Chapter Seven

Watershed Fred
They sometimes call him Watershed Fred,

But just what is a watershed, Fred?

Is it like the shed that sits in my backyard?

Or is it something else that we must guard?

We want to know more about our Quittie,

We want to know why it runs through our City.

Why does it have cement dikes on the side

Instead of a grassy bank, like in the countryside?

What about Beatriz, our butterfly,

Did she make it back or did she just die?

We don’t see her, and spring is here.

What’s her life cycle, make it clear!
We have questions, Watershed Fred,
You’re the expert, everyone said.
Give us answers, won’t you please,
So we can help, no apologies.

Freddy heard them coming. He wondered which children were reciting this poem. Could it have been the students from Southwest Elementary? Apparently so. These third graders went right up to the 7th Street Bridge, looking for their favorite fish. One boy trailed behind, because he stopped to examine some sort of insect that had been buzzing around his ear. The insect landed on the grass beside the Quittie.

Freddy splashed his tail, and said to all of the students that gathered on the bridge:

Yes, some call me Watershed Fred,
I have heard your questions, just as you said.
I will try to answer them so then you’ll know
What’s going on and which way to go.
First about the watershed,
Go ask a teacher, it’s in her head,
within Lebanon’s schools there’s expertise
Find the answers, it will be a breeze.

Next, about our butterfly,
Study the lifecycle, but don’t you cry,
To know her life span you must study
Go do the research with a buddy.

About the dikes along the Quittie,
Study some history in our city,
Ask an elder in our town,
About the flood that poured on down.
By the way, what’s happening here?

On top of my bridge, what did I hear?

Is a mural being created?

If that is so, I’ll be elated!

The students liked the way Fred talked to them because it made them want to find the answers. They decided to get right to their work by dividing the tasks that Freddy identified. “Let’s think about this,” Makenzie stated. “Hmm, how about if Gage and Matthew find out if our teachers know about watersheds; what do you think?”

Gage replied, “That works for me! Matthew, Makenzie and I can write a letter to the fifth grade teacher who teaches science. I think it’s Mrs. Paine.”

Dashany volunteered, “Madalyn and I can stop at the library to research the life span of the butterfly.”

“I will join you on that – I really want to know what happened to Beatrix,” Faith added.

Yuna chimed in, “I want to work with Danica and Geisha on the history assignment. You know, finding an old person who remembers why there is a cement bank on the sides of the Quittie.”
Freddy splashed his tail and said, “Hey, please mind your manners and respect your elders. Not a good idea to call someone and old person!”

“Okay, I get it, Freddy. I’ll be careful about that,” replied Yuna. Next Nevaeh spoke up. “New topic. Jaylani and I want to talk to Freddy about the artwork on his bridge. We’ll tell him about the mural project and our great big clean up scheduled on Saturday for Earth Day.”

Jaylani added, “Yeah, and I want to tell him all about what we are doing at Optimist Park. By the way, what happened to Joseph, Gannon and Zyair?” She scanned the area. “Oh, there they are.” Mak, Madalyn and Nevaeh stayed to talk to Freddy, while all of the other kids ran over to Zyair, who was standing there talking to a strange looking insect that Gannon was holding.

As the students ran over, Joseph warned them, “Don’t run, you’ll scare him away, and Zyair is making friends with him. Look, he even got the insect to stand on Gannon’s hand.”

“What is it?” they asked in unison.
“It’s a dragonfly!” exclaimed Zyair. “He was buzzing in my ear and sure enough he started to tell me things. He told me his name was Flash.”

“Yeah, and he is a friend of Freddy the Fish, Ruby Robin, and all of Freddy’s other buddies,” said Gannon.

“Why is his name Flash?” asked Geisha.

“Because he can hover like a helicopter and be really still, and then all of the sudden, as quick as a flash, he can zoom over to his next stop. Flash is a great name for a dragonfly,” explained Logan.

“Why, thank you,” Flash responded rapidly. He tipped his head, and within the next second he was gone, heading in the direction of Southwest Elementary School.

“Where is he going? Does anybody know?” the students asked.
“I know,” Zyair exclaimed. “He is going to Optimist Park. I told him that we were going to clean it up on Earth Day, as part of the Great Lebanon Community Project and United Way Day of Caring. He wanted to check it out!”

