Natural Resources Protective Association

Coalition Against Water Disposal of Contaminated Sediments Post Office Box 050328 - Staten Island, NY 10305



WINTER 2020

In Memory of Edward "Kerry" Sullivan

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IRON SAILORS ON A WOOD SHIP - A WEEK ON THE SLOOP CLEARWATER

By Tony Rose

Pete Seeger, a historic figure in folk music, American history and environmental activism lived along the Hudson in the 1960's. He was gravely dismayed by the condition of the river. Along with a few musician friends, he began a series of concerts to raise awareness and money to heal the Hudson in particular and the planet, in general.

Industrial waste had turned parts of the river ugly colors. Globs of oil and balls of tar clotted the rainbow reflections of oil slicks on the shore. Communities up and down the river ended their sewer systems at the mighty river looking to send their waste to the sea. Dissolved oxygen and the marine life that depended upon it had just about disappeared.

Pete and his friends formed the Clearwater Hudson River Foundation in 1966. They immediately realized they needed some THING to crystallize public opinion on the state of the river; some tangible object people could relate to when thinking of their Hudson.

This led to commissioning the sloop Clearwater. The ship is a recreation of the ships that plied wares up and down the river from 1620 till the 1840's. It is a variant of river craft that Dutch sailors had used for many years before arriving on our shores. The Clearwater is over 100 feet long, including its bowsprit forward and mainsail boom aft that hangs over the stern. The hull is over seventy feet. It can sleep up to 16 people although it usually operated by captain and crew of five members. They are supplemented by up to five volunteers who are integral to the operation of the ship as a legitimate sailing vessel and floating environmental education academy. Crew trainees and interns often accompany the ship and assist in its operation.

Interestingly, the original Hudson River sloops, which operated as the semi-tractor trailers of their day, operated with a crew of four. What serves now as the main cabin was the cargo hold of the working ship. It held sacks of flour, lumber, horses or cows as well as kegs of butter, tools, hardware and all the other necessities required for agrarian life throughout the history of early America. Unlike the Clearwater, this crew worked all year long, rain or shine, stifling heat or bitter



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cold. The Clearwater, launched in 1969, is hauled out at the end of the fall and worked on by the crew and volunteers over the winter. Much of the ship is repaired or replaced. It is returned to action in the early spring.

Wooden ships from the age of sail had an operational life of from ten to twenty years. At some point, wood ages, becomes creaky and rotten and ship replacement becomes more reasonable than repair. The sloop Clearwater celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, a tribute to the vision, dedication and hard work of the organization's donors, staff and volunteers.

There is no running water throughout the ship. No showers. Toilets or heads are five-gallon plastic buckets in wood cabinets. Sawdust sprinkled over the top of waste effectively masks odors. The lower deck is not downstairs, but below. This is an authentic experience. There are numerous knots to be learned, each with a distinct design and purpose. The crew work closely together and in close quarters, so patience and tolerance are vitally important.

The organization lobbies legislative bodies in favor of the environment and conducts concerts and educational forums throughout the year to advance environmental Its flagship event is the goals. annual Clearwater Festival: Α Hudson River Revival held every Father's Day weekend at Croton-on-Hudson Park between Ossining and Peekskill on a reclaimed landfill which juts out into the river. Member sails and VIP events begin Friday



Captain Nick and Joshua demonstrate safety

night and are followed by two days of live music and environmental activism as well as crafts, artisanal foods and a general spirit of hope and camaraderie that permeate the proceeding year. Alternative rock to zydeco, folk music to native American; singer-songwriters send clouds of music soaring and campers, who are allowed to set up in what are usually daytime picnic sites, fill the night with guitars, mandolins zithers, banjoleles and drums till the early morning hours. It is a great experience and highly recommended.

Clearwater recruits members that weekend and a perk of membership is the ability to volunteer as a crew member aboard the sloop for a week or more during its sailing season.

A morning aboard begins at 6:15 with a mandolin song or a reading from Yeats or Keats or Maya Angelou. The messenger informs sleepy crewmembers that "turn to" happens at 6:30 and all crew members will grab a bucket or longhandled brush and scrub brine into the deck planking to preserve the wood. Metal and varnished surfaces are then wiped down with clear water and a chamois to prevent rot and rust. A well-deserved and hearty breakfast is followed by chores.

