

# Volunteers Bolster Beczak

## Community Members Help Ease Center's Growing Pains

The growing demand for environmental education in our area has been a tremendous opportunity for Beczak. We have responded with award-winning programs, reaching record numbers of children and adults month after month. But our staff and resources have been stretched thin. We needed help. Pronto!

Sometimes the things you need are right under your nose but you can't see them. That old saying is certainly true at Beczak. With the arrival of Sarah Macdonald, Beczak's new Community Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator, all of a sudden volunteers are everywhere! We suspect they were there all along—just waiting until we were able to notice them. With financial assistance from the Evelyn Zamboni Fund at the Westchester Community Foundation, Beczak has finally provided a point person in Sarah for the many folks ready to offer their time and talents.

Over 25 new volunteers have come forward in the past few months. Waiting eagerly to sign up was Isr'a, a nine-year-old neighbor who stuffs envelopes, makes copies and does other similar tasks. Older neighborhood children are signing up to help clean the fish tanks. Students from Sarah Lawrence College and several adults have come forward to help with various tasks.

Beczak has always had a small cadre of volunteers, including its dedicated board of directors and Michael Bravo, who is always ready to help us when we need him (see related article on page 6). But, as we have grown into the new Interpretive Center, our needs and responsibilities have increased



*Sarah Macdonald greets Beczak visitors*

exponentially, and Beczak's professional staff is not large enough to get everything done.

The list of volunteer opportunities includes something for everyone, regardless of age, interest, ability or available time. You can become a docent at the Interpretive Center, or edit this newsletter, or teach people about the Hudson River at the many warm weather festivals and fairs around the area. You can help organize our evening lectures and public events, do office work, perform marsh maintenance, keep the garden shipshape, or help with fundraising.

Recently, ten members of the Amelia Earhart Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol volunteered at EagleFest (see page 4). The young cadets were energetic and good-spirited from setup until cleanup. They helped the event run smoothly, braved the cold to clean up the marsh, and even managed to squeeze in time to learn about eagles and use the spotting scopes to look for these majestic birds. One of their adult

chaperones has been back to Beczak several times since EagleFest after a visit to his doctor revealed his blood pressure had gone down. He attributes the improvement to volunteering here, so he's made it a point to come often.

Beczak and the Hudson River can have a positive effect on your life as well. Call Sarah at 914.377.1900 to find out about a volunteer opportunity that fits your interests and schedule. Community service for students is available, so is free parking. 🐟

## Beczak to honor Andy Spano



Beczak Environmental Education Center will present its annual Environmental Award to

Westchester County Executive Andrew J. Spano at its Fifth Annual Environmental Breakfast to be held at The Riverview in Hastings, NY on Sunday, May 21 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Mr. Spano is being honored for his consistent and passionate support of Westchester's environment and his unwavering support of Beczak. Tickets are \$50 and available by calling Beczak at 914.377.1900.



# BECZAK

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

35 Alexander Street, Yonkers, NY 10701  
914.377.1900 • www.beczak.org

*Beczak's mission is to educate people about the ecology, culture and history of the Hudson River by providing interactive educational experiences focused on the river. We do this so that everyone we reach can become better stewards of the Hudson and better citizens of their community.*

### Staff

Kathleen Savolt, Executive Director  
Cynthia Fowx, Director of Education  
Jennifer Mokos, Educator/Exhibit Curator  
Victoria Garufi, Educator  
Sarah Macdonald, Community Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator  
Tripper and Cedar, Canine Mascots

### Board of Directors

Andrew Romano, Esq., President  
Rochelle Odesser, Secretary  
Steve Newcomb, CPA, Treasurer  
Niyazi Bodur, Ph.D.  
Paul W. Meyer, Jr., Esq.  
Al Kuropatwa  
Rosemary Lee  
Jessica MacFarlane  
Charlene Paden  
Adolph Stewart

### Newsletter

#### EDITOR

Kathleen Savolt

#### WRITERS

Cynthia Fowx  
Jenn Mokos  
Vicky Garufi  
Kathleen Savolt

#### PHOTOS

Andy Spano photo, Toby McAfee  
All other photos, Beczak staff using a FujiFilm FinePix F700 generously donated by FujiFilm USA.