With that, the students ran back to Southwest to tell their principal, Mr. Coletti, and their writing teacher, Ms. Brunelli, about their wonderful new friend Flash the Dragonfly. Once the excitement died down, they realized they had a lot to accomplish. They needed to research more about monarchs, learn the history about the cement dikes on the side of the Quittie, and they had to find out about watersheds. They got right to the tasks at hand.

The girls who were talking to Freddy lingered all afternoon, telling him all about the mural. Naveah said, “It includes pictures of you, Freddy. And, there’s Beatrix, Oreo, Braylon Beaver, Vampy, the Mallards, Tyre the Turtle, and other friends of yours.”
Mak added, “The painting will will be on both sides of your bridge, right between the YMCA and the Lebanon Public Library.” Madelyn continued, “This fantastic giant-sized painting will make our city more beautiful, and it will help remind all of us to protect the environment and keep our waterways clean.”

Dasahny added, “The high school art students wanted to bring your story to life, Freddy. They made your adventures come to life for all to see. And, Mr. Shuey helped many of us make the tiles for the bridge.”

Freddy was very excited about all of this, especially because another clean up day was right around the corner. The mural was going to be displayed on the day of the Great Lebanon Community Project Clean Up.

The following day, as the students were arriving to school and heading into breakfast, Mrs. Paine went to her mailbox, as she does every day. She picked up a letter that caught her interest. The handwriting on the envelope looked as if was written by some students. She opened it, and read:


Dear Mrs. Paine,

We are trying to learn more about watersheds. Freddy the fish told us that we should find an expert teacher in our school. We heard that you are doing some cool science projects with your class.

We are writing to you because we think you might be the best one to help us with information about watersheds. Write back as soon as possible, or stop by when you have a chance.

Sincerely,
Matthew, Gage, and Makenzie
Grade 3, Southwest
On the same day, a gentleman who knew a lot about the history of our town, went to his mailbox at home and found a letter. It also looked as if it was written by students. Curious, he opened the letter right away. It said,

Dear Mr. Weddle,

We are third grade students from Southwest Elementary School. Our names are Geisha, Danica and Yuna. We are sending this letter because we want to know more about our Quittie.

Were you around when the Hazel Dike was built? Do you remember when it was built? Were you a little kid back then?

Do you know why it had to be built, and why they called it the Hazel Dike? What were you doing when it was being built?

Can you come and visit us and help us learn more, or write back? Our teacher, Ms. Brunelli, said you would be a great resource to find all our answers.

Respectfully,
Danica, Yuna, and Geisha
Grade 3, Southwest

Both Mrs. Paine and Mr. Weddle took these student letters very seriously. They were glad that the children were curious about their town and the watershed. What would be the best way to get the information across? Each of them pondered the question for a while. Mrs. Paine decided to write a letter back to the students. This way they could take the information, keep it and share it with Mr. Celaschi.
Dear 3rd Graders-

It was such a nice surprise to receive a letter from you. Here are some interesting facts about watersheds that you may not know about quite yet. A watershed is an area of land that feeds all the water running under it and draining off of it into a body of water.

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is approximately 64,000 square miles wide. There are 150 major rivers and streams that flow into the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Our little Quittapahilla Creek is a small but important part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The mighty Susquehanna River that runs through the city of Harrisburg is an ever bigger part of that Watershed. If you ever go to a Harrisburg Senators game, you will most likely see people boating and fishing on the river.

Many rivers flow into watersheds. The Chesapeake Watershed provides drinking water to over 17 million people. It is extremely important to have clean riverbanks, rivers, streams and lakes in order to maintain a healthy watershed.

I hope that you enjoyed learning about watersheds and keeping the environment clean. When you get to 5th grade, we will be doing many science projects that will be really informative and super exciting.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Paine

Mr. Weddle decided to share his information by returning a letter with Ms. Brunelli when she went to school the next day.

Dear Yuna, Danica and Geisha,

I was thrilled to receive your letter and will be extremely excited to share what information I know about the Hazel Dike in Lebanon City. At that time, I was 34 years old and was teaching in the Lebanon School District, I was a History teacher, teaching 7th grade.

The Hazel Dike was built in order to make sure that the area was safe from floodwaters.

In 1972, a very powerful storm called Agnes swept through the entire state of Pennsylvania and the eastern seaboard. The city of Lebanon was overcome with flood waters. Many people lost their homes and all of their possessions.
It was a very scary time for the city of Lebanon and surrounding areas. The Hazel Dike channeled the water so that the area would remain flood free, so to speak. Since the dike was built, the city of Lebanon has never seen floodwaters of that magnitude again. The federal government, along with the city, gave the money to build the Hazel Dike and it has proved to be a great asset to the city.