By 8:30, buses filled with school children arrive. They are greeted on shore by an educator, crew and volunteers and broken down into groups. The groups are escorted aboard and receive a safety lecture and demonstration. They hear about the history of the river as well as that of the ship. We leave the dock under motor and then the kids are distributed along the gangways to raise the sails. The mainsail, shackles and boom weigh 3,500 pounds. These fourth graders, with a little help, will raise the equivalent of two Subaru's seven stories in the air. It is an impressive event and it happens twice each day. Sometimes a fishing trawl trails behind the ship and we see what life lies beneath the waves. The kids then rotate through ten-minute teaching stations that may include navigation aids, steering the tiller which guides the Clearwater, water quality testing, critters that live in or under the Hudson and a chance to



Fredi shows kids critters

visit the main cabin to view the galley and living quarters and a review of the history of the Hudson from canoe to containership.

Along the way, there is a moment of silence where participants are encouraged to just listen. Listen to the birds, to the wind in the sails, the waves that lap against the hull. Feel the bounce and the rolling of the boat.

The moment of silence is ended with music. There is always music aboard the Clearwater.

On one sail, the engineer plays a song of the sea on his accordion, an instrument some of the children have never seen before. A volunteer sings about unicorns while playing the guitar. A pair of crew members sing a sea chanty (pronounced "shanty") while standing on a boom high above everyone's head.

The gangplank is restored once ashore and the children leave; enriched and inspired. The presenters enjoy the day as much as the kids.

A quick lunch, chores and repeat.

After the second sail, dinner and chores complete the day. There are a few minutes of free time and then, everyone heads to a bunk or a hammock to await tomorrow's dawn and another day of teaching and learning.

After a week, there are aches in places you didn't know you had and a rosy glow of contentment knowing



a new generation of environmentalists have been recruited and empowered.



LEMON CREEK PARK AT SHARROTT AVENUE CLEANUP

By Jim Scarcella

On Saturday, September 22, NRPA and Protectors of the Pine Oak Woods cleaned a half mile of Lemon Creek Park for International Beach Cleanup Day. Students from Tottenville HS helped out also. Captain Chuck Perry has the exact info but approximately 30 volunteers collected 16 bags of garbage totaling 300 pounds.

We also cleared the Dorothy Fitzpatrick fish sculpture and included in the garbage were over a 100 bottle caps and a television. There was noticeably less Styrofoam.

CLEAN UP AT ALICE AUSTEN HOUSE PARK -BUONO BEACH

By Jim Scarcella

In late September, NRPA teamed up with the NYU Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban



Environmental Education and Cub Scouts Pack 754 of Bayside, Queens, to clean Alice Austen House Beach in Rosebank. This clean up occurred on Sunday to accommodate persons who work Saturdays.

The weather was perfect, in the 70's with a bay breeze. At first, I was overwhelmed at the sight of 36 Scouts and their parents, but with help from Howie and Mary Ellen Fishbein, Tony Rose, Edith, Livern Chin (Pack 754) and Christina Edsall, the Stewardship Education Specialist at NYU Wallerstein, all of the waivers were quickly signed and the water quality monitoring stations were mobilized on the lawn of Alice Austen House, Ms. Edsall is involved in the River Works program at NYU Wallerstein, which works with schools and local groups to revitalize north shore parks in Staten Island.



Tony spoke to the kids about the marine creatures at risk in our estuary. Dr. Mary Leou, the Director of the Wallerstein Collaborative, demonstrated testing for pH, salinity and dissolved oxygen (DO). The Scouts soon learned that a DO of 4 ppm (parts per million) is the minimum for marine aquatic life survival.

Next, it was time to scour the beach and rip-rap for garbage and debris. The kids did a great job removing plastic bags, refreshment containers, strapping bands, bait boxes, fishing line, ripped canvas, bottle caps, cigarette butts, pieces of broken glass and more.

Further east along the rocks there was a trove of debris, including an oil filter depository, a 40-gallon water storage tank, a five-gallon bucket container and plastic bottles of every shape and size. In addition, there was an 80 foot piece of three inch tugboat rope. After some struggle, the rope was free of the rocks and drift wood. Still it was mighty bulky and unmanageable. So, I gathered Miss Big Apple - Nicole Doz, Catherine and Dmitry, and we brought the rope 150 feet west. From the patch of beach, we enlisted Evan and the Scouts to haul the rope another 200 feet to the debris pile. Ms. Doz is certainly a multifaceted person. She is a former Miss Staten Island and also a member of New York's Strongest – she works for the NYC Dept. of Sanitation.

