A Water Conservation Adventure for the Whole Family...

"You never miss the water 'til the well runs dry." "Waste not, want not." We've all heard the clichés, but have we ever really thought about what would happen if we turned on the faucet and nothing came out? You may have experienced this once or twice, temporarily, and it was probably caused by a local emergency. But what would our lives be like if this critical natural resource was tainted or unavailable for an extended period of time?

That's exactly the premise of an attention grabbing adventure story at the heart of a new educational program, created from thousands of hours of collaboration, planning and development.

Getting Started...

Severn Trent Services gave the program a jump start when they donated a 16-foot trailer and generously outfitted it with air conditioning, installed track lighting, and finished the interior with material suitable for the application of graphics and exhibits. This outstanding gift provided us with the opportunity to create our **Mobile Teaching Lab** (to be available to local schools and at community events) -- an age-appropriate, hands-on approach to water education. Exhibits include information on where our water comes from, pollution sources, the water cycle and much more – all developed to be both educational and entertaining.

The Mobile Teaching Lab, impressive as it was, could not stand on its own. From the beginning, it was our goal to bring to local schools a comprehensive and well thought-out program. This meant interesting, informative and user-friendly teaching materials, hands-on experiments and a flexibility to make the program work in a way that was best for each classroom and/or student. But most importantly, we needed something to tie it all together – something that would grab the students' attention and allow educators to more *easily get across the key message: Water is a precious natural resource that we must protect and use wisely.* That's where the *Journey to Pansophigus* began…

Tapping Local Talent...

Journey to Pansophigus, a children's book written by gifted local writer, Nikki Wynn, was the glue needed to pull it all together. Wynn, a graduate of Klein High School and Texas A&M University, offered up a story uniquely in-line with our program goals – one which effortlessly weaves a complex global issue into an adventurous and captivating storyline. *Journey* includes a band of likable characters, the age old conflict between "good guys" and "bad guys", some nail-biting moments, the emergence of reluctant heroes, and a strong, clear message.

"The process of writing *Jour-*

Journey to Pansophigus author Nikki Wynn, enjoys a whimsical visit with Abbie, the book's heroine. The story marries a strong water conservation message with an exciting adventure, appealing to readers of all ages.

ney to Pansophigus was a real journey for me, too" said Wynn. "Melding my involvement in the water industry with what grabs the interest of children in this late elementary / early junior high age group posed a real challenge. It was important to pass on a crucial message without making it too obvious. This story would have no impact if it didn't first entertain."

Wynn's well-developed main characters – Abbie, a lovely teenage salamander; Alex, an alligator who is Abbie's best friend; and Bub, the exuberant (and often annoying) younger frog, join forces with Pteron, a wimpy dragonfly, and Bradley, a stubborn beaver -- to solve a critical water emergency in Gaea, the tropical lagoon they call home.

To visually bring the characters to life, local artist Daniel Shaw was brought in to incorporate his wonderful illustrations. Shaw, a graduate of Eisenhower High School, honed his considerable skills and talent in the Advanced Visual Arts Program at Aldine's Contemporary Education Center (ACE). His important artistic "inner-eye" gives him the unique ability to transform rough concepts into detailed, artful illustrations. Shaw's contribution to *Journey to Pansophigus* is immeasurable.

More Parts of the Puzzle…

While the trailer was being outfitted with custom-made displays, educators were consulted to consider appropriate classroom preparation for on-campus Mobile Teaching Lab visits. This yielded hands-on experiments, which included teacher and student activity guide sheets.

Additional local talent was recruited to develop a fresh design for another key component of the program – an animated hydrologic cycle. The basic concept of the "water cycle" has been communicated to children in many different ways over the years, but this particular rendition is particularly unique and effective.

Talented young designer, Steve Lee, owner of Houston-based Slant Alliance and Klein High grad, was asked to come up with this new, interactive and visual interpretation which allows students to "enter" the cycle at any point in its process. The result? An animated Water Cycle Experience CD that exceeded all expectations.

A Vision Becomes Reality…

With all the components in place, the program is set to "hit the road" this fall. Following a meeting with Superintendents and Science Department heads (from ISDs within the Authority's boundaries), the Mobile Teaching Lab will begin traveling to schools throughout the system.

