

Bay Fest '98: Family Fun With a Nautical Theme

Ahoy, mateys. The soaring mercury transformed the glistening waters of Sheephead Bay into an aquatic altar during the Blessing of the Fleet spectacle presented by the Bay Improvement Group (BIG).

Bayfest '98, an annual marine foray, drew thousands of seafaring revelers to Driscoll Tucker Park, Emmons Avenue and East 27th Street, where on-shore festivities equaled the off-shore, pomp-filled rites.

The crowd watched in delight as a procession of vessels from area yacht and fishing clubs was "blessed" — in hopes of a safe and prosperous fishing and sailing season — by the Rev. Torben Poulsen, of the Danish Seamen's Church, 102 Willow Street.

In addition, frolickers enjoyed the music of the sea and shore — plus pop tunes —

courtesy of such groups as "Stout," "Shooting Star" and "The Brooklyn Sweet Adelines Chorus.

Professional diver Gene Ritter — known for his underwater "scoops" in Sheephead Bay and Coney Island — wowed the crowd with a scuba demonstration, while those who preferred action challenged their marine mettle in a rowing competition.

Magic shows, clowns and a community barbecue culminated the bash.

Arizona Iced Tea and Topps Meat were among the sponsors of the celebration of New York's oldest and largest active party boat fishing fleet.

Steven Barrison is president of BIG. Felicia Parker helped coordinate the event.

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The group, "Stout" provided live, seafaring music.

Sheepshead Bay Celebrates Its Maritime Heritage

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Reveler Kristine Zeh examines an exhibit.



Felicia Parker, who helped coordinate the event, sings a sea chantey.



Grassroots activists gather for a group shot. Snapped with BIG President Steve Barrison (second from left) are Gerritsen Beach Cares representatives Catherine Blundell, Mike Taylor and Joseph Fov, president.

Photos By Steve Solomonson

Diver Gene Ritter is joined by a "horseshoe crab" character from the New York Aquarium. Also pictured is diving administrator Carole Toffales.



Steven Barrison presents Housing Commissioner Myrtle Whitmore with a plaque.



The crowd explodes with delight over Bayfest '98 festivities.

Photos By Steve Solomonson



The Rev. Torben Poulsen delivers the benediction.