When we moved a piece of driftwood, the earwigs and sand fleas did a mariachi dance. Two fishermen nearby showed off the "scup porgies" they had caught.

All in all, we removed over 330 lbs. of garbage from the beach.

Special thanks to Mary Ellen & Howie Fishbein, Tony Rose, Chuck Perry, Nicole Doz, Dmitriy Bykaskiy, Livern Chin, and Christina Edsall for making the beach ecology day successful on every level. And many thanks to the wonderful members of Cub Scouts Pack 754, who helped to make this day a great success!

CEDAR GROVE BEACH CLEANUP

By Jim Scarcella

In early Autumn, NRPA teamed up with the NYC Parks Department to clean a half mile of Cedar Grove Beach, located in New Dorp. This particular section of beach is not part of the swimming portion of the park. Vin Cascella got us permission to



clean it, and Stephanie and Amber processed our "It's My Park Day" application.

Richie Chan and I met at the gate, we met Howie and Mary Ellen Fishbein and went about a half mile down to the Oakwood sea wall. Several more volunteers began to arrive - Rob, Kathy, Tony, Catherine, Ms. Big Apple - Nicole Doz, Maxine and Sasha, Lisa from Tottenville High School. We distributed gloves, bags and refreshments.

The beach is incredible, with pristine dunes you might expect at Cape Cod or Sandy Hook. The only problem was the amount of sand burr plants, the spikes were painful!

The garbage was varied and plentiful, with bottle caps leading the way, followed by cigarette filters, straws, broken toys, teeth whitening sticks and more. I found recycled plastic pieces of park bench, with density, tremendous а plastic automobile bumper, a five-gallon fuel tank, and driftwood. Some of the debris was from careless individuals, some washed up by the tides. Recreation uses were documented by two golf balls, two tennis balls, and a "Coop" cloth-lined vollevball. There were some Monarch butterflies feeding on yellow flowered Milkweed plants. Several Herring Gulls meandered the beach and near shore waters.





ALL DUES HAVE EXPIRED ON DECEMBER 31st.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES IF YOU HAVE NOT DONE SO.

RENEWAL FORM ON PAGE 5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

All in all, we collected over 300 lbs. of garbage and left Cedar Grove Beach in better condition than we found it.

Join us at our next clean up, you'll be glad you did. Thank you!

LEMON CREEK PARK AT SEGUINE AVENUE CLEANUP

By Jim Scarcella

NYC H2O and NRPA teamed up with St. Joseph's by the Sea High School, NY Cares and other schools, students and organizations to clean up over 700 lbs. of debris from Lemon Creek Park. Over 40 volunteers cleaned half a mile of beach and recycled 20 lbs. of aluminum and glass.

Special thanks to Matt, Richie, Mary Ellen, Howie, Catherine, Vinny, Peter, Katie, and Clay Seth Wollney. Special thanks to Councilman Joe Borelli who provided funds for pizza.

THE BEACH IN WINTER By Jim Scarcella

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Just because the calendar changes, it's no reason to stop your visits to the beach. In fact, the beach in winter can be just as enjoyable as spring, summer or fall.

Start with some sturdy shoes, and some clothing in layers, the hat and gloves for extremities and you're all set.

Perhaps the first thing you may notice is there are less people around (not necessarily a bad thing). The roar of the wind-driven sea is still there, as the wave crests and falls, soothing sounds that have repeated for eons can go deep into your psyche, if you let them. The Herring Gulls plaintive cries are in the mix too, especially for a freshly cracked Quahog. There are multiple species of waterfowl including Buffleheads, Scaup, and Brandt.

Let us not forget the thrill of finding our regenerated Easter Oyster, thanks to Baykeeper and Billion Oyster project.

If you are there after a storm, chances are you will see the tide line from the previous evening well up the sand, with driftwood, salt hay (Spartina grasses) Phragmites and the lowly cigarette butts, straws and candy wrappers.

