

BOAT BASIN BULLetin

Issue 1

All the news that floats we'll print

January 2008

Why a newsletter for the Boat Basin?

Ed Bacon
S/Y Prelude

During 2007 Paul Jordan and Joe Fitzpatrick passed away and Frances Gaffney and Hubert Gee were married. I was surprised how many Basin users did not know one or more of these had occurred.

This community has become like the suburbs – instead of neighborhoods and cul de sacs, we have mooring fields and docks. Generally, you know what's happening in your cul de sac but you may not know of Basin-wide events. Other than posting a notice in the mailroom, there is no way to disseminate news or notification of meetings or events to the Boat Basin users. This newsletter is designed to be an on-line vehicle for communicating information of interest to the Basin. It will cover present and future events but also document the Basin's past, tradition and people. Distribution will be on an irregular basis. Send your contributions of articles, newsworthy events, issues and pictures to ebacon@nyc.rr.com

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PAST

W. 79th St Boat Basin History

We all want to know how it was *in the beginning*. From the Big Bang to the Garden of Eden to the circumstances of our own births, we yearn to travel back to that distant time when everything was new and full of promise. (from "Mayflower" by Nathaniel Philbrick)

To go back to the real beginning, you should read Chapter One of Leslie Day's "Field Guide to the Natural World of New York City" in which Leslie succinctly describes the period from four hundred million years ago to the arrival of the Europeans in New York.

According to Robert Caro, author of Robert Moses' biography, "The Power Broker", during the Depression 30's the future site of the Boat Basin was a garbage dump and crowds would dig with sticks and their hands through the fresh dumped loads looking for food before the garbage scows were loaded. Four tracks of the New York Central railroad ran across the mud flats nearby with no public access to the crumbling river bank.

Helen Worden, in "Round Manhattan's rim" (thehistorybox.com), stated that in 1934 the 79th Street docks, supposedly condemned, were used by several yachts, traveling show boats, coal barges, sand scows and a floating lunch barge.

Robert Moses, through innovative garnering of funds from the city, the state, the feds, the Grade Crossing Elimination Fund (there was no grade crossing of the tracks at 79th Street), a fund for art works on public projects fund, the Public Works Administration, the Civil Works Administration and New York Central railroad assessments, re-landscaped Riverside Park and built the Henry Hudson Parkway to cover the exposed railroad tracks and give the public access to the water. Included in the plans, mirabile dictu, was the W. 79th Street Boat Basin:

A MUNICIPAL small boat basin in the Hudson River off Seventy-ninth Street will be opened to public use without ceremony by the Park Department today. . . . The basin is built in the form of a hollow square, with runways forming three sides and the brick seawall along the shore making the fourth side. It is built just below the traffic circle on the Henry Hudson Parkway. Inside the circle is a garage for parking the automobiles of yachtmens using the basin.

The basin will be operated by a concessionaire on contract with the city. A sliding scale of rates for mooring, fresh water and service by the day, month and season has been agreed upon by the operator and Park Department. The monthly rate for boats is about \$25.

New York Times, April 1, 1938

- from "The Splendid Sliver. Riverside Park" by Edward Grimm and Peter Schroeder

However, Moses, in a running feud with the Columbia Yacht Club at 86th Street, destroyed their beautiful clubhouse:



- from a 1911 postcard

missing an opportunity to shift it to the Boat Basin and convert it to a dock office and restaurant. It's a good possibility that the Boat Basin was built to spite the Columbia Yacht Club since Moses felt they were rude to him and Moses, while brilliant, was vindictive.

The well-designed original basin – A Dock, a B landing dock and C Dock - lessened damage by the winter ice floes by building the A and C Docks at an angle instead of perpendicular to the shoreline:



- from "The Power Broker" by Robert Caro

To be continued ...

Life after the Boat Basin

DORON KATZMAN arrived at the Boat Basin in 1983. While here, he maintained or worked on many of the Basin vessels, married CINDY KANE and fathered Tova. In 1996, they left the Basin and moved to a new home on Martha's Vineyard.



