

Celebrating the Donor of a Large Bequest to the New Jersey Chapter

by Dennis Schvejda, Chapter Conservation Director

I first met Ken Lloyd in the early 1990's when I was Chair of the North Jersey Group's Conservation Committee. We were working to protect High Mountain in Wayne, and Pyramid Mountain in Kinnelon, among a host of other issues. Ken was an avid hiker who loved the New Jersey Highlands, and we were working to protect two of his favorite places. For the next several years, Ken attended just about every Committee meeting. He never missed any of the monthly Wayne Town Council meetings, which we attended faithfully until we succeeded in protecting 1,200 acres of High Mountain.

Ken was elderly, tall and gaunt, wore glasses and a pork-pie hat. He was quiet, never testifying or speaking out at public hearings. But he was there, offering encouragement, advice and expressing a heartfelt gratitude for our efforts. Ken was a fellow we all liked.

After a time, Ken suffered from failing health, and he eventually stopped attending our meetings. After another few years, I learned of Ken's death. I had expected it, Ken being elderly, and ill, but it was sad news nonetheless. I was told Ken had left the Club a bit of money in his will. Ken had lived frugally; in fact, I thought him to be "poor" in means but rich in spirit.

Almost a year passes, and now I'm notified by National Sierra that Ken's bequest was the largest our NJ Chapter has ever received. Ken was quite wealthy.

Who would have thought that our work together would have made such an impression? I am deeply touched by Ken's gift. He leaves a legacy that will affect many lives. Ken's bequest is an investment in cleaner air and water, more open space, environmental laws enforced, and new laws enacted. The NJ Chapter will work hard to make this happen.

In my mind's eye, Ken, I see you smiling, chuckling at the surprise you had in store for your Sierra friends. ☺

Director's Report

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happen. These projects were originally done deals, and the fact that the State may not allow them to happen is a major victory whether we win all or some. We would like to win all.

Last year's State budget had a shortfall of more than \$3 billion. One of the places from which the Treasury Department raided money to close the gap was the Green Acres Program. It was the first time in the history of that Program where monies were taken for other uses. \$20 million of interest on Green Acres funds were used to pay the debt service on bonds (instead of general funds, which is what the law calls for). We were able to stop any further raids in this year's budget. (Instead, \$7 million were taken from the Garden State Trust to pay for staffing at Green Acres.

Two park diversions that were originally approved by Gov. Whitman's DEP Commissioner Shinn went forward under the new Administration: the Cape May site for Atlantic Cape Community College and Park Madison in Plainfield. Commissioner Shinn, as part of a Consent Order with the Cape May County Freeholders, settled a lawsuit and as a condition committed the DEP to support the transfer of parkland in Cape May County for a new college. We had testified before the State House Commission and asked the new Administration to kill this project. Instead, the transfer was approved. Now the Sierra Club and other organizations are suing to block this development on parkland. On his last day in office, Commissioner Shinn approved the diverting of four acres of parkland in Plainfield for a new county office building and a strip mall. The Sierra Club sued and won, stopping the diversion. However, special legislation was passed to move this diversion forward. We have asked the Governor to veto it and we are working with the Governor's office on this issue.

Early in the McGreevey Administration when the Open Public Records Act rules came out, many of us who had worked to pass this legislation, felt the rules were weakening their intent. We found that we were able to work with the Governor's staff and fix them.

There are many issues still to be resolved: clean car, Highlands, steep slope protection, TDR. There is a tremendous amount of opposition building against the changes that the new Administration has made. There was a polluter's paradise during the Whitman eight years and those groups who are used to getting their own way are now organizing to fight the new Administration. Part of their strategy is to claim that the Sierra Club has too much influence over the new Administration. Henry Hill, the Attorney for the Builder's Association, had on his web site, "What Sierra proposes, Campbell disposes." as a way of trying to diffuse any influence with the Commissioner. Jim Sinclair, lobbyist for the NJ Business & Industry Association, stated in his Environmental Notes that, "It seems that the main purpose of the DEP is now to please Jeff Tittel and the Sierra Club." So we have to be sure that the proposals for strengthening the protections of our waters, for implementing the Governor's sprawl agenda, as well as other programs to protect the environment, will happen. We will have to work harder and be more diligent in order to stop the special interests. If we do, New Jersey will have a better environment for future generations. ☺

BOOK REVIEW:

THE WATER IS WIDE

by Mark Oshinskie

Sometimes I wonder whether I read stuff in order to learn or, rather, to become more convinced that what I already believe is true. I suspect that most people daily reinforce, rather than reconsider, their worldviews through the prism of their preferred politically-charged media outlets. All Things Considered, my eye!

This may be why I enjoy reading books by Rutgers Professor David Ehrenfeld. I fundamentally agree with his notion that, since long before 9/11, the world has been degenerating environmentally, economically, socially and spiritually. He also thinks we're going downhill academically. I have less of a basis for an opinion on that, and less concern, as well.