The power of the storm's affects are amplified on the lee side of a jetty or breakwater. Here it can be violent, strong waves dislodging with materials that were previously bladder anchored in wrack (rockweed) and briny covered stones. You may find sea glass from 50 years ago and if you're lucky a coin from the recent past. Remains of clay refactoring products look redorange, with maybe a streak of wellworn masonry cement. The remains of Razor Clams, Slipper shells and pieces of wampum can be found.

The beach in winter offers an incredible experience, make sure you enjoy our natural wonders year-round.

GREAT KILLS HARBOR PARK

By Jim Scarcella

In late 2019, a development proposal surfaced that will adversely affect the Great Kills Harbor Community. H Development Group and Rampulla Architects are planning 71 one and two family



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houses at Nelson Avenue and Tennyson Drive, a project that will destroy the peacefulness of the harbor and overwhelm the traffic, schools, Infrastructure, quality of life and add pollution.

Community Board 3 voted down the developer's request for waivers to saturate the community. Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, Great Kills Civic and Natural Resources Protective Association are requesting the four acre site at 70 Tennyson Drive be added to Seaside Nature Park, which is adjacent to the parcel.

The property is a floodplain, a wetland and a nature habitat.

Please contact Councilman Joe Borelli, Borough President Jim Oddo and Borough Parks Commissioner Lynda Ricciardone and urge them to work to get funds together, to have the 70 Tennyson Drive four acre parcel bought by the City/State and transferred to NYC Department of Parks and Recreation.

Thank you for caring about Great Kills Harbor and the surrounding community.

AN ESPLANADE RISES ON RICHMOND TERRACE

By Tony Rose

The day broke sunny and clear, warm for a day in late November. Parks Enforcement Police monitored traffic and directed pedestrians. Suits abounded, an unusual sight in this working-class portion of Richmond Terrace. Nestled in between a shipyard and a dredging company, carved stone blocks reflected the bright sunlight.

The site had once been owned by Samuel Wright, a prominent islander and a former police commissioner before the consolidation of the five





boroughs. A solitary patch of green in a gray, industrial area, the new Richmond Terrace Park welcomed dignitaries from city and state agencies.

Previouslv a dumping ground overrun by bamboo-like knotweed, the waterfront strip had been owned by the Economic Development Corporation. It was once home to wooden ships and even a houseboat whose familv attended Port Richmond High School. Too narrow to be developed, the site languished and attracted commercial dumpers and homeowners looking to get rid of yard refuse. It had been cleaned a number of times by community both individually groups and collectively, yielding taxi parts, construction debris, parts of boats and marine trash ranging from bumper floats to odd pieces of Styrofoam.

Participants had included the NRPA, the North Shore Waterfront Conservancy, a Hindu temple and Wagner College fraternity students.

The Mayor's office and Department of Transportation had initiated a public plaza program to provide open spaces at major public intersections; Staten Island had no appropriate locations. So, in an operation initiated by Councilwoman Debi Rose, the Parks Department and the other city agencies, an initiative to provide a public plaza was arranged to create a scenic overlook ay a historic spot already owned by the city and long on the list of desired improvements.

Along with Assemblyman Charles Fall and the Northfield LDC, the players joined to cut the ribbon on a magnificent new park. The site, protected by a sturdy barrier along the sidewalk, opens with new lighting, a fountain with the new wrinkle, a re-usable bottle filler. The walkway opens to a gathering space with vandal-proof stone blocks for benches. The plaza looks over a vista of the Kill Van Kull with Shooters Island in the background and a foreground that includes the wooden skeletons of ancient ships and barges worthy of a John Noble sketch. Dredging barges flank the opening of the inlet as tugs and workboats cross the scene.

A winding walkway passes through trees on its way to an overlook with steel railings and benches that reaches out to the water.

The four-million-dollar project was a piece of the city's PlaNYC 2030 public Plaza program aimed at offering city residents quality open space a 10-minute walk from their home

SAW MILL CREEK RESTORATION IS NY STATE'S FIRST MITIGATION BANK PROJECT

By Tony Rose

Landowners and developers continue to impact the waterfronts and wetlands of Staten Island. They historically have and there is no reason to think this will ever stop. however. The state. has а responsibility to ensure that the overall quality of our waterfront is maintained. One method to ensure that quality is remediation. Should a project remove or damage essential wetlands, their permit requires restoration of an equal or larger of adjacent wetland. piece Sometimes a 3:1, a 4:1 or even 10:1 ratio can be required.



