Second issue already?

Ed Bacon
S/Y Prelude

I know what you’re thinking. Here’s another newsletter that takes off like a bat out of hell with frequent issues at the beginning, then a slowdown and finally a disappearance. There will be frequent issues up until the re-union, mainly to track down alumni and set up the re-union. Our charter season will then ramp up and there will be a slowdown of issues until the fall. The disappearance will be up to you. I need more feedback from you – articles, events, issues, pictures, paintings and e-mail addresses of other Basin users and Basin alumni. Send them to ebacon@nyc.rr.com This IS a community newsletter. Thanks to Lew Wood, Frances Gaffney and Ray Stevens for their contributions to this issue.

-ED-

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W. 79th St Boat Basin History

Egbert Viele’s 1874 map shows the Hudson shoreline with the railroad tracks along the banks. A stream ran down the hills to the river between 79th Street and 80th Street. At low tide, one can see a constant stream of water flowing from a rock-framed opening in the promenade bulkhead midway between B Dock and C Dock. Possible outlet for the stream which is now underground?

According to “The Power Broker”, when Robert Moses extended the park from the railroad tracks (the Parkway) down to the current bulkhead, fill was needed. Having no funds for the fill, he struck a deal with New York Central to use the excavated earth and rock from the cuts and tunnels required to lower the Eleventh Avenue railroad bed below ground level from the West 60’s to the Penn Station yards. When you walk out C Dock gate onto the promenade, Hell's Kitchen may be underfoot.
This photo was taken shortly after the West Side Renovation opening on October 12, 1937. The opening day grandstand for Mayor LaGuardia on the traffic circle has already been removed, the rotunda fountain’s twelve bronze frogs are spitting water into the center of the fountain and the Henry Hudson Parkway is already incurring traffic jams. Larger trees can be seen on the original park on the other side of the parkway and fresh plantings on the new fill. The dock in front of the rotunda is the current location of the dock office. The work barges and pile drivers are setting up for the construction of A Dock.

The Basin hasn’t changed much in its first nine years. No slips or finger docks on the south side of C Dock, no D Dock, no E Dock.

*To be continued*
Life after the Boat Basin

Alf Hansen lived with his wife Joan on board the Seagoing houseboat “Joanie” on D Dock from 1970 to 1975. Alf was born in Norway, went to sea on the Norwegian sail-training ships and was a merchant mariner on the World War II Arctic Murmansk convoys that lost 85 merchant vessels to the Germans. On one of his layovers in NYC, he met Joanie, a dancer who specialized in tap dancing on her hands. When Alf retired from his commercial building superintendent job in 1975, they drove their boat to Richmond’s Marina in Edgewater, NJ, had the boat loaded on a truck and then flew to Tampa/ St Petersburg, FL to meet the boat. They had never been to Florida before! Joanie died of throat cancer and later Alf married Susan, swallowed the anchor, and lived in a house in St. Petersburg. When Susan died, Susan’s family convinced Alf to move a few hours away to Ocala, FL to be near them. On March 23, Alf celebrates his 90th birthday. Cards can be sent to:

Alf Hansen
520 NE 52 Court
Ocala, FL 34470

You must have been a beautiful baby

In the late 1960’s, the liveaboard era began at the Basin. The Basin quickly became a grass widowers’ haven with the kids visiting on weekends. One possible explanation for the divorced men filling the Basin is that as a guy experiences trauma such as a divorce, he retreats to a comfort zone or a Benson’s relaxation response that many received from boating. A more mundane explanation would be that the Basin was all that the guys could afford after the alimony/support awards.

With girlfriends and second wives moving aboard and single women establishing residency on their own boats, it was only a matter of time before the first Boat Basin Baby – Dana Bragonier arrived on Reg and Penny Bragonier’s trawler “Stormy Petrel”.

The second baby to arrive was Brigitte to Monique and Lew (aka The Father of Our Country) Wood. Lew, who reported news, weather and sports on the Today Show, had spelled “IT’S A GIRL” with signal flags to announce her arrival on E Dock. Here’s a more complete description from Lew:
Brigitte Marie Wood, called Bri (NOT Brie...that's cheese!) was born to parents Monique and Lew Wood on July 27, 1976, the year of our big Bi-Centennial in NYC, including the parade of Tall Ships up the Hudson. Monique barely made it up the rickety finger piers in the dark of night to the taxi in the rotunda for a wild ride to the hospital on the east side.

