

# Bronx Council for Environmental Quality

## Environmental Focus



"an aesthetic, unpolluted environment with a natural and historic heritage"

Summer 2008



### President's Column

Dear BCEQ Members & Supporters,

The Happy Days of Summer are here! The Solstice is June 20th. Take advantage of long daylight hours to observe the many Wonders of Nature in The Bronx. Suggested links for places to visit and explore are listed on our regularly updated website. Please visit soon.

For Bronxites, June & July may offer leisure time to enjoy those Lazy Days of Summer and to plan for the coming year. This year, we Bronx Environmental Activists have been busy meeting and networking. Check out the Photos of our November "All Things Parks and Environmental", December Holiday Dinner-Meeting, February "Bronx Parks Speak Up", and March "Water Conference."

In between, we've been actively watching how our Borough changes. Work on the Replacement Parks for Macombs Dam Park is slow, but the new Yankee Stadium is on time. The controversial Van Cortlandt Park Water Filtration Plant is moving along, but the cost is approaching \$3 Billion. The Bronx River is getting cleaner, but still needs our attention. BCEQ finished up our Harlem River Brownfields Opportunity Area Report, and was granted another round.

This month, at our Outdoor June Meeting, BCEQ will recognize outstanding environmental educators with our Annual Reel EE Awards, named after one of our founders and past President Helen Reel.

I hope to see you soon at one of our many activities. If you want more information on any of the items in this edition, I encourage you to visit our website – [www.bceq.org](http://www.bceq.org). To read my candid comments on environmental issues, both local and global, please click on [President's Blog](#).

\*\*\*icle\*\*\* pres@bceq.org  
Mr. I.C. Levenberg-Engel

### Seventh Annual Water Conference



On Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> The Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) held its Seventh Annual Water Conference on "Stormwater Impacts: Upstate and Downstate, Exploring a Common Vision for the Drinking Watershed." BCEQ Water Committee Co-chair Dart Westphal compared the impact of building the Gilboa Reservoir on our upstate neighbors, with the construction of the Cross-Bronx Expressway on Downstate citizens -- a Common link among

watershed and city residents. He introduced the Keynote Speaker, Robert Elburn, the Regional Water Engineer for Region 2 (the NYC office) of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), who described the challenges of sustaining development in a drinking water watershed without filtration.

A panel moderated by Dr. Walter Matystik of Manhattan College used the Bellearye Mountain project located in the Catskill and Delaware Watersheds as a model in its discussion of stormwater issues. Speakers included: Dr. Kimberlee Kane, NYC Department of Environmental Protection; Deborah DeWan, Catskill Center for Conservation and Development; Leila C. Goldmark Esq., Riverkeeper, Inc; Gary Gales, consultant to Crossroad Ventures; and BCEQ Vice President: Dr. Paul Mankiewicz, Gaia Institute.

The panel discussion covered: *Low Impact Development or Smart Growth: What makes a good model? Is Bellearye a good model? What can we learn from a review of Low Impact Development projects in the Kensico Reservoir watershed such as: MBIA and Route 120/22 highway expansion? What does the revised Bellearye proposal mean to the upstate communities? What does the revised Bellearye proposal mean to the downstate communities' drinking water and/or if we build, how can we do no harm and make things better?* A lively Q&A period followed.

The Water Committee intends to continue discussions on how any development can do no harm and make things better.

Annarita Macri (BCEQ intern 2008)



**Bronx Council for  
Environmental Quality**

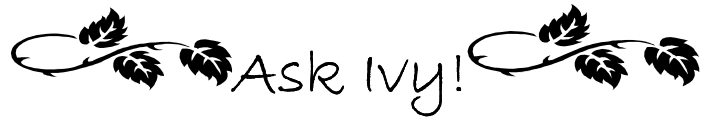
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*Water-* Dart Westphal and Karen Argenti  
*Education-* Mark Stern and Steve Ritz (Acting)  
*Parks/Open Space-* Christina Taylor  
*Communications-* Karen Argenti  
*Grants/Funding-* Stephen Franciosa  
*Recycling/ Solid Waste-* Harry Bubbins (Acting)  
*Nominations-* I.C. Levenberg-Engel and David Burg

***The BCEQ Focus is made possible by  
 generous support from State  
 Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz  
 and  
 BCEQ memberships.***



Ivy is a local environmental educator who is available to answer your questions about environmental topics. *Ask Ivy* is written for entertainment/informative purposes only and doesn't necessarily represent the views of BCEQ nor its editorial staff. If you have a question for Ivy email her at bceqaskivy@hotmail.com or send it to: Ask Ivy, c/o BCEQ, P.O. Box 265, City Island Station, The Bronx, NY 10464.

