

The Great Lebanon Community Project!



Illustration by
Hannah Moore,
Grade 9, LHS

This is not a fish tale!

This book is dedicated to the Lebanon Community especially to the students of the Lebanon School District. It is a book that we hope to build on. We would like to include student, teacher and community illustrations and writings.

This is not a fish tale!

The Great Lebanon
Community Project!

By Marianne T. Bartley, Ed.D.

Chapter One

Once upon a time, not in a far off kingdom or a make believe place, but right here, in the town of Lebanon, PA, both the Mayor and the School Superintendent were faced with a great big problem. Mayor Capello loved her city and its people, but had too much to do and not enough money to hire people to get the work done. Dr. Bartley, the Superintendent of Schools, loved the school district, and all of its students and teachers, staff, and principals, but wanted to make school more practical, and wanted the students to see that they could use what they were learning to make a difference in their town.

The Mayor was frustrated. How can we make our city better? How can we encourage new businesses to move into the city? How can we make sure we improve our environment so that

we can have a GREAT city today and in the future? “What can I do?” thought the Mayor.
“What can I do as Mayor to make Lebanon the place to grow?”

The School Superintendent was frustrated. How can we make our schools better? How can we make sure that our students know that they are smart, that they are creative, that they are innovative? How can we motivate our students to work hard and to realize how important their lives are? How can we make sure we have the best learning environment both now and in the future? The Superintendent thought, “What can I do?”

Both the Mayor and the School Superintendent went about their business, worrying about all of their responsibilities. Sometimes they both got so disappointed, they could just cry. “Woe is me! I have too much to do! I don’t have enough money to change things,” they thought. The days went by, and they never gave up; they kept trying. Some days, they saw glimmers of hope here and there, but still neither of them knew how to get out of their predicaments.

Then one night, the School Superintendent went to sleep after a long Board Meeting. It was almost summer, and everyone was thinking of vacation time. Dr. Bartley finally fell asleep, and when she awoke, she started to think of a crazy dream that she had just had. It was a dream about an orange fish. This was a special fish; it was lively, funny, and it could talk. (Anything's possible in your dreams, you see!) The fish was named Freddy the Fish, and it just so happened that he was living in the Quittapahilla Creek down near the Lebanon Public Library and the YMCA, right near 7th Street.

During her dream Dr. Bartley was riding her bike to the YMCA where she was planning to work out. Often times, when working out at the YMCA Dr. Bartley would see Mayor Capello, who liked to work out at the YMCA as well. Sometimes Mr. Cruz, Mrs. Danielewicz, Mr. Marks, and Mrs. Daub would be there too. Or maybe even Mrs. Haitos would be there. One never knows! She wondered if she would see any of them that day.

As she approached the bridge going over the Quittie on her bicycle, she hit gravel and fell to the ground, and rolled right down to the side of the creek. She banged her head, but she thought to herself, “No big deal. No blood.” As she brushed herself off and got up, she heard a little voice gurgling nearby. She didn’t see anyone, so she figured she imagined it. She started up the hill, but heard the gurgling voice again. “Hey you, over there! Can you hear me?”

Dr. Bartley turned around, sat down on the hill by the creek, and noticed a fish splashing around in the Quittie. She heard the voice again. “Yes, that really was a voice you were hearing. That’s my voice! I am Freddy the Fish!”

Now even though it was a dream, Dr. Bartley thought to herself, “...hmmm, I must have banged my head really hard because now I see an orange fish in the Quittie, and he’s talking to me! That’s not normal.” She made a note on her iPhone to call her Dr. Yocum, whose office is down on Cumberland Street. She mumbled to herself, “The doctor will need to examine me to see if I

have a concussion. It seems as if I've become delusional. A talking fish named Freddy, in the Quittapahilla Creek?! This just doesn't make sense."

Freddy the Fish persisted. "I think I know who YOU are. Aren't you the one in charge of the schools around here? Aren't you the one who hands out the academic achievement and effort awards? Don't you hand out the diplomas at graduation?and don't you call the snow days?"

"Yes, that's true. I am the Superintendent of the Lebanon School District, and I do all those things." said Dr. Bartley.

Freddy the Fish responded, "The kids think you own all of the schools in Lebanon. Is that true?"

"No, I don't own any of the schools! Actually, the taxpayers in the district really own the schools. They are the ones who pay taxes to keep the schools open," she explained. "Here's

how it works. The adults in our community, and lots of the parents of the kids in town vote for the members of the School Board. The School Board is the one that hires the superintendent to oversee our seven schools: Lebanon High School, Lebanon Middle School, Southeast Elementary School, Southwest Elementary School, Northwest Elementary School, Harding Elementary School, and Henry Houck Elementary School. It's a big job. I work with the principals and the staff to make sure all of the students have the things they need for learning."

"Oh, I see," gurgled Freddy the Fish. "So, it sounds as if you have a lot of responsibility."

"Yes, I do," said Dr. Bartley.

"Then you're the one I need to talk to," said Freddy the Fish. "I already have the Mayor's ear, just the other day I had a conversation with her. I told her, Mayor Capello, we've gotta do something around here to take care of our water. It's all connected you know!"

Freddy the Fish continued, "The water in the Quittie is connected to other waterways in our area, which connect to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. They are connected to our oceans."

Dr. Bartley said to Freddy the Fish, "Well, so what? What's the big deal? We have plenty of water around here. Every time I turn on the faucet, I have water to drink, to take a shower, to do my laundry, to water my garden and to clean my car. There's even enough water to go for a swim at the pool at Coleman's Park if I want to, or to swim in the pool in my friend's back yard."