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Dear Friends:

It's always a pleasure to take time to let you know what's happening at Beczak and this edition of *The Beczak Net* is no exception. Our Interpretive Center has been open just about 1½ years and there is never a dull moment around here. Our school programming is virtually sold out, the PEARLS section of our HSBC After School Environmental Club is creating a Hudson River mural on two walls in the Center, our volunteer program is off to a smashing start, adult classes have begun and our estuary monitoring equipment is getting a lot of attention.

The excitement in the air is palpable and as the warm weather approaches, we look forward to seeing lots of people at Beczak. We still need more volunteers and we will be hosting weekend events in May and July here at Habirshaw Park. Please take a moment to look at our event calendar and plan to join us as often as you can.

Many of you commented favorably on our exciting new look unveiled with our winter newsletter, renamed *The Beczak Net*. This is just one of the outcomes of a grant-funded initiative to ensure that everyone knows Beczak is the place to learn about the Hudson. We have a new logo (complete with our new motto, *Learn to Love the Hudson*), a clearer statement of our mission which explains what we do and why we do it (see box on left) and a brand new sign on Alexander Street (see story, page 5). Our goal is better communication with you, our supporters, and members of the community at large. Our website is undergoing a major transformation and soon you will be able to log on and keep up with what's going on at Beczak. Plus, you'll be able to download program brochures and review financial accountability information. We have hundreds of wonderful photographs and you only get to see a handful in each newsletter. We will display many more in the new website's Photo Gallery.

These are all outward signs of big changes

here at Beczak as we build on our excellent education programs and work to realize our vision of being a sustainable organization that is a top provider of customer-oriented Hudson River education. We will work hard at fostering a visceral connection between people and the river that will enhance this national treasure. Look for new classes, exhibits at the Interpretive Center and more educational articles like *A Primer on Tides* in this edition. And keep those cards and letters coming. We need your feedback and input. You can reach me by e-mail at [ksavolt@beczak.org](mailto:ksavolt@beczak.org).

Hope to see you soon,  
Kathy

## EVENTS AT A GLANCE

### Wednesday, April 12

Con Edison Lunchtime Learning Series for Adults: *Cuckoo for Copepods!*

### Saturday, April 22

WHUD Kid's Fair at the Westchester County Center, White Plains

### Sunday, April 23

Earth Day Clean-up

### Saturday, May 6

Yonkers Mayfair

### Tuesday, May 16

Con Edison Lunchtime Learning Series for Adults

### Sunday, May 21

Fifth Annual Environmental Breakfast to honor Andy Spano

### Tuesday, June 20

*Beachcomb and Sketch*, A Drawing Workshop with Artist Judith Aronow

### Saturday, July 22

Annual Great Hudson River Paddle Festival

### Tuesday, July 25

IHARE Teacherhostel at Beczak  
Historic Westchester: The Hudson River Experience

More information: [www.beczak.org](http://www.beczak.org)



# HUDSON RIVER PARAMETERS

## PART 1: A PRIMER ON TIDES



*Our marsh at high tide*

If you have been watching the water level data from our monitoring equipment in the river, you may have noticed that the water is not at the same height every day, or even every hour. The moon is primarily responsible for the continually changing water level in the Hudson River, known as the tides.

(The sun also plays an important role, but to a lesser degree because of its greater distance from the earth). As the moon revolves around the spinning earth, the gravitational force of the moon pulls the water in the oceans into a bulge at the point closest to the moon. A second bulge is created on the side of the earth opposite the moon. As the bulge of water follows the moon, a predictable rise and fall of the water is created (high and low tide). Because high tide is following the moon's track around earth, the tide cycle corresponds with our moon's day ("lunar day") which is slightly longer than our 24 hour day. That is why high and low tides do not happen at the same time every day. There are two high tides and two low tides in the Hudson River every lunar day.

At high tide, rising water from the Atlantic Ocean flows north into the Hudson River. Then, as the water level in the ocean begins

to fall, the current in the Hudson switches direction and begins to flow south, back into the ocean until low tide is reached. This switching of the current between north and south is why the Hudson is known as "the river that flows both ways."

You can see these tides in action using the online data from our monitoring equipment. Looking at the water level graph for any 24-hour period, you will see two peaks and two troughs corresponding to high tide and low tide, respectively.

You might also notice that the levels of the water at high tide and low tide are different from day to day. The height of the high tide on one day, February 12, 2006, for example, is higher than the high tide of another day in the same month, February 23, 2006. This pattern is caused by the sun. When the moon and the sun are aligned, their gravitational forces are combined to create more extreme tides (higher highs and lower lows). These tides, called spring tides, occur every month during the new and full moons.