- *Doron, Nelly and Cindy*



- *Tova and Nelly Katzman*

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Doron, who works in construction on the island, built a 2-level studio in the hillside adjoining their home. The top studio is for Cindy's art projects:



- "Mapping Geraldine" from <http://cindykane.com/>

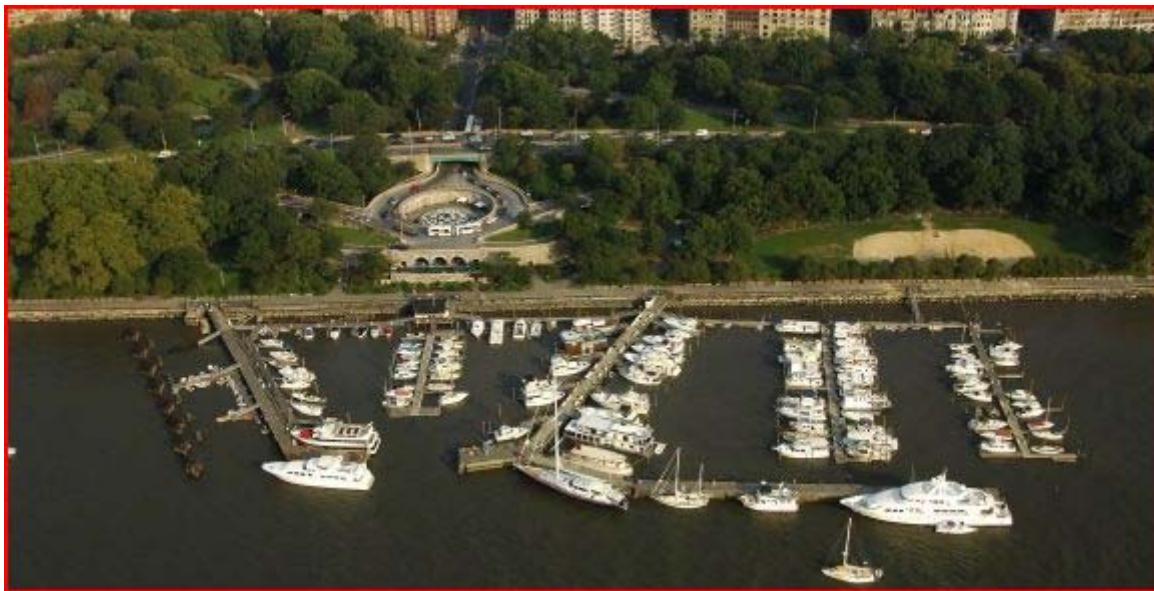
and the bottom functions as Doron's workshop where he has built custom cabinetry and a cat boat replica:



- Doron and his cat boat

While Cindy has had over 20 solo exhibitions, it's obvious from the workmanship and lines of Doron's cat boat that there are at least two artists in the family.

PRESENT



- from marinas.com

New blood

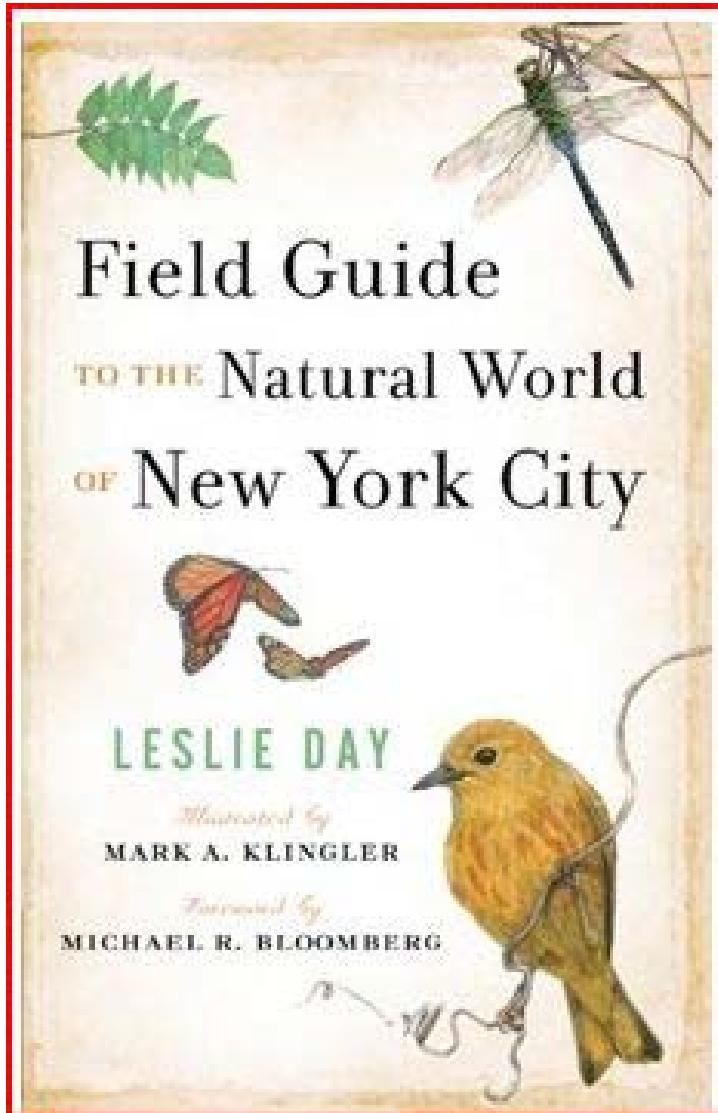
Over the last twenty years, the number of year-round vessels dropped from over 100 to about 40. Gloria Weiss and Leslie Day, with the assistance of Norman Siegel and Gale Brewer, negotiated with Parks over the last five years and Parks agreed to additional year-round permits to stabilize the year-round community at 52 boats. The live aboard community welcomes the new blood - Phil Argiroff, Al Wolfson and Simms – and eagerly awaits more transfusions.