Bri never lived in a house until she was about ten years old...always on a boat. First, the Chris Craft 46' Aquahome "Serendipity", then the Irwin 52 "Arcturus", which we sailed all over LI Sound and then to Florida, where we lived for ten years. She adapted well to the nautical life, and knew all the lingo. Once approaching dockside on the Intracoastal in the Carolinas, the four-year-old called out "four feet under the transducer, Daddy!" much to the astonishment of those on the dock.

Bri attended high school in Indianapolis and Indiana University, moving to California after graduation in 1998. There, she worked in a gallery for the famous Warner Brothers animator and director Chuck Jones (Elmer Fudd, Road Runner, the Grinch) then became director of acquisitions at the Franklin Bowles Art Gallery in San Francisco, a position she continues to hold. Bri met and married her husband, Bruce White, in San Francisco where they live and enjoy that great city. Bruce is a NASA engineer, at Ames Research Center, Moffet Field, and is working on the concept for the next Mars lander. So far, no children, much to Mama Monique's chagrin.
PRESENT

That’s my neighbor?

Frances Gaffney lives on “X-ta-sea” (the boat, not the designer drug) on D Dock with her husband Hubert Gee, a long-time resident of the Basin.
From Frances: My introduction to the Boat Basin coincided with my introduction to Hubert. I met him through a mutual friend. It was love at first sight. No matter where he lived, we would be together - it just happened that he lived on a boat.

My first winter exposed me to the power of the river when the ice field south of the E dock broke loose. I had no prior delusions but this event solidified my respect for the water. It also confirmed my faith in the strength of the community. It was impressive how everyone worked together to save Dick’s boat; pumps were brought out, fiberglass was repaired, coffee was brewed. No one left until everyone was safe. My respect for Hubert grew, too, as I saw him get up at three in the morning to pump out Meg Berlin’s boat on what must have been the coldest night of the season. The beauty of the river makes any hardship worthwhile. I’ve tried to capture the ever changing colors of the sky and water in my paintings. There are endless subjects to paint up and down the river. I love the challenge of painting the patterns in the moving water. The southern Hudson is all about surface reflections. Further north there is a play between the surface and what can be seen below the surface, such as rocks and sand. The works are perforce small since my studio is on the boat. This has led me to develop a sense of vast space within a small painting.

May I take this opportunity to thank everyone for making me feel welcome? Your warmth has made my adjustment to a new life very easy. Life is precarious on a houseboat. Being surrounded by my special neighbors makes me feel safe. But when asked where my paintings can be seen I tell everyone, ‘at Sofia Bros.’ [storage center].
Jane’s 75th party

A surprise birthday party was held at Carmine’s Restaurant between 90th and 91st Streets on Broadway on January 16th by 15 of her neighbors and ex-neighbors.

- Jane and Linda Mays

Boat Basin staff

Marc Brown has left the Parks Department for a job in graphics design at NYC HRA (Human Resources Administration). We wish him luck.
Recent Basin press

Several winters ago, the first seal showed up at the Boat Basin. We’ve had a Second Coming:
Hawks

The red-tailed hawks got their beaks out-of-joint and moved near the Basin for their own NY Times coverage:
Boaters

Not to be topped, the community received its Times article. Except for the title, which was probably an editor’s hook to attract readers, it was a positive article:
For Perhaps $400 a Month, a Home on the Hudson River

For perhaps $400 a month, a home on the Hudson River.

Page 2

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Page 2

For Perhaps $400 a Month, a Home on the Hudson River

Page 2
Parks

And finally, Parks received some unwanted press. Conforming to the time-honored practice of the City of New York Comptroller’s publicizing his aspirations for the next mayoral race, Comptroller Thompson released his first headlines-grabbing audit report:

- From the New York Post

For more detail, see the report:

http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/audit/PDF_FILES/FK06_123A.pdf
PFUTURE

Boat Basin Alumni Reunion

The reunion will be on Thursday, June 12 at 6:00 pm on C Dock. Artists and photographers will be allowed to display their art as long as nothing is affixed/nailed to the dock.

