

The Incredible Hospitality of the Croton Yacht Club

By John H. Vargo, Publisher

August 14th, 2021 proved to be a very hot day for fishing on the Hudson River.

Never the less, Dennis Kooney, host at the Croton Yacht Club Wounded Warrior Catfish Derby and Nancy Beastra, Event Coordinator for Wounded Warrior were at Their usual outstanding best in providing an interesting an comfortable experience as possible on Saturday August 13th as part of the HRFA Catfish Chaos River wide fishing derby. Tied to it was a private special Wounded Warrior fishing contest. (A contest within a contest)!

Arguably the largest catfish derby on the Hudson River in terms of territory covered, the HRFA Catfish Chaos Catfish Derby had weigh stations at Piermont Pier in Piermont, Westerly Marina in Ossining, NY to Coeymans Landing Marina in Coeymans, NY. (14 miles south of Albany). The idea is to provide as much opportunity as possible to anyone who wished to fish.

The Croton Yacht Club in Croton, NY is an ideal location to fish and have children fishing from because of its physical layout. The bulkhead railing stretching the length of the clubhouse is



Note the young lady and the height of the railing. A perfect fit!

designed for resting fishing rods against and is the perfect height to keep children safe. There is nothing quite like it on the Hudson River. Couple that with a beautiful clubhouse, manicured grounds and a marina and you have the ideal place to host fishing events.

Then there is the wonderful, knowledgeable Dennis Kooney. Dennis, an avid Hudson River fisherman, is always one jump ahead of everyone in what is required to make visitors to the Croton Yacht Club as comfortable



as possible.

Dennis reflected:
"The Yacht Club members appreciate the so many sacrifices that our veterans have made and we are honored to be able to make a small positive difference in their lives and the lives of their family members by providing a safe and comfortable setting for them. Our partnership with the Hudson River Fisherman's Association and Wounded



Logan Schwann, winner of the youth division Fishing from the stern of his parent's boat which was Moored at the Croton Yacht Club, Logan managed to catch this 23-inch catfish to win the Hudson River wide Catfish Chaos, Youth Division, Fishing Derby held on August 13, 2021

Warriors organization has allowed us to expanded our outreach programs and we look forward to continuing that relationship into the future."

Approximately 35 Wounded Warriors, many past visitors to the location from other events, were cared for in every way possible. As the morning progressed and the sun came out, Dennis would quietly be moving tables and umbrellas around so that the children and adults fishing were covered. This was fully appreciated by everyone, as the sun was brutal.



Jesse Brody, overall winner with this magnificent 31-inch catfish.

On top of that service the clubhouse itself has a very efficient air conditioning system that offered not only a comfortable place to sit and rest but also coffee and bagels

When I arrived at the Croton Yacht Club at 8am there was one man already at the railing, putting fishing rods together. His name was Jeff Christie, and he represented the HRFA volunteer who was in charge of providing each Wounded Warrior with a fishing Rod and bait

for the event. With one Wounded Warrior waiting for his rod sitting at the table, Jeff kept up a cheerful dialogue about the days fishing while at the same time putting a rod together and baiting the hooks.

As the morning progressed Jeff did an outstanding job of repeating that mission for each of the families that arrived. He was the first one on the scene and almost the last to leave at the end of the day. He did

Nancy Beestra, Event Coordinator Wounded Warrior Catfish Chaos Derby, sitting on table, Jeff Christie, (glasses on hat in background) Gill Hawkins, HRFA and Jane, sitting, and wounded warrior, Gari Harvey, Standing in foreground with his nephew



and outstanding job as a representative of the HRFA. Gill Hawkins, of the HRFA also assisted during the morning fishing.

The fishing was spotty all over the Hudson River. Most serious fisherman with experience on the river suggested that the water temperature was just too warm.

The largest fish, a 31" channel catfish, almost did not

make it to the weigh station in time, but Jesse Brody, by cell phone kept calling the weigh station by cell phone at Westerly Marina in Ossining, NY and was guided in with only minutes lasting to the closing bell.

Everyone who signed up for the Catfish Chaos Contest, including the Wounded Warrior folks, had a chance at winning a trip on the unique Solar Boat called Solaris berthed at the Hudson River Maritime Museum on

The winner of the drawing, Peter Musse, has the opportunity to invite 18 of his friends on the only commercially U. S. Coast Guard certified solar boat operated in the United States.



In the morning, and at noon a full complement of sandwiches was set out for everyone.

Top 20

1. Jesse Brody
2. Gordon Winn
3. Kevin Peter
4. Chris Walter
5. Jeff Winn
6. Stan Drezek
7. Cody Shutter
8. Daniel Narzyski
9. Bill Klippel
10. Winston James

11. Kevin Whelan
12. Charley Spindelman
13. Pat Murray
14. Bill Walsh
15. Edwin Sanabria
16. Wayne Geider
17. Anthony Dell
18. Bill Hazen
19. Alex Spindelman
20. Greg Van Wormer

- ## Top 3 Youth
- 1 Logan Schwan
 2. Jayden Hilland
 3. Liam Robinson