*Dear Ivy,*

*I often purchase cases of bottle water to take on the go for my family. I feel that NYC drinking water is tasty and completely safe so I often refill these bottles with tap water. I was recently told that I should never reuse these bottles because they can breakdown and cause cancer. Am I putting my family in danger just to protect the environment?*

*Caught in a Conundrum in Co-op City*

Dear Caught in a Conundrum:

This is a common myth started by a thesis paper by a University of Idaho's doctoral student that was not peer reviewed and thanks to modern technology is spreading like wildfire. Most convenience-size beverage bottles sold in the U.S. are made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET). The FDA has determined that PET meets standards for food-contact materials established by federal regulations and therefore permits the use of PET in food and beverage packaging for both single use and repeated use. There has been no scientific data that concludes that reusing these plastic bottles causes leaching at levels that would be considered carcinogenic.

When reusing these bottles, you should be aware that once opened, bacteria can grow in virtually any packaging material if a food or beverage is stored in conditions suitable for bacterial growth. Therefore, it is best to clean any container with hot soapy water and to dry thoroughly before reuse.

Take these steps to ensure that you can safely reuse the bottles:

- First wash and dry your hands thoroughly so that you don't contaminate the bottle with bacteria.
- Examine the bottle to ensure that it is not damaged.
- Thoroughly clean bottles and nozzles with hot, soapy water and make sure the inside of the bottle air dries completely before use.
- Use good quality water from a safe source.
- Don't share bottles- saliva can transfer germs that can lead to illnesses. Make sure each bottle is labeled with each user's name for easy identification, and is used only by that individual.

Now that we've made sure your family is healthy, let's talk about keeping Mother Earth healthy. According to the Container Recycling Institute, "in 2005 an estimated 144 billion containers were wasted in the United States. Wasted means not recycled: sent to landfills or incinerators, or littered along our country's roads and parks, fields and streams, and rivers and beaches. This includes approximately 54 billion aluminum cans, 52 billion plastic bottles and jugs, 30 billion glass bottles, and about 10 billion pouches, cartons, and drink boxes." Therefore, no matter what you are drinking out of, please make sure you recycle the container once you are finished. Perhaps soon, the NYS Legislature will pass the long overdue "Bigger Better Bottle Bill," which will include refundable deposits on all beverage containers. Until then, if you don't recycle, your water bottle ends up polluting our landfills.

Ivy



**BCEQ and Neighbors at the November 2007 All Things Parks and Environmental (ATP&E) and the December 2007 Holiday Dinner Meeting (HDM) at Yankee Tavern.**

*From top to bottom, L to R:* 1. Harry Bubbins, (Friends of Brook Park) holds the 2008 Calendar (HDM); 2. VP Paul Mankiewicz toasting the new year (HDM); 3. VP Joyce Hogi making a list, checking it twice (HDM); 4. Christina Taylor (Parks Chair) and Maria Luisa Cipriano (Membership/Events Chair) at the November meeting (ATP&E); 5. Guest Speaker (ATP&E) Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz (81 AD) talks about protecting parkland, especially Van Cortlandt Park; 6. Speaker (ATP&E) Council Member Helen Foster (16 CD) talking about parkland, including what happened to the Yankee Stadium replacement parks; 7. Mark Stern, Dart Westphal, Anne Marie Garti listening to Guest Speakers (ATP&E); 8. Lynn Schwarz and Judy Baier from the neighborhood (ATP&E); 9. Water committee members, Paul Mankiewicz and Karen Argenti display the long awaited check for the BCEQ's Harlem River Brownfields Opportunity Area Program (BOA) Report and Study (HDM).

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**Bronx Council for Environmental Quality Membership Form**

- Low Annual Fees: [ ] Individual \$10.00 [ ] Student/Senior \$5.00 [ ] Family \$25.00  
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**Please check all that apply:**

I am interested in: ( ) Volunteering ( ) Outdoor Activities ( ) Symposia Planning  
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I am interested in serving on these Committees: ( ) Parks/OpenSpace ( ) Air Quality  
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Other \_\_\_\_\_

( ) **Please check here if you would like to save paper and download your complimentary newsletter off of the web at [www.bceq.org](http://www.bceq.org)**



The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Bronx Parks Speak Up was held on Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at Lehman College. Over 170 attendees visited information tables, attended workshops, listened to various presentations or asked questions at the Artificial Grass Panel Discussion. If you would like to help plan the 2009 Bronx Parks Speak Up please send an email to [bxspeakup@hotmail.com](mailto:bxspeakup@hotmail.com).

**Announcing the winners of the 2008 BCEQ “Keeping it Reel” Environmental Education Awards:**

**Student Recipients:**

The Green Institute in Soundview at Stevenson High School Campus

**Educator:**

Bethany Spence of Millennium Art Academy

**Informal Educator:**

Mike Zamm of the Council on the Environment of New York City

**The “Keeping it Reel” awards are in honor BCEQ co-founder Helen Reel.**



The Bronx Council for Environmental Quality  
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