During the first and last quarter moons, the sun and moon are at right angles to each other and their forces work in opposition, thereby reducing some of the moon's pull. This creates less of a height change between high tide and low tide; these are called neap tides. The magnitude of the tides can also be affected by the weather. Falling atmospheric pressure (also known as barometric pressure or "BP" in our online chart) creates higher high tides or lower low tides. Strong winds and/or low barometric pressure which correspond with neap tides can create a blow-out tide, a low tide that exposes areas of the river bottom that are normally under water.

Want to see the tides for yourself? Visit Beczak to view our new time-lapse video of the tides filmed in our marsh by filmmaker Philip DeRise (see story, page 6). 🐟



*Low tide exposes the tidal channel*

### BEZAK'S ESTUARY MONITORING SYSTEM

Our monitoring equipment brings the conditions of the river to your computer in real time. The data can be viewed online at [www.trial.wqdata.com](http://www.trial.wqdata.com) (user name Beczak, password beczak06).

### Equipment Maintenance Notes

On February 10 we replaced a defective sensor in the weather station that measures air temperature and relative humidity. The erroneous data has been filtered off of the website and will be erased from the database. Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused you.



# Eagles in Yonkers?

Of all the beautiful and fascinating birds found along the Hudson River, the Bald Eagle may be the most famous. The emblem of our country, it was celebrated at the Beczak Center on February 19, 2006.

Beczak collaborated with The Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester to take part in Teatown Lake Reservation's 2nd annual "EagleFest" to celebrate the Bald Eagles' winter return to the Hudson.

Beczak provided spotting scopes, binoculars, and bird identification books for the eager birders of the community. On the cold, crisp winter afternoon, we spotted geese, gulls and lots of smaller birds, but no eagles. Unseasonably warm temperatures this winter prevented ice floes from forming or traveling this far south on the river. This meant that our usual Bald Eagle visitors were missing their favorite river spots here in downtown Yonkers. Despite the lack of eagles this year, visitors had plenty to do, reading eagle information and participating in activities to learn about this fierce bird. Children and adults compared their wingspan to that of an eagle's 8 foot wingspan, examined a feather under a microscope and exercised Bernoulli's Principle to understand the flight of an eagle. Some adults stopped by just to take advantage of the cozy fire in the fireplace to sit and watch the river.

We look forward to participating in EagleFest next year and are already hoping for a real, old-fashioned frozen winter on the Hudson. ➤



*My wing span's not as big as his!*



*I think I see an eagle...*



*Examining a feather up close*

# It's a Sign!

---

Thanks to Jon DePreter, of DePreter Designs in Pine Plains, NY we have new sign on Alexander Street. Mr. DePreter, an accomplished sculptor and signmaker, donated the design, fabrication and installation of this beautiful new sign. Mr. DePreter also donated new window signage to match our new logo. A BIG thanks to Bill Morrison, of William Morrison Communications in New York City, who made this happen. Bill, who is helping Beczak with marketing, is a long-time friend of Jon. Bill was struck by our lack of identification on Alexander Street and convinced Jon to get involved. Bill even helped with the installation. Please visit Jon's website at [www.depreterdesigns.com](http://www.depreterdesigns.com) and Bill's at [www.williammorrison.com](http://www.williammorrison.com), and keep them in mind if you have need of marketing services or signage. 🐟



*Heave Ho!*



*Jon with the finished product*



*Michael Bravo steadies the sign, Jon checks the level, Bill removes debris*

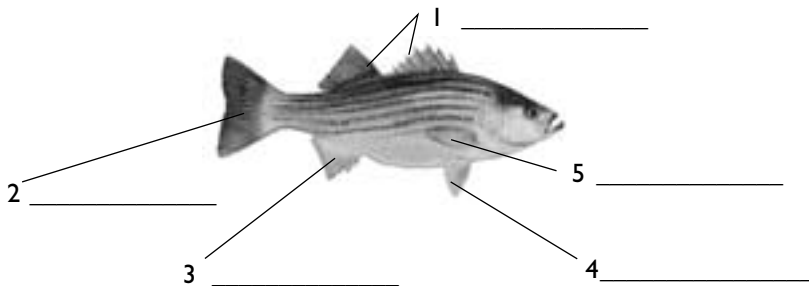


# KIDS' CORNER

Can you identify and label the fins of the striped bass below?

