www.sbwa.org). Network for Good is managing this process for us which minimizes our administration time. You will receive an e-mail acknowledging your donation on behalf of SBWA. Please note that your donation will appear on your credit card as "Network for Good", not SBWA. Please take advantage of this new service and support SBWA's programs!



### Please Donate to SBWA Today!

Yes, I/we want to support SBWA's efforts to protect and enhance our water resources!

My/our check is enclosed. *(Please make checks payable to "SBWA.")*

\$200     \$100     \$50    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

My company will match my gift. I have enclosed an appropriate form.

I am interested in including SBWA in my will.

Please complete this form and mail with your contribution to: SBWA, Lechner House, 41 Lilac Drive, Flemington, NJ 08822

**Thank you for your support!**

SBWA is a 501(c)3 organization.

All donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.



### Schering-Plough Helps Fund Our Education Program



Karl Varnai presenting the check to Bill Kibler

This August, Schering-Plough (SP) awarded us \$2,500 to support our Waterways Stewardship Project, which is our core environmental education program for school students. Bill Kibler, Nicole Rahman, and Lynn Becker made their way to SP's Summit, NJ location for the presentation of the check. Karl Varnai, Principal Engineer, and his team from SP Summit Maintenance and Facilities Services, chose to support our education program. They have also been involved with environmental education through teaching students about solar energy with solar powered toys. We greatly appreciate their support of our program. Thanks also to Alan Rennie, one of our Environmental Educators, for suggesting our program to them as a possible awardee. Thank you Schering-Plough!

### Watershed Institute Grant

Special thanks to the Watershed Institute (WSI), who provided us a generous grant to support our strategic planning process. The SBWA board and staff are beginning to prepare our next strategic plan, which we expect to unveil at our annual meeting in March 2010. The grant from the WSI will help us hire an experienced consultant and prepare an excellent plan for our future.



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Environment”



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After you read this newsletter, please pass it on to a friend or neighbor and ask them to join us as SBWA members. Thank you.