

September 22, 1998

Dear Member,

Last Thursday, our club held a memorial service for Bruce Hagan at our North Cove docks. More than 100 members attended. The outpouring of sympathy was beyond moving. Bruce's wife Kathy spoke at the memorial and told members that when she, her daughter Alex and Bruce were sailing at the club, they were at their happiest. She said the club felt like her extended family.

John Brown, Kevin Kelly and Lisa Semel gave remembrances of Bruce. The club bell was rung and J/24 #14, which was Bruce's boat for the fall racing series, pulled away from dock with members John, Kevin, Debby Riback & Michelle Zezima on board. Vice Commodore Peter Cavrell fired the cannon and a memorial wreath was thrown into the harbor.

The past two weeks have been the saddest and most difficult in the history of our club.

I would like to thank the many members who came down to the club, wrote notes or called. This support was comforting and helpful in a trying time. I have learned a lot about "we" as a club and what a thoughtful and compassionate group of people we are.

Looking forward to the future, the club will begin an extensive review of all operations. While no one can eliminate the inherent risk of water activities, our club has always tried and will continue to try to encourage safety. Now is the time to re-evaluate all of our operations and with the broadest involvement of members, create a series of programs, standards and protocols which will enable us to move forward as best possible. This will become Bruce's legacy at our club and a legacy to the continuing rebirth of recreational sailing in New York Harbor.

Our review process will begin with an open club meeting on Thursday, October 22 at 6 p.m. This meeting will be held at the Bear Sterns auditorium on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of 245 Park Ave, between 46<sup>th</sup> & 47<sup>th</sup> streets. The auditorium has been generously arranged by Lorraine Talmi. All members are encouraged to attend.

In further consideration of this tragic accident, the club will be making several changes to the schedule. First, *The Great Race* was canceled out of respect to Bruce and his family. Second, the *Ambrose Light Race* will be shortened and third, we will keep *Miss Manhattan* here in the north rather than sending her to the Caribbean.

The *Ambrose Light Race* has been a popular tradition at our club for many years. It is our annual marathon for J/24s. This year, it seems advisable to shorten the course. Ambrose Light is many miles offshore and before we send our J/24s so far, it would be more prudent to complete our review of club operations. Instead, the race will be run to the Verrazano Bridge and back. This will lead to a new tradition, the *Verrazano Bridge Race*. Because the *Ambrose Light Race* is

so long, it also seems appropriate to schedule it near the longest day of the year, or next June or July.

The decision to keep our flagship *Miss Manhattan* here in the north rather than sending her to the Caribbean has been more difficult. There are two concerns, first safety and second the allocation of resources. It appears the boat is in excellent condition and Bill Heffner, who has captained her all summer, has proven an experienced and prudent sailor. Also, the transit south was to be part of the Caribbean 1500 Rally which would have added additional support. However, until the review of club operations is complete, it is better to be conservative.

The allocation of staff time is another reason to now change plans. We have many important programs on our agenda. Next year will see an international match racing series at our club on two sandbaggers (more about this exciting program will be sent to you shortly). Also, we need to establish a clubhouse at Pier 25 because that facility will continue to grow. We are also beginning a time-consuming review of operations. It appears that we could have too much on our plate. Reducing non-essential and time-consuming programs like sending our flagship south, appears to be a prudent decision.

However, our club remains committed to the concept of sending our Beneteau to the Caribbean during the winter. The educational opportunity offered through a *Passage-Making Adventure* is valuable and a well-priced vacation in the British Virgin Island is desirable. While plans are on hold for this year, we shall now start planning for next winter.

Finally, many members have called the club offering help for Bruce's family. The family has set up a scholarship fund for Bruce's 12-year-old daughter Alex. More information will be sent to you shortly. Our club will also hold a memorial regatta which is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, October 17. This will also be the last day of sailing for the 1998 season with the Decommissioning Ceremony that evening. The memorial regatta will raise money for the scholarship fund and information will be sent to you shortly.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Fortenbaugh  
Commodore