

Narragansett Bay: Another Hudson?

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It took a crisis to draw attention to pollution in Narragansett Bay. The fact that the Providence sewer plant spews 62 million gallons of partially treated sewage into the Bay each day elicited little reaction from most Rhode Islanders or their elected officials until March of 1979 when masses of raw human waste washed up on an East Providence beach and it was no longer easy to avoid the problem.

The East Providence incident was shortly followed by others of its kind. Warwick residents woke up one April morning to find Oakland Beach and Conimicut Point likewise blanketed in brown. Parts of the Barrington shoreline were carpeted soon after.

When the sewage hit the Edgewood Yacht Club (EYC) in Cranston, the situation grew more complicated. A young boy became ill for three days after a cut on his arm apparently became infected while he was sailing at the Club. The boy's father, Judge Advocate of EYC Norman Orodener, threatened to sue the City of Providence, and the Club commodore issued warnings to all EYC members informing them of the health hazards of sailing in the upper Bay "so that each member and his or her guest can make their own decision as to whether or not they intend to sail at the Club."<sup>1</sup> When a group of angry Club members crowded into the office of Providence City Solicitor Ronald Glantz, he agreed to send City representatives to Cranston to discuss the problem. At the following meeting,