Caroling

The Not Ready For Prime Time Carolers serenaded the Boat Basin community on December 17 but this time the rank amateurs were joined by D Dock's Linda Mays, who sings at the New York Metropolitan Opera. The annual caroling potluck party held on Mary Henry's floating home was attended by 35 to 40 persons. Norman Siegel and Gale Brewer attended and were thanked for their efforts on behalf of the Basin users. Once again, thanks to Mary and Raj for the use of their vessel.

Leslie Day's book published

Leslie's book was published this fall and the publishing was celebrated at Gracie Mansion with Mayor Bloomberg, who wrote the Foreword:



- from fieldguidenyc.com

The book is now in its second printing and can be bought through her website <http://fieldguidenyc.com/>, Barnes and Noble and other bookstores.

That's my neighbor?



JANE CLEGG arrived at the Boat Basin in 1987 on her 38' custom-built schooner J.F.S. (Jane's fighting Ship) Salignac (yes, the brandy, not Jane's red wine). Jane grew up in Vancouver, British Columbia and England and learned to sail as a Wren (Women's Royal Navy Service) on a lake in the Suez Canal. After leaving the service, Jane was an airline stewardess for British European Airways and then was stage manager or production manager for the San Francisco Opera, Ballet Betties, Café La Mama, the Provincetown Playhouse in the Village, the Pennsylvania Ballet, The Egg, Art Park, the Metropolitan Opera, and Off-Broadway and Off-Off Broadway theaters. She even worked on productions in Austria. At ABC, she was a studio coordinator or production manager for soap operas, ABC News, the Early Morning News and Good Morning America. She helped set up the ABC coverage for the Sarajevo Winter Olympics and then re-vamped ABC's Central Stores inventory control system. After leaving ABC, Jane started her own company, Jane Clegg and Associates, to provide project management and owner's representative services. One of her projects was to manage replacement of the Winter Garden's technical equipment after 9/11. To add to her multiple lives, she is now a licensed commercial real estate agent.

Asked what she likes about the Boat Basin, Jane replied, "I like the neighbors. It's a good community and it's wonderful on D Dock. It's like living in a village but you can have your privacy. It reminds me of the English town and country way of life." Jane has also given back to the Basin community – she took her turn in the box as President of the Hudson Harbor Preservation Association, a harrowing experience for any sane person.

Jane has sailed the J.F.S. Salignac on trips to the Tappan Zee, Sandy Hook and Port Jefferson and if it's a nice weekend, you may see her red sails on the Hudson.

