

# Three lovingly-restored, historic ships at Brooklyn Heights marina

## Catching the last, sweet days of the sailing season

October 16, 2023 Mary Frost



Folk music still plays an important role on the iconic Clearwater. From left: Engineer Lillian Kiser Taylor, ship's cook Smash, and educational coordinator Ella Agoos. Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle

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**BROOKLYN HEIGHTS** — Three lovingly-restored, historic ships graced ONE°15 Brooklyn Marina at Brooklyn Bridge Park this weekend — the iconic Hudson River sloop Clearwater, the sail-powered cargo schooner Apollonia, and the 38-foot cabin cruiser Rarebit, sister boat to Ernest Hemingway’s famous “Pilar.”

This weekend was the season’s final Brooklyn port of call for Clearwater and Apollonia. Rarebit, owned by actor/producer Matthew Rhys, will remain the marina’s official charter boat through mid-November, after which she sails to her new home in the Florida Keys.



Clearwater First Mate James Parker. Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle

## **The Clearwater — advocating for the environment for more than 50 years**

The Clearwater was founded in the late 1960s by folk musician and eco-activist Pete Seeger, at a time when the Hudson River was filthy. Seeger modeled the 106 ft.

sloop, which was launched in 1969, after the Dutch cargo vessels that once plied the Hudson River.

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Seeger sailed Clearwater from New York City to Washington, D.C. to take part in the very first Earth Day celebration in 1970. His music accompanied a slideshow he showed to Congress, comparing images of the pristine 1850s Hudson with the polluted river of 1970. This campaign was a major contributor to the passage of the Clean Water Act.

Today, Clearwater continues to advocate for the environment and teach the next generation.





Clearwater Captain Rory Kane (right), with Captain trainee Liam Henrie (left). Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle

“We educate people about the Hudson River, its environment and its history, and we have been teaching them about how special it is for 50 years,” Clearwater Captain Rory Kane told the Brooklyn Eagle.

Taking care of the ship is a labor of love for Kane and his crew, which includes permanent staff, trainees and volunteers.

“It’s constant maintenance,” he said. “The only thing a wooden boat does by itself is rot and rust. We are at it every day, all day, making sure that things are still working.

Kane volunteered for the first time 11 years ago, he said. “I have done almost every job on board. I really love the lifestyle, I love the message, I love doing education, I love maintaining a wooden vessel and I love sailing, too. And I think that’s what brings a lot of people here.”

First Mate James Parker has been with Clearwater for two years.



Clearwater trainee Bryn Gerson relaxes on deck. Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle

“The more that people get out on the water and see the place where they live from a different angle — whether it’s New York City or somewhere Upstate — it can really give them a new perspective on what a beautiful place it is,” Parker said. “And I think that when we take kids and the public out on the water, we instill that value in them: that their home is somewhere that’s beautiful and worth taking care of.”

For trainee Bryn Gerson, Clearwater “represents community and coming together over important topics,” she said. “I love the idea of a floating classroom and being in a place of learning, and being united over the right things.”





Working the shoreline were (from left) trainee Jenna DiMarzo, outreach and engagement manager Amali Knobloch, and deckhand Feleesha Jones. Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle

## **The schooner Apollonia brings goods and connects communities**

The schooner Apollonia, a 77-year-old restored sailing vessel that sustainably transports cargo along the Hudson River, visited ONE<sup>o</sup>15 Brooklyn Marina on Friday, where the crew unloaded her cargo of pumpkins, lumber, cider, malted barley, beer, whiskey, maple syrup and walnuts (and hosted a convivial social hour for friends and supporters).



Apollonia's Captain Sam Merrett, left, with team member Brad Vogel, Fellow at The Center for Post Carbon Logistics. Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle

The Apollonia uses renewable wind energy and is emission free, resulting in a net positive for cargo that isn't time sensitive. Her travels up and down the Hudson also connect a community of like-minded individuals who value high quality, sustainably-produced goods and folksy, Hudson River music.

On Saturday, the ship sailed south to Red Hook to deliver more cargo "and party at Strong Rope Brewery for Sail Freight Saturday," Apollonia's Captain Sam Merrett and logistics team member Brad Vogel told the Brooklyn Eagle. (The Barge Rat Band supplied the music.)





The Apollonia docked this weekend at ONE°15 Brooklyn Marina for her final cargo run of the season. Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle

## **Rarebit's last season in Brooklyn**

Rarebit, painstakingly restored by actor/producer Matthew Rhys and his captain Kelli Farwell, is one of the few remaining original Wheeler Playmates, the iconic wooden pleasure and fishing yachts of a bygone era. She was built in 1939 at Brooklyn's Wheeler Shipyard, at the foot of Cropsey Avenue in Coney Island. Rarebit is a sister boat to one of the most famous fishing boats of all time — Ernest Hemingway's "Pilar." (Hemingway's Playmate was Hull No. 576, while Rarebit was Hull No. 1,140.)

With an interior of now-rare Honduran mahogany, a structure of white oak, the original fittings, an ice box from the '30s and a gramophone, stepping onto Rarebit is like stepping into a different era. Rarebit is currently ONE°15 Brooklyn Marina's official charter boat.





Rarebit, one of the few remaining original Wheeler Playmates, the iconic wooden pleasure and fishing yachts of a bygone era. Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle

Rarebit is totally booked for the rest of the season, Capt. Farwell told the Eagle. Bookings skyrocketed when word got out that Rarebit will be relocating to the Florida Keys in mid-November where she'll be just a stone's throw from her sister Pilar, docked at the Earnest Hemingway Museum in Cuba.



Captain Kelli Farwell, left, with Rarebit's owner Matthew Rhys during an earlier excursion. File photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle





Clearwater's gangway crew (from left): Deckhand Charlee Heidkamp and volunteer Chris Duff. Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle





Captain trainee Liam Henrie adjusts the Clearwater's tiller. Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle





The beautiful Hudson River sloop Clearwater docked at ONE°15 Brooklyn Marina. File photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle



The deck of the Clearwater, docked at ONE°15 Brooklyn Marina this past weekend. Photo: Mary Frost, Brooklyn Eagle

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