I was happy to share what information that I know about the history of the Hazel Dike in Lebanon, Pa. I hope that you have a great end of the year and always remember, “Those that don’t learn history, are doomed to repeat it.”

Sincerely,
Mr. Weddle

Meanwhile, Faith, Dasahny, and Madalyn had completed their research on monarch butterflies. They were sitting on the grassy lawn of Southwest on a warm afternoon and they all appeared to be frustrated. “I don’t get it,” said Dasahny. We’ve been reading that the life span of the monarch butterfly is about six to eight weeks. How could it be that Beatrix left Lebanon in the fall at the end of October?”

“Yeah,” replied Madalyn. “That’s October, November, December, January, February, March, and it’s already April. That’s more than eight weeks!”

Faith said, “It’s more like twenty-eight weeks! According to our research, she should have not lived past early December! Vampy the bat told us all that after her migration to Mexico, she survived a devastating storm there.”

Now, Ruby Robin overheard all of this as she was out enjoying the sunshine. She knew she had to intervene. She flew right down to them and began to explain, “I know the answers to your questions. Beatrix was a special butterfly, like all of the monarchs that are born at the end of the summer and into early fall. They live longer than eight weeks. They live about six
months because they have a very special job to do to keep the monarch species alive. It’s all about their migration, and the course of nature. Beatrix made it to Mexico through the storm. In early March, she knew it was time to migrate back to Florida. She had to leave Benson behind because his time on earth was finished.”

“What happened next?” asked the girls.

“I met up with Beatrix after she landed safely in Florida. She found a nice grassy area with plenty of milkweed pods. She laid her eggs on a milkweed plant. She told me that she was very, very happy because she had such a good life, filled with adventures and great friendships. She asked me to tell her offspring about Freddy the Fish, and to give him her regards. A few days later, she realized her work was done, and Beatrix died peacefully. She lived for over six months!”

Ruby continued, “At first I felt really sad about this, but soon after, I noticed that her egg had changed into a caterpillar, and finally became a butterfly. I had a conversation with her daughter, Beatrix the Second, and told her all about her wonderful mother. Beatrix the Second was a very happy butterfly every day of her life. I went with her when she migrated farther north, to South of the Border. She had a chance to meet Vampy, and heard all about her mom’s adventures. She settled at South of the Border, and also laid her eggs there.

Soon after, Beatrix the Third was born. This would be Beatrix’s granddaughter. She flew from South of the Border to Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson in the beautiful state of Virginia. There Beatrix the Third enjoyed fluttering around
the flower and herb gardens. Eventually, she found plenty of milkweed plants on which to lay her eggs. I imagine that soon the great granddaughter of Beatrix will be born. She will likely migrate back to Lebanon. I’ll be looking for her later in the next month or so. I’ll make sure Beatrix the Fourth meets Freddy.”

The girls were captivated by the story that Ruby Robin shared. “Wow! Nature is awesome!” said Danica. “Something as delicate as a butterfly has such an amazing story! They pass it on, one generation after the other.”

The girls thanked Ruby. Danica and Madalyn proclaimed, “We surely have learned a lot about monarch butterflies. We appreciate them now more than ever before! We will explain this to our class as best we can.”

Saturday, April 22nd, had arrived. The Lebanon High School cafeteria was bustling with people, all volunteering for United Way Day of Caring. Many teachers, students, families, and community members grabbed a bite to eat before venturing out to improve our city by picking up trash, painting park benches, and planting gardens. It was a chilly morning, and it had rained heavily the day before. That did not stop the Cedars from taking part in the Great Lebanon Community Project on Earth Day.

Lots of Southwest teachers, including Ms. Maulfair, Mrs. Fenton, and Mrs. Guth got right to work at Optimist Park, near their school. Working together, scrubbing, cleaning and painting, they were accomplishing a lot. At the same time students and staff from Northwest and Lebanon Middle School were sprucing up Coleman’s Park. The Henry Houck family was at
Northeast Park, while the Harding students cleaned up the streets and sidewalks right around their school. Southeast students focused their efforts on the North 6th Street Playground. The Mayor and the Superintendent wanted to see everybody in action. But how could they get to see everything!! Mayor Capello knew the answer. She elected to use the “Cedar Express,” her glass bottom helicopter that she only used on very special occasions. Earth Day was just the right day to fire up the engines and fly around the city of Lebanon.