A recent initiative used lately in several states is mitigation banking. As recompense for damaging or eliminating natural areas, developers



would be able to buy mitigation credits which could be pooled and used in a larger project. Some environmentalists have worried that this would give developers a blank check to ravage the environment. Representatives from the DEC reassure us that they still must approve any permits and they would judge them by the same criteria they always have.

There can be no denying that the project at Saw Mill Creek is a mark on the positive side of the ledger when judging the merits of mitigation banking.

Wetlands have a well-established reputation for protecting communities by preventing storm surges, providing homes for local animals and bacteria in the mud break down pollutants in area waters.

The Saw Mill Creek area has long been a haven for dumpers depositing construction debris, toxic materials, auto parts and contractor waste.

Over the years, creek beds have been filled in by silt, trash and other runoff. The poisoned, choked streams have not been able to provide essential wetland services that nature often provides.

After years of political wrangling, including Senator Chuck Schumer



lobbying the National Fish and Wildlife Service for approval, the initiative went into effect. The plan included \$12 million in federal Sandy funds and \$2.5 million in city and state funding.

City and State officials joined island elected officials in a symbolic planting of the final native greenery on Tuesday October 8th. Kayak Staten Island was on hand to help participants view the less accessible portions of the project.

There will be no active recreation in the area, but canoers and kayakers will be able to access the site from the Arthur Kill. Posters on easels displayed before and after aerial photos of the zone. There is still much debris on the site, including plastics, car wheels and tires, but the creek now at least has a fighting chance.

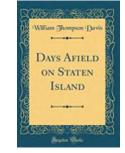
BOOKS ABOUT STATEN ISLAND (PART ONE)

By Jim Scarcella

As we crisscross from Lower NY Bay over to the Arthur Kill, we sometimes wonder about our predecessors and nature on this wonderful (isolated) borough.

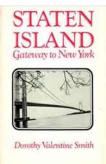
For instance, Victory Boulevard was once know as 'Richmond Turnpike' and there were automobile races in the vicinity of Lincoln Avenue and Mayor John Hylan Boulevard in Grant City. The following books offer a look back, and knowledge of the past can guide the future.

First up is William T. Davis "Days Afield on Staten Island" (1892) wherein the author documents life along Richmond Turnpike, including interviews with craft persons and notable people and natural features.

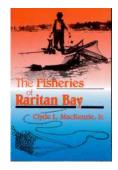


An incredible resource is Dorothy Valentine Smith's "Staten Island, Gateway to New York" (1970). Ms.

Valentine Smith starts with the Raritan Indians, who were watching the arrival of the Dutch patroons around 1638. The description of the natives and the wildlife seen by David Pieterszen De Vries is invaluable. Further chapters document Staten Island's industrial development, civic and judicial (legislative) processes, transition from farming to semi-suburbia, and much more.



Another resource to be treasured is Clyde L. Mackenzie's "The Fisheries of Raritan Bay" (1992), which documents the treasures of our estuary, from the Lenape Indians to the colonists, commercial fishing, shell fishing, traditional fishing techniques, and interviews with present watermen.



These three books will give you a great start in your quest to know more about the history of Staten Island, it's natural world, and why NRPA and like-minded citizens are so passionate about protecting our marine and natural resources.

2019 STATEN ISLAND STUDENT SUMMIT

By Tony Rose

In a seriously active October, the NRPA kicked off its third annual Staten Island Student Summit. Operated in association with New Jersey-based Clean Ocean Action, the Student Summit brought 160

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middle-school students to Great Kills Park to study shore ecology,

Participants are broken into two cohorts. Students in the first group attend one of a number of field activities such as a shorefront cleanup, small boats, a nature walk, or a demo of surf-casting or scuba. The remaining half take part in a round table of flash learning stations with 10-minute presentations on topics like fresh-water wetlands, non-point source pollution, horseshoe crabs, or the return of oysters to NY Harbor.



Along with 20 chaperones, the students listened and learned and followed the first go-round with a brief snack. The groups then



switched roles; field trip kids took their turn at the round-robin learning and the class kids headed to the beach.