### Word Bank

dorsal fins • pectoral fin • caudal fin • anal fin • pelvic fin



Don't know your fins? Come to Beczak and complete our oversized Striped Bass puzzle to get all the answers!

Answers, page 7

# MEET MICHAEL BRAVO, VOLUNTEER



Michael first came to Beczak in summer 2004. He had just moved back to Yonkers, his hometown, and

was looking for a job so his wife and infant son could join him. He had been living in Colombia for 9 years teaching English as a second language and physical education. He and his wife decided to return to the United States to rear their son in a safer environment.

Michael has helped Beczak in so many ways. He doesn't mind doing the heavy lifting, including toting water from the river, moving furniture, and shoveling snow. Beczak also benefits Michael's creative skills. He drew symbolic doors when Hurricane Ivan moved our opening ceremonies indoors, and he is our pumpkin carver and decorator for Boo-zak, our annual

Halloween party. Michael never seems to tire, even after carving a dozen pumpkins.

An accomplished athlete, Michael practices Chinese kick boxing and has gold and silver medals from the Pan American games and the International Kung Fu Festival. He lives in Nodine Hill with his wife, Maria, and son, Miguelito. ◀

# Time and Tide Wait for no Filmmaker

Sometimes working with Beczak is like watching the tides change, especially if you are directing and producing video of our marsh. This winter, Philip DeRise spent many early and very cold hours taking footage of the marsh to digitally capture the tide cycle during daylight hours. We now use the resulting time-lapsed film as an educational tool to depict exactly how the marsh changes with the tides – a rather

# Make Your Computer a Cash Machine for Beczak



Here is a way to financially support Beczak that is really easy, and it won't cost you a penny! Do you use an Internet search engine to find things on the web?

You can raise money for Beczak by using GoodSearch, an internet search engine that is powered by Yahoo! You will get the same high-quality results you are familiar with, and each search will generate approximately \$0.01 for Beczak.

Just go to [www.GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com), type in Beczak as the charity of your choice and get started. Use this search engine like any other. You can keep track of how much we've earned by clicking the "amount raised" button. If 500 people switched to Good Search for Beczak and used it 4 times a day, we could earn \$7,300 in a year!

Help Beczak by switching your search engine today. Use GoodSearch, and tell your friends, family and co-workers. ▶



*Philip patiently waiting for high tide*

abstract concept for many of our students and visitors who do not have six hours to sit and watch the river. Philip recently completed a short documentary, *Queen of the Hudson*, about another Hudson River landmark, his hometown of Poughkeepsie, NY. ▶



# Katzen Intern Announced

Samuel Tenadu III, a senior at Saunders Trades & Technical High School in Yonkers, has been selected as Beczak's David Katzen intern for 2006.



Sam Tenadu examining cattails for his research on the effects of road salt.

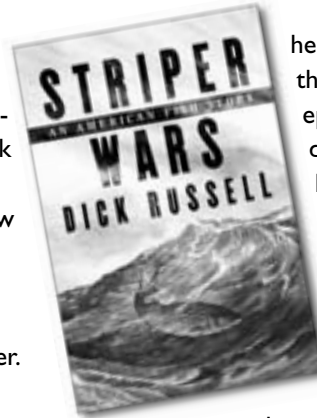
You may remember reading about Sam in our spring 2005 newsletter. He has been involved with Beczak for two and a half years as a Saunders Learn & Serve intern, as a volunteer and as a summer student worker.

As a Katzen intern, Sam will work with Cynthia Fowx, Beczak's Director of Education, researching the effects of road salts on narrow-leaf cattails (*Typha angustifolia*). The results of Sam's study will be given to Beczak, and his experiment set-up is being used as a temporary exhibit in the center. The study will also serve as his "Tech Prep" project, which is a requirement of his studies at Saunders High School.

The David Katzen Internship Fund, which will support internships through Saunders High School for the next four years, was established by Berenice Katzen-Cohen, former Beczak board member and long time volunteer, in memory of her father, David Katzen. 🐟

# BE CZAK PRESENTS: An American Fish Story

Author, journalist and fisherman Dick Russell was greeted by an enthusiastic audience at Beczak on January 17 when he arrived to discuss his new book, *Striper Wars – An American Fish Story*. The evening lecture was co-sponsored by Riverkeeper.



heroes and bad characters who clashed in the struggle to save the striper. It was an epic ecological battle that stretched down the east coast from Massachusetts to Maryland. Today, while Hudson River striped bass populations continue to face their own threats, stripers in the fish's primary spawning waters of the Chesapeake Bay are suffering from malnutrition due to the overfishing of menhaden, their main source of food.

