

# The Hudson River Four Hundred Years Later; An Ecological Approach at Cary

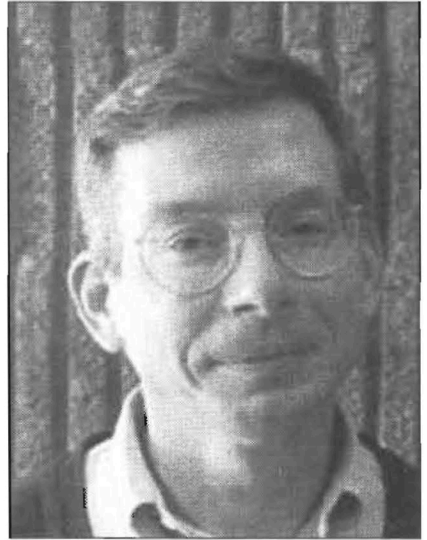
By Clint Iacovone

Four hundred years ago, Europeans explored America and settled up and down the Hudson River. It quickly became the major source of commerce and transportation. It is still of great significance today, the river in and of itself is a call for celebration and discussion.

To commemorate the river's anniversary, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies hosted an informative night in which science and art melded together. Ecologist David Strayer spoke and discussed the major ecological changes that have occurred since Henry Hudson's time and the significance that these changes pose on New York State and the surrounding area.

One positive ecological change that has occurred is that the river is now completely navigable. In Hudson's day, navigation was a brackish nightmare and even the most qualified captains found it difficult to maneuver through the river's side channels and mud banks. Thanks to channel draining and centuries of dredging, the Hudson River has provided us with easy transportation and navigable waters that Hudson and his crew **might have wished they had sailed through.**

Strayer said there are many invasive problems the river faces. There are many alien species that have been introduced into the river's ecosystem. These invaders unbalance the food chain making it more and more difficult for the



David Strayer, ecologist.

native species to feed. Perhaps the most egregious example of an invasive species is the zebra mussel. Accidentally introduced into the Salt Lakes in 1991, zebra mussels now set up prominence residence in the Hudson River. They eat all the plankton forcing the native species to fight for survival. These invasive species are a threat to the entire ecosystem and were a major talking point of the night.

Skipping over the highly publicized GE dilemma, doom and gloom eventually gave way to celebration and art. It is clear that everyone at the Cary Institute was happy to learn about the river and all it has given us in the last four hundred years. Although there is still progress to be made in the upcoming years to improve the ecology of the river, Strayer and his team of ecologists seem determined and steadfast in their approach to solving this dilemma.