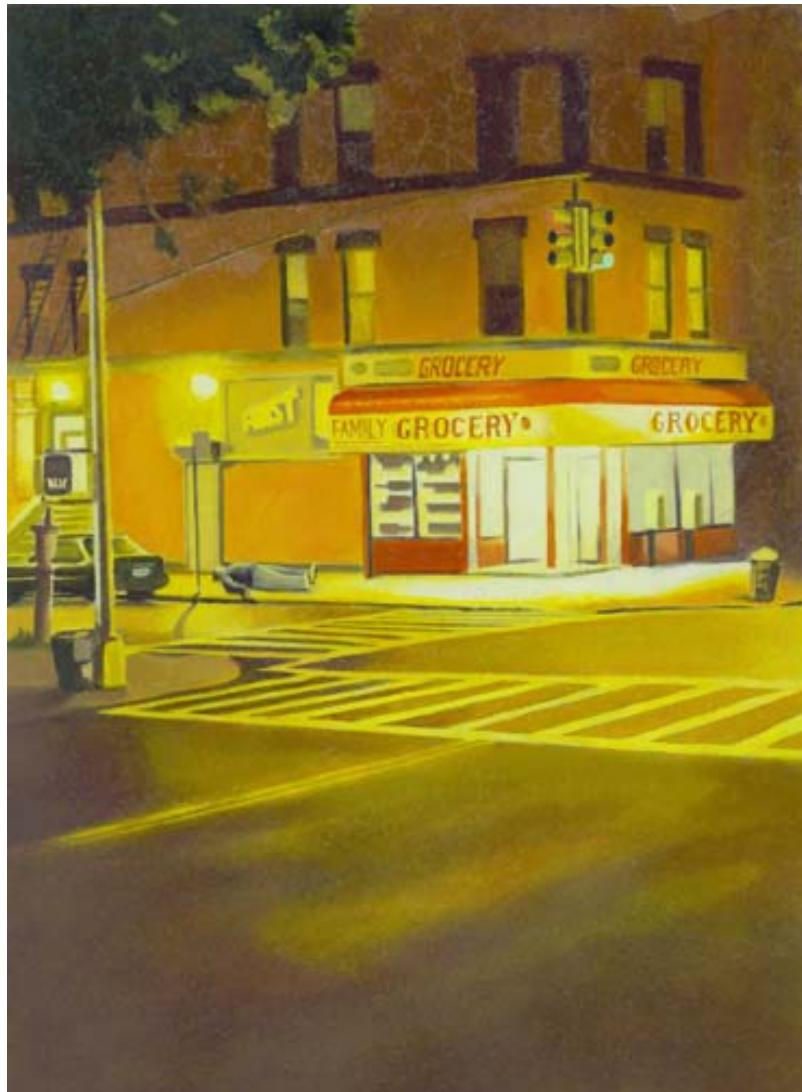
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Jane is also celebrating a birthday this month. A gentleman doesn't reveal a lady's age but I'll give you a hint: Jane was five years old when the Boat Basin opened.

Basin staff talent

Many of you remember Dockmaster Burns Patterson painting his canvases in the A Dock fuel dock kiosk. After all these years, we have another artist working at the Boat Basin. Marc Brown, whose work was exhibited at Salmagundi Gallery on Fifth Avenue, works in various media, e.g., oil on masonite:



"The Consequence" by Marc Brown

PFUTURE

Boat Basin Alumni Reunion

We've talked for years about holding a Boat Basin Alumni Reunion. Well, the Twelfth of Never has just become the Twelfth of June. Make a note on your 2008 calendar that the reunion will be on Thursday, June 12 at 6:00 pm on C Dock.

It'll be a Sips (beer, wine and soda), Snacks (hors d'oeuvres) and Schmooze (Yada, yada, yada) event. Dinner may be had at area restaurants – see [http://iboatnyharbor.com/Boat Basin Restaurants.htm](http://iboatnyharbor.com/Boat%20Basin%20Restaurants.htm) A voluntary contribution of \$20 per person will be solicited at the door. Any funds remaining after paying the event expenses will be contributed to the Boat Basin and Riverside Park Fund. Please send any alumni e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers to ebacon@nyc.rr.com

Pfantasy pfuture

Several years ago, the Old Homestead restaurant, a downtown steak house, celebrated a significant anniversary by charging its customers their opening day prices, e.g., a T-bone steak was 12 cents. For the 70th anniversary this year of the W. 79th St Boat Basin, the Parks Department has decided to follow suit. At a recent press conference, Commissioner Adrian Benepe said, "We've made our revenue targets by increasing dockage fees seven times, more than doubling the dockage, in the last twelve years. Whenever we needed increased revenue, we knew we could get the money from the long-term users. So, as a thank you and as a celebration of the Basin's 70th, we're offering the Basin's opening day prices of \$25/month for each vessel including parking in the garage. 2008 summer season vessels will be charged \$150 and year-round vessels will be charged \$300."

Parting proverb

...there is nothing – absolute nothing – half so much worth doing, than simply messing around in boats.

- from "Wind in the Willows" by Kenneth Grahame