In his best known work, *The Arrogance of Humanism* (1978), Ehrenfeld took aim at the notion that humans can systematically manage the world. He points out that many efforts to improve things fail and even cause other problems. Efforts to measure as a basis for problem solving are intrinsically flawed, misleading and, well...arrogant.

Fundamentally, he questions how we know what we know. I recently read a doctor's account of the first lecture he heard in medical school. The instructor said, "Half of what we will teach you is wrong. The only problem is we don't know which half." While he was clearly exaggerating to make a point, if that sentiment applies to medical curriculum, how can we structure the more complex natural and social worlds with much confidence? Ehrenfeld observes that most Western people internalize—and most institutions and inventions reflect—the dubious principle that every problem has a rational, human-mediated solution.

In *Swimming Lessons* (2002), Ehrenfeld updates these themes and purports to provide instructions to stay afloat in a technomaniac world. *Swimming Lessons* is an often charming series of 35 essays in which Ehrenfeld discusses everything from dinosaurs to ancient Jewish texts to detective novels—and spins anecdotes about gardening, raising children, bird watching, exotic camping trips and turning down, as a teen, an opportunity to read books, for pay, to his father's friend, some going-blind physician he knew as "Dr. Williams" (a/k/a William Carlos Williams), in Dr. Williams' final year. The latter is about not perceiving treasures placed right before us.

In this vein, while the author writes elegantly of his trips to Arctic isles, tropical forests and remote Canadian lakes, he also finds neglected beauty in New Jersey's outdoor spaces. He mentions the Millstone Canal and the Hutcheson Forest and centers a whole essay on New Jersey microenvironments he visits with his Field Ecology classes, such as highwaysides and railyards. He suggests that, in its own way, New Jersey is undervalued in relation to better known ecotourist destinations. Besides, it's accessible and it's home.

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Like his literary predecessors Lewis Thomas and Wendell Berry (his friend, to whom the book is dedicated), the author's method is to connect the micro to the macro, the specific to the general. I do the same thing in my own head, in ways that drive others, and sometimes myself, a little crazy. For example, both the author and I will agonize over the purchase of a tool because of the social, economic and global impact this purchase might have. I can't help myself. But sometimes I think I overdo this, principally because the choices are already so constrained and because my one vote counts for so little in this big world.

We also agree that the benefits of technology are greatly overstated and that technology often causes more problems than it solves. He slams genetic engineering and notes, for example, that computers are supposed to save society great amounts of energy but that computers account for about 15% of all domestic energy use. Do people drive less because of computer use?

Ehrenfeld favors older, slower, more face-to-face, more local, lower tech, more craftspersonlike ways of doing things. He rails, inter alia, against globalization and against Internet activism's inability to serve as anything close to a commensurately countervailing force. In so doing, he makes a lot of sense.

The author's instructions are most often subtly delivered. Most—the ones that resonate best with me—are philosophical and personal. Curtail emailing, Net surfing, TV watching and consuming. Instead, slow down, develop your faith, talk to your neighbors, make more

of your own food and, I would add, make some music, dance and do something athletic.

A few other instructions are more institutional and less helpful. For example, the author suggests that corporations should have charters for 20-year terms, at which time their conduct should be evaluated in order to adjudicate whether they have been sufficiently virtuous to deserve charter renewal. From my legal experience, I perceive more than a few practical problems with this proposal including, but not limited to, the glacial pace of due process, the impossibility of a thorough review of the multitudes of extant corporations and the Black Hand of partisan politics.

Setting aside these drier procedural concerns, is it really possible to measure a corporation's virtue?

Consider, for example, even a superficial examination of that paragon of corporate responsibility, Ben and Jerry's. Sure, they pay their farmers milk prices above federal milk order levels and pay their scoopers twice the minimum wage. And Ben and Jerry seem so nice! They wear wire-rimmed glasses and tie dyed shirts, have colorful stores and give their flavors hip, whimsical names. But does their sugary, (saturated) fatty and sometimes hydrogenated product induce cavities, obesity, heart-disease and prostate cancer? How many shops do they have in serious urban neighborhoods? Are they jovial, New Age redliners? Do they hire minorities or am I just visiting the stores at the wrong times? Besides, haven't Ben and Jerry succumbed to the endless growth business model? And is it really so laudable to pay teens enough that they can afford Camaros? Or should low wage labor be an adolescent rite of passage? If you can afford to routinely buy lunch out in your early twenties, you'll have less to look forward to in your forties.

If it matters, we have a few other differences. The author's views are more PC than mine. He also seems to see a meltdown in the nearer term than I do, after which things can be rebuilt better than before. I think the decline has—and will continue to be—gradual, deniable and partially exportable, and that it will be hard to reconstruct much of the good we have lost. But that's just my opinion. I won't try to convince you. ☺

Mark Oshinskie is an attorney and writer on environmental issues.

YOU HAVE MORE TO GIVE THAN YOU KNOW

Maybe you can't make a gift to protect the environment during your lifetime, but you can become a financial hero by remembering the Sierra Club in your will. You can even direct your gift to a special Club program or to the New Jersey Chapter.

For information about making a bequest to the New Jersey Chapter call George Denzer at 609-799-5839.