Please send any alumni e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers to ebacon@nyc.rr.com

Here are some of the Missing in Action:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leslie Strauss</th>
<th>Emily Lee</th>
<th>Didier</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry and Toby Cohen</td>
<td>Helen Mignon</td>
<td>Mike the diver</td>
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<tr>
<td>? Patterson (stage mgr)</td>
<td>Paul ? (bought Marsten’s boat)</td>
<td>Rick, Eric and Thor Field</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pat Pulley</td>
<td>Peter Addis</td>
<td>Lonnie Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Clive and Richard</td>
<td>Kip and Tiffany</td>
<td>Dave Foster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greg Smith</td>
<td>Bonnie Munchen and kids</td>
<td>Jay Pellicane</td>
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<td>Mike O’Rourke</td>
<td>Howard Chavell</td>
<td>Guessing Julian</td>
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<td>Burns Patterson</td>
<td>Ruthie Hammerman</td>
<td>The Cat Lady</td>
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<td>Jonathan Asche</td>
<td>Susan and Tanya Octaviano</td>
<td>Bobby Held</td>
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<td>Jerry Berton</td>
<td>Paola and Roland Stern</td>
<td>Barry</td>
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<td>Julie and Miles</td>
<td>Beth McCarthy</td>
<td>Orlando Rodriguez</td>
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<td>Josh Bloomgarden</td>
<td>Mel Appelbaum</td>
<td>Pat Halvorsen</td>
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<td>Leslie Smoke</td>
<td>Harum Avrum</td>
<td>Jill Baker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judy Williams</td>
<td>Faye and family</td>
<td>Ida Smyer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ione Haskell</td>
<td>Tom Salmon</td>
<td>Phyllis and Dave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat, Mariah and Morgan Carey</td>
<td>Lou Gonzalez</td>
<td>Neil Sendar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richie Havens</td>
<td>Tom Glennon</td>
<td>Russell Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Bob</td>
<td>Tony from “Seven C’s”</td>
<td>Joan and Ed Wood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hugh Downs</td>
<td>Jerry Fouche</td>
<td>Mike Samuels</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Edelman</td>
<td>Lillian Torgeson</td>
<td>Harry Wilkins</td>
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If you don’t see someone on the list above or on the distribution list, contact me and I’ll add them.
Boat Basin Tea, Literary and Duckwatching Society

At Jane Clegg’s party, Ray Stevens suggested Boat Basin users getting together for a non-crisis, non-political, social quarterly dinner. The only order of business would be to select the next dinner spot. The first dinner will be held at Dallas BBQ, 27 West 72nd St at 7:00 pm on Saturday, March 22. See dallasbbq.com for menu. If you’re interested in attending, contact Ray at ray123boo@verizon.net

Pfantasy pfuture

Minutes of a meeting in Parks Commissioner Benepe’s office discussing the findings of the $200,000 Boat Basin dredging survey:

Commissioner Benepe: Keith, could you summarize the dredging survey report?

Keith Kerman, Director of Operations: No need to summarize, Commissioner, it’s a half page plus a few pictures:

- Phase I: Communicate to Basin users that the survey is complete and that work will start in five years. Meanwhile, let the Basin silt in.

- Phase II: With the Basin completely silted in, install cinder block foundations under the boats, build asphalt walkways and landscape the Basin. Raise the rates to cover the costs.

- Phase III: Allow global warming to raise the Hudson’s level to the top of the foundations, probably in fifty years, and float the boats off the foundations into plenty of water.

- Ergo, expensive dredging not required.

Nate Grove, Director of Marinas:
Commissioner, there are only four pictures with the report.

Nate: This is Phase I – low tide at the Basin now. As you can see, it won’t be long before the foundations can be installed.
Nate: This is Phase II – you’re looking at E Dock just before the cinder block foundations and the asphalt walkways.

Nate: Here’s an overview of the Basin before Phase III global warming - check out the gardens near the boats.

Nate: And here’s Phase III – thanks to Google Maps with some global warming software. The current ball fields can be a shallow wading pool for kids; the old promenade can be used for a kayaking and canoeing canal; and finally, the boaters will have enough water to arrive and depart at any tide.
Commissioner: Frankly, I was expecting a lot more for $200,000.

Keith: I like it. Let’s put it in the Mayor’s Plan for the City. Easy to implement. No cost to the city. Although, there is a glitch. We’ll need a new regulation: no towed trailers allowed, only running motor homes approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Nate: I don’t like it! How am I going to go to my next Harvard re-union and tell my classmates that I’m managing a crummy trailer park?

Commissioner: C’mon, Nate, take one for the team. Let’s go ahead with the recommendations. Oh, and remember, from now on no one mentions the dreaded “D” word.

**D Dock replacement**

Some allowed “D” words. This spring, D Dock will be Demolished. The D Dockers will be Displaced to other Docks. Don’t expect them to be Delightful neighbors until they can Decamp for the new D Dock.

**Parting proverb**

A harbor, even if it is a little harbor, is a good thing…it takes something from the world, and has something to give in return.

- *Sarah Orne Jewett*