Freddy was very excited that the students were going to clean his home again. He knew that the winter had been hard on the Quittie. Sometimes careless people discarded unwanted items right into the creek. Other times the wind picked up trash, dropping it right into Freddy’s home. That Saturday morning, some of the High School Cedars ventured right into the chilly water and began to pick up trash.

The water was cold, and it was higher than normal because of all of the rain. As the Cedars started to work, the water began to move more swiftly. Freddy was frolicking about, and Flash the Dragonfly was hovering over the water, enjoying the sounds and sites. Suddenly, the fast moving water pulled Freddy the Fish into a storm drain along the
Hazel Dike. Freddy could not swim against the direction of the rapidly moving current, and in the blink of an eye, he disappeared from the Quittle.

Flash heard Freddy call out,

“SOMEBODY HELP ME, I AM GETTING SWEPT AWAY INTO THE UNDERGROUND SYSTEM!”

Flash knew he couldn’t follow Freddy into the giant drain, but he did know that the drains were connected to the gutters along the road. He immediately went to the closest storm drain on 8th Street, and he caught a glimpse of Freddy tumbling through the drain, toward the direction of Optimist Park. Flash remembered the Southwest students had taken him to the park before, and he decided to head over in that direction.
The Southwest kids were venturing about the Optimist, making friends with one another as they worked among the birds and the budding trees. A grasshopper named Jumpy was becoming acquainted with the children who were cleaning the merry-go-round and the sliding board. He introduced himself to Joseph and Gannon as Zyair ran into the meeting room to refill the bucket with clean water.

As Zyair was heading back to his classmates, he heard a familiar buzz right next to his ear. He put the bucket down at the bottom of the sliding board and Flash the Dragonfly began to speak, “Zyair, we have real trouble in this town. Freddy is being swept away from the Quittie by fast moving water, and he is headed this way through the storm drains. We have to help him!”

Jumpy the Grasshopper was on top of the sliding board. He was looking up in the sky because he heard the sound of Mayor Capello’s glass bottom helicopter, named the Cedar Express, approaching Optimist Park. When he glanced down he saw something unbelievable. He saw a fish flying out of the storm drain in the parking lot; he flew up into the air heading in
his direction. Down came Freddy, head over tail, landing on the wet sliding board. Low and behold, there he was, Freddy landed right in Zyair’s clean, fresh water bucket. SPLASH!!!!

“Three Cheers for Freddy!” Mayor Capello proclaimed, as she stepped out of the helicopter and headed to the sliding board. All of the teachers and kids at the Optimist Park ran over to see Freddy, and repeated, “Three Cheers for Freddy!” Flash fluttered and the grasshopper jumped for joy to see that Freddy the Fish landed in a bucket of water. They were thrilled that Freddy was alright and that Mayor Capello had a glass bottom helicopter. The Southwest students filled up the bottom of the helicopter with water, and dumped Freddy into the helicopter.

After Mayor Capello thanked the students for their work, she and Jumpy hopped into the helicopter, keeping their feet above the water and they took off. She knew she needed to get Freddy back home. Flash followed the helicopter. He had no trouble keeping up with them. They all landed on the 7th Street Bridge, where the LHS Artists and their teacher, Mrs. Fetzer,
greeted them. Freddy, Jumpy and Flash got to see the murals showing his adventures. Freddy was exhilarated and very happy to see the artwork, although he grimaced when he saw the picture of Oreo. He did not want to revisit his time with that rabbit.

After pleasantries and accolades were exchanged, Mayor Capello released Freddy back into the Quittie. The water was clean, and much calmer now. Freddy exclaimed, “I love an adventure, but it is sure good to be home!”

The following Southwest students contributed to Chapter 7:

- Goge Firestone
- Faith Ortiz
- Geisha Perez
- Dasahny Thong
- Makenzie Groff
- Gannon Shirato
- Jaylani Torres
- Matthew Margarito
- Joseph Otero
- Yuna Mercedes
- Nevaeh Mejia
- Zyair Layne
- Danica Haggerty
- Madalyn Lentz
- Logan Self
- Ms. Brunelli

![Image of students contributing to Chapter 7]