"The Authority's Board of Directors has been tremendously supportive of this program since its inception," said NHCRWA's General Manager, Jimmie Schindewolf. "We are especially excited about the opportunity to team up with the West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA), individual MUDs within our boundaries, engineers, operators and others interested in sponsoring the program, to reach our goal of bringing these materials to every targeted classroom."

"Our community continues to grow," Schindewolf commented, "so learning to use water wisely is tremendously important. Getting our young people involved in this challenge will have a major impact on water use habits and patterns for the future. This program really brings the point home -- water indeed is life, and it is up to each of us to learn to be good stewards of this critical natural resource."

The Mobile Teaching Lab has been outfitted for visits to school campuses in seven Independent School Districts.

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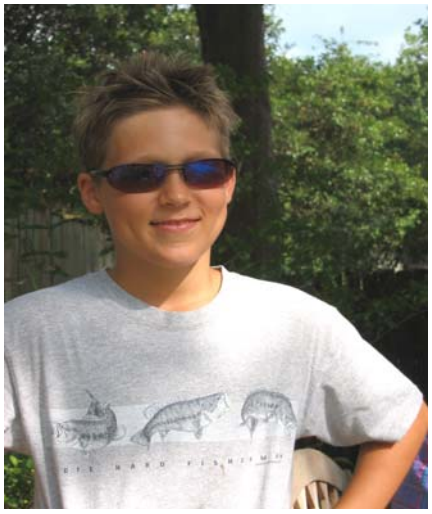


Special Thanks to....

■ Science educators Lollie Garay, Tanya Cantrell, and Carol Fraser for their assistance in the classroom activity development.

■ Russell Lambert, The Texas Network (an Aldine graduate), for developing the *Learning to Use Water Wisely* flash animation CD, featuring Klein High student Ryan Roszko, left, who has helped the Authority "teach" water conservation to kids for the past two years.

Additional Information...

Want to sponsor some classroom packets? Visit the web link below to learn how to provide this strong conservation message to a school near you. (Sets of 35 books, Readers' Guide, and CDs)

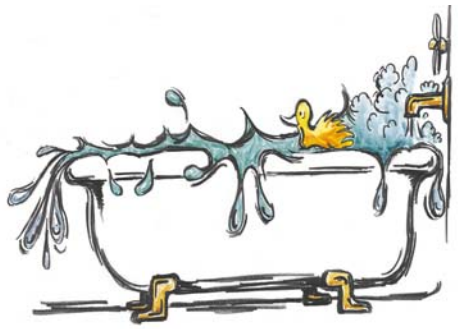
Sponsors also needed for quantities of books, Readers' Guides and CDs for Home Schoolers and Private Schools. Help provide the water conservation materials for these important educational experiences, too.

Home Schooling Parents... Don't miss out on this exciting story. Single copies...along with a Readers' Guide and the Interactive Water Cycle CD...may be obtained while "sponsored" supplies last through the NHCRWA (*www.stopthedrop.org*) or the WHCRWA (*www.whcrwa.com*), or the set may be purchased through *www.waterlilypress.com* for a nominal charge.

Visit the special *Journey to Pansophigus* section at *www.stopthedrop.org* for additional ordering information.

Cool Water Facts from the USGS

♦ The incorporated limits of Houston totals 600 square miles. If it rained one inch on all of those 600 square miles, 10.4 billion gallons would fall; the equivalent of 209 million fifty-gallon baths.



♦ If your home occupied one-third of an acre of Houston's land, that same one inch of rain would deliver 9,042 gallons of water to your lot; the equivalent of 181 fifty-gallon baths.

♦ **Does that tiny little leak really waste water?** You bet it does! If your home has three leaky faucets that each drip thirty drops per minute, you're wasting eleven gallons of water per day or 4,165 gallons per year -- that's the equivalent of 83 fifty-gallon baths.

♦ **What is a 100-year flood?** According to the US Geological Survey, the term describes the recurrence interval of floods. In short, the chance that a creek or river will flow as high as the 100-year flood stage in a given year is 1 in 100. Statistically, each year begins with the same 1% chance that a 100-year event will occur. And just because a 100-year flood happened last year doesn't mean that it won't happen this year, too. Future rainfall and floods don't depend on the rainfall and floods that happened in the past.