Freddy the Fish responded, "That's true, for now. But we shouldn't take everything for granted! Look around here. Someone threw a Turkey Hill soda cup and straw in the Quittie, and that's my home. And look over there. There's an old TV in the Quittie. That adds chemicals to our water, and there's a Weis shopping bag, and a cart. That causes all kinds of problems. And look at that gutter and drain over there across the street, which catches the rainwater. There's all kinds of trash next to it which will get washed down the drain."

“Hmm,” said Dr. Bartley. “I know this isn’t good. Even when I was a kid we talked about keeping things clean and free of pollution. It just seems as if no one really cares about it, and that things will just go on like this forever. I know I try to do my part, but I’m just one person.”

“But, you know a lot of people, Doc. More people need to help out. You may not realize what the Mayor of Lebanon is faced with,” said Freddy the Fish. “You better go talk to her. She has all kinds of government groups coming down on her to make sure that the town takes care of its waterways and water supplies. She has the DEP breathing down her back. That would be the Department of Environmental Protection in the state of Pennsylvania. She has the EPA breathing down her back. That would be the Environmental Protection Agency for the United States of America. She’s even supposed to go up to Stoever’s Dam sometime in the near future, drain the whole lake, fix it, and make it better. She has all kinds of things she is supposed to do, including educating the whole city on what needs to happen.hmm, and you thought you

had it bad, Dr. Bartley, taking care of 5,000 kids! Put yourself in her shoes. She has the whole town!”

With that, Freddy the Fish swam upstream, near the ducks, and Dr. Bartley was left pondering, as she gradually got back up. She hopped on her bike, and rode right over to the YMCA. Sure enough, as she went upstairs, waving to some of her students going to the youth center on the way, she ran into some of her staff. Mrs. Danielewicz was on the elliptical, Mrs. Daub was lifting weights, and Mr. Marks was running on the treadmill. Everyone greeted each other. Down on the other end of the gym was Mayor Capello on the stair climber.

Dr. Bartley went right over to her, and it was almost as if they read each other’s minds. Mayor Capello looked Dr. Bartley right in the eye and said, “You didn’t by any chance run into a talking fish named Freddy, did you?” Dr. Bartley nodded, “Affirmative.”

Mayor Capello had a glimmer in her eye. She laughed and said, “I thought so. I thought I was going crazy the other day when I heard that same fish. I mean, who ever heard of a talking fish in the Quittie? It’s just too strange! That fish was giving me a warning, reminding me that I have so, so much to remedy in the City of Lebanon to make it a better place. He told me that I better get things moving to meet the requirements of the EPA and the DEP. He also told me that I was going to need a lot of help, but that he would be sending someone my way.”

Dr. Bartley knew that she was dreaming, and in her dream she responded to the Mayor saying, “I’m not sure what we can do, but I do know that we have a lot of talented, caring students, teachers, parents, staff and principals in the Lebanon School District. I know that the kids like you, Mayor Capello. They always like it when you come to visit them in our schools. Even the high school kids like it when you come to help out with mock interviews, or when you come to see their wonderful musicals. Maybe, just maybe, our students and schools will want to help our Mayor.”

The memories of the dream started to fade. Morning was around the corner.

Suddenly, the alarm went off on Dr. Bartley's iPhone. It was 5:45 AM, and it was time to get up and go to work. Nothing was the same that morning at work. Dr. Bartley knew she had to call a meeting, and bring some key people together. She gave a name for the meeting, and called it the Great Lebanon Community Project.

She invited the Mayor. She invited our Lebanon High School principal, Mr. Giovino, and our Lebanon Middle School principal, Mrs. Connelly. She invited Mr. Habecker, of Southeast Elementary School, to represent all of the elementary schools, including Northwest, Southwest, Henry Houck and Harding. She invited Trevor Brown and Laurie Bowersox, from HACCC. She invited Stephanie Harmon, who worked on the Envirothon. She invited all of her cabinet, including Mr. Murphy, Dr. Danz, Mr. Hartman, Mr. Richards, Mr. Shattls, and Mr. Coatsworth to come. She invited Mrs. Herr, from our Business Office to come. And, she invited Mr. Okonak, and Mr. Liriano, both members of the School Board to come. She even invited Mrs. Harrell,

because Mrs. Harrell is a big help to Dr. Bartley whenever she gets big ideas. And this was going to be a big idea.

No one knew what the meeting would be about. But everyone wanted to know, “What was the Great Lebanon Community Project?” The group met, and brainstormed, and everyone agreed we needed to do something to help our community. We were not sure what it was, but we knew we wanted to help the Mayor. We learned about all of the things the Mayor needed to accomplish, and we wanted to work with her to help our community, and to ensure a brighter future.

We met a second time. After the second meeting, and our encounter with Freddy the Fish, we were ready to move forward. We decided to develop our project around water. And that is how “The Great Lebanon Community Project” was born. We thought about a lot of different names. Maybe we should name our project WOW for Wonders of our Watershed, or STRAW, for “Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed.”

It was Mr. Ludwig and Mr. Nordall who suggested that we let the kids name the project. So, that is what we will do! All of our classes in all of our schools can make suggestions, and then we will have our Mayor declare the winner!

The winner will be announced on September 21st, 2016, at an all district assembly to be held at Alumni Stadium. That will be just about one week before the Fireball Run will close down Cumberland Street on the 27th, a date that Dr. Bartley is declaring an “Official No Homework Night!”

Stay tuned for Chapter Two.