When populations of striped bass began plummeting in the early 1980s due to overfishing and habitat destruction, Dick Russell directed an Atlantic coast conservation campaign that resulted in one of the most remarkable wildlife comebacks in the history of fisheries. *Striper Wars* is Mr. Russell's inspiring account of the people and events responsible for the successful preservation of one of America's favorite fish and of what has happened since.

Mr. Russell reminded us of the need for an ecosystem-based approach to conserving species. He spoke with great passion about his experiences, and his enthusiastic appreciation for these remarkable fish filled the room. He patiently answered questions from the audience, including some about the outlook for bass in the Hudson.

During the course of the evening Mr. Russell told absorbing tales of remarkable

It is always a pleasure to welcome the likes of Mr. Russell to Beczak. We appreciate his love and concern for the river. 🐟

# MacFarlane Joins Beczak Board

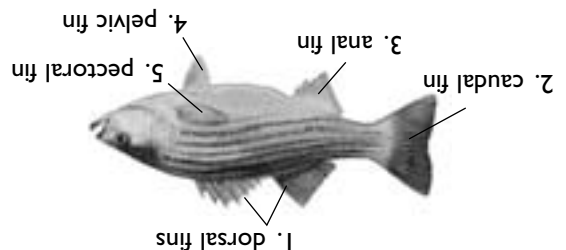
Jessica MacFarlane joined the Beczak board of directors in January. Ms. MacFarlane is the Director of Human Resources at Homes for America Holdings, Inc., a real estate development corporation located in Yonkers. Homes for America is building the new Class A office building across from the Post Office on Main Street and is also developing the former BICC site north of Beczak on Alexander Street.

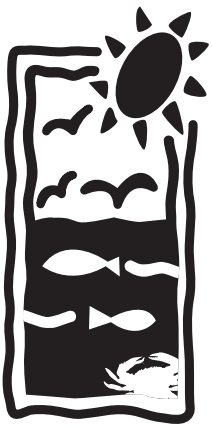
Council of Westchester's "Rising Star: Westchester's Forty under Forty" award in 2004. She and her husband live along the waterfront in downtown Yonkers. Welcome aboard, Jessica!

Recently leaving the Beczak board were Barbara Karsten and Dr. Kathleen Pistone Carucci. We thank them for their exemplary service and their generous offers to continue their volunteer work with Beczak. 🐟

Ms. MacFarlane was awarded the Business

## KIDS' CORNER ANSWERS





**BECZAK**  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
EDUCATION CENTER  
LEARN TO LOVE THE HUDSON

35 Alexander Street, Yonkers, NY 10701  
914.377.1900 • www.beczak.org

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
New York, NY  
Permit No. 3



## FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### Grants and Donations

We wish to thank the following donors and granters for their generosity.

**The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation** for a grant from their Hudson River Estuary Program. Beczak was awarded \$7,269 to purchase an interactive kiosk which will house our Estuary Monitoring Station data display and educational games about the Hudson for children.

**Jon DePreter, of DePreter Designs** ([www.depreterdesigns.com](http://www.depreterdesigns.com)) in Pine Plains, NY for our new sign on Alexander Street. Mr. DePreter donated the design, fabrication and installation of this beautiful new sign (see story, page 5).

### Get Involved!

Help us to provide our community with first-rate environmental education.

Sponsor a class trip to Beczak for your favorite teacher, or underwrite the next edition of our newsletter. Please call Kathy Savolt at 914-377-1900 for details.

Become a Beczak volunteer. There are many tasks and projects that need your help. Contact Sarah Macdonald at 914-377-1900 to learn more.

Make a gift in honor of a friend or in memory of a loved one. We will post their name and yours in our newsletter and on our website's current list of "Friends of Beczak."

Remember Beczak in your will using the following language: "I bequeath to Beczak

Environmental Education Center, Inc. a not-for-profit corporation located at 35 Alexander Street, Yonkers, NY 10701, \_\_\_% of my residuary estate for its general purposes." If you want to designate your gift to a specific program, please call the office to discuss.

### Wish List

The Beczak Center is always in need of different items. Check out the list to see if you can help.

- Hand truck
- Empty wooden crates from clementines
- A copy of *A Description of the New Netherlands*, by Adriaen van der Donck. It was last reprinted in 1968 by the Syracuse University Press. We would like a copy for our library. 🐟