

# insights

*New knowledge in the sciences and the humanities*

## Bay Watch

**CAN BARNEGAT BAY BE SAVED?**

**O**n too many Monday mornings, the smell of human waste coming from Barnegat Bay is enough to make Michael Kennish sick. But unlike most shore lovers, Kennish (CAS'72,GSNB '74,'77) is in a position to do something about the source of this problem—boats that dump the contents of portable toilets overboard—and others that threaten the beauty and health of the bay. The

Rutgers marine scientist is leading a study—the first since the 1960s—that could be New Jersey's last chance to save this natural treasure.

The \$1.5 million, three-year study is funded by the federal National Estuary Program, a nationwide anti-pollution initiative for 30 major estuaries. Barnegat Bay and Little Egg Harbor—a 50-mile thread of water between the mainland of New

Jersey and its barrier islands—won designation in 1995 because of its importance as a fishery, wildlife sanctuary, and playground for boaters, windsurfers, and swimmers.

Kennish will coordinate the work of a group that includes several Rutgers scientists and graduate students from a variety of disciplines. They will analyze data collected since 1985, conduct new surveys, identify problems, and recommend solutions. "Convincing legislative bodies to commit the resources and institute the radical and controversial measures that may be necessary will be more difficult than the science," says Kennish.

The bay's downward spiral goes far beyond the congestion and pollution of summer use. For years, Ocean and Monmouth counties have led the state in

population growth. The problem of pollutants is compounded by the bay's narrow, shallow dimensions. Because fresh, replenishing ocean waters can enter through only two narrow inlets on the bay's eastern edge, its waters heat quickly and stagnate easily.

Pete McLain, former deputy director of the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife, points out that the estuary accommodates 53,000 licensed vessels, far beyond its capacity. Sailboat owners, kayakers, and bird watchers grumble about power boats and Jet Skis that zip around peaceful lagoons. Fishermen complain that the propellers of big boats chew up blue-crab spawning grounds and that marinas have too few pump-out stations for raw sewage. McLain also discovered that a single-cell protozoan is killing the bay's eel grass, which provides critical breeding grounds for juvenile fish, clams, and blue crabs.

Says McLain, 71, who lives on one of the bay's islands: "The bay is simply overused and abused. If we don't act now, it will die before our eyes."

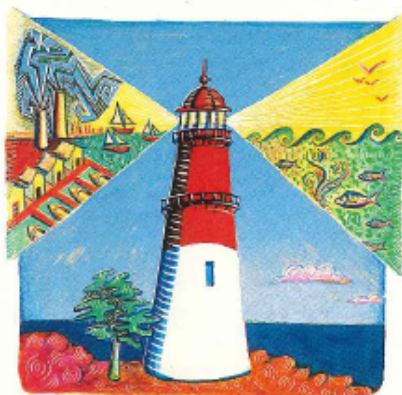
## Customer Service

**BARRIER-FREE SHOPPING FOR THE DISABLED**

**W**hen Carol Kaufman teaches students in her retail-marketing class about the public-access ramifications of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, she doesn't have them memorize tedious course material: She sends them into New Jersey shopping malls to learn firsthand what it's like to be a disabled shopper. "Students are our future business leaders," says Kaufman, an associate professor of marketing at Rutgers-Camden. "They need to realize that the ADA affects not only the 49 million disabled people in this country, but millions of senior citizens and kids as well."

The 1992 ADA legislation requires that public buildings be easily accessible to the handicapped by the provision of ramps, designated parking spaces, and other aids. But, Kaufman points out, many of the improvements are required only on new construction. The law also contains grandfather provisions for older buildings and, she says, "a vague notion that changes of considerable expense aren't required."

This past spring, Kaufman's class, accompanied



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