In addition to presenters from the NRPA and Clean Ocean Action, the faculty included presenters from the NYC Parks Department, Kayak Staten Island, The Harbor School, the Staten Island Sport Divers, the National Park Services. In addition, the NPS hosted the event at Gateway/Great Kills Park and provided material support in the form of tables, labor and keeping the power on and water running after the completion of seasonal activities.

Charlie Olson was there with a crew from the Environmental Communications Group videotaping the event. To view a video of the inaugural Summit, type Staten Island Student Summit into your computer browser. An updated, longer form video is forthcoming.

Students each received a vinvl. drawstring backpack and a stainlesssteel drinking bottle to reduce the use of single-use plastic. Past have prompted giveaways the formation of Green Teams in schools and events like IS7's "Ban the Plastic Bottle Lunch" days (see "Celebrating Green Team" the video on YouTube).

Grants from the Northfield Savings Foundation, the New York State Nurses Association and Borough President Jim Oddo's office helped subsidize the expenses laid out by the NRPA. Additional funding is being sought for 2020 and any members who are aware of charitable employers or organizations who might assist in this wonderful presentation are encouraged to contact the NRPA board.

Everyone engaged in this event thoroughly enjoyed the day.

IS7 REQUESTS A MID-WEEK CLEANUP

By Tony Rose

Inspired by the Staten Island Student Summit, students and teachers from Elias Bernstein IS7 requested a weekday event, a first for the NRPA.



Etan Goldberg, Bernstein's science coordinator explained his school's "We commitment. originally participated in the first Summit and brought one class of sixth graders. Kids from that group started a Green Team and got the Administration on board and sold steel bottles to the rest of the sixth grade. Thev organized the Ban Plastic Bottle day. Now, they are 7th graders and support environmental activism. We are introducing another, new sixth grade to the summit and want to have an immersive event. We would like to bring the entire sixth grade to the shore to participate in a cleanup."



The plan was to march five classes of sixth graders to Wolfes Pond Park (or use buses, if available), in two sessions on a Tuesday morning and introduce them to the shore. The kids received a briefing on the hazards of plastic and the need to focus, as a society, on the need to

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reduce, re-use and recycle. The students were enthusiastic and the Parks Department was pleased to have them, offering bags and gloves in addition to those supplied by the NRPA.

The children worked in small groups coordinating their activity to most efficiently gather trash on the beach. Howie Fishbein and Tony Rose guided their efforts and gave nature presentations to the students while they worked and in a "thank you" debriefing after each session. The carcasses of a small shark and a sea turtle were found during the clean-up.

Over one hundred fifty students attended along with teachers and parents.



Holiday Gathering 2019 with Friends of Blue Heron Park

MEETING SCHEDULE ON THE 1st TUESDAY OF THE MONTH Meetings held at the Regina M. McGinn, MD Medical Education Center at Staten Island University Hospital 2nd floor

January 7, 2020 February 4, 2020 March 3, 2020 April 7, 2020 May 5, 2020 June 2, 2020

July No meeting

August 4, 201920 September 1, 2020 October 6, 2020 November No meeting December 1, 2020

Schedule of Events:

NRPA MEETING LOCATION is at the Regina M. McGinn, MD Medical Education Center at Staten Island University Hospital 2nd floor, 475 Seaview Ave, Staten Island, NY 10305 click here for directions

Tuesday, December 3, 2019 - Holiday gathering at the Blue Heron Nature Center 7:30 PM click here for directions

Wednesday, January 1, 2020 - 30th Annual New Year's Day Beach Walk. Meet at Gateway National Park, Great Kills 12 PM to 2 PM. Join us for a fantastic way to have a winter fresh air and beach discovery. Snacks and refreshments provided. Call Jim (718) 873-4291 or Cliff (718) 313-8591 <u>click here for directions</u>

Tuesday, January 7, 2020 - NRPA monthly meeting 7:30 PM

Tuesday, February 4, 2020 - NRPA monthly meeting 7:30 PM

Tuesday, March 3, 2020 - NRPA monthly meeting 7:30 PM

Tuesday, April 7, 2020 - NRPA monthly meeting 7:30 PM

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YES! I/We v	 \$15.00 Individual \$25.00 Organization \$500.00 Lifetime Member vant to join the fight! 	 \$20.00 Family \$100.00 Sponsor (after 5 payments you become Lifetime member)
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