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# Society for Industrial Archeology ROEBLING CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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April 2003

Vol. 12 No.1

## UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

Group sizes on tours are limited. Be considerate of your fellow members. If you register and find that you cannot attend notify Mary Habstritt ([mhabstritt@aol.com](mailto:mhabstritt@aol.com); 212-769-4946) ASAP so that your spot may be given to someone else. Don't be a no-show!

### **Domino Sugar Refinery**

Friday, May 9, 2003

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Domino Sugar was a highly sought tour site for the Brooklyn SIA conference and American Sugar Refining is welcoming us back! Portions of this historic waterfront refinery date to 1884 and we will see both active processing of liquid sugar and the historic power plant. The tour will last two to three hours. Attendees must sign a liability waiver and wear appropriate safety gear including hardhats. Bring a flashlight to better view abandoned areas of the plant. Group size is limited to 30 and preference will be given to those who volunteered for the Brooklyn conference but were unable to attend the earlier tour. (If you've been there, please do not register.) Register by phone or e-mail to Mary and she will send a waiver and further instructions to you.

### **High Line**

Wednesday, May 28, 2003

1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

On May 28, Friends of the High Line (FHL) will host a tour of the Manhattan rail viaduct they are valiantly trying to save. There is currently a competition underway to design a park for the deck and we will discuss this on the tour. Group size is limited to 10 individuals due to CSX restrictions. Priority will be given to Chapter officers and the remaining spaces will be filled by drawing names from a hat. If you would like your name in the drawing, contact Mary by phone or e-mail by May 14th. She will notify you one week before the tour if you have won a spot.

*Note that accessing the High Line without CSX permission is illegal, and threatens FHL's working relationship with CSX, which in turn may threaten their long-term ability to open*

*the Line to full and complete public access. Help save the High Line and open it to the public: Don't trespass.*

## FUTURE EVENTS

Watch upcoming newsletters for these events still in the planning stages:

- Tour of 1904 IRT power station on Manhattan's West Side co-sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. The exterior façade was designed by Stanford White and the plant is now used by Con Ed to generate steam. Narration to be provided by power plant historian, Gerry Weinstein, and one of MAS's architectural historians. If anyone has a contact at Con Ed who could help us with this, please contact Mary.
- Visit to Bush Terminal rail facilities with Tom Flagg.
- Tour of Thomas Edison's experimental iron mine in New Jersey with Bill Wilkie and Joe Macasek.

Your ideas for future tours are welcome!

## ROEBLING CHAPTER BUSINESS

### **Meet your new Board!**

Many of the Board members elected at our annual meeting will be familiar to you from their long service to the Chapter, but perhaps there are some things you don't know about them. Allow us to introduce (or re-introduce) ourselves.

**President:** Mary Habstritt

**E-mail:** [mhabstritt@aol.com](mailto:mhabstritt@aol.com)

**Phone:** 212-769-4946

Mary is a recently retired librarian who plans to focus on historical writing and educational events. That includes planning some great chapter tours! She is also studying to earn a certificate in horticulture and has a special interest in working on projects that bring historic preservation together with landscape restoration. She has been an SIA member since 1989. Mary finishes a term as a director and the Conferences and Tours Chair of the national SIA in June. She chaired the committee that organized the recent SIA annual meeting in Brooklyn.

**Vice President:** Lynn Rakos  
**E-mail:** rakos@usace.army.mil  
**Phone:** 212-264-0229

Lynn is a Senior Archaeologist with the New York District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Her SIA membership dates to 1985 when she was thrilled and intrigued to find a group of people who share a passion for our industrial past. Recently she played an active role on the 2002 Brooklyn conference committee and had a great time showing off her home borough. She is currently running for the office of director with the national SIA (Vote Roebing!) and is looking forward to touting the benefits of SIA to the world.

**Treasurer:** Charles Scott  
**E-mail:** charlesrailroads@msn.com  
**Phone:** 609-689-3334 (h)

Charles Scott is the Coordinator of the Transportation Unit of the State Historic Preservation Office, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The Transportation Unit is responsible for cultural resource reviews for all transportation-related projects pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act and the New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act. He has worked for SHPO for 16 years. Charles has handled the Chapter's finances for many years.

**Nominations & Symposium Chair:** Tom Flagg  
**E-mail:** tflagg@sunyopt.edu  
**Phone:** 212-780-5155 (w)

Tom is a past director of the SIA, a past president of the Chapter (1984-1988), and has served as nominations chair of the RCSIA since 1988. He is an IA consultant, specializing in documenting the history of the Port of New York, and is a partner with Gerry Weinstein in Photo Recording Associates, which specializes in large format photography of industrial sites. For his day job he is a lab instructor at the State Univ. of NY College of Optometry in Manhattan.

**Secretary:** Aron Eisenpress  
**E-mail:** afecu@cunyvm.cuny.edu  
**Phone:** 212-541-0918 (w); 212-724-5620 (h)

Aron was interested in IA for a long time (without knowing it) and joined the SIA as soon as he found about it! He is a lapsed hiker and a photographer, and his day job is working with mainframe computer systems for the City University of New York. Aron maintains our membership roll and is the one to contact if you have a change of address, phone number, or e-mail.

## Summary of the Annual Meeting, January 25, 2003

President Paul Bartczak called the meeting to order at 12:45. After announcing his retirement from the Chapter presidency, he gave a review of Chapter activities in 2002:

- **January 19** – Annual meeting at Drew University.
- **June 6-10** – National SIA meeting in Brooklyn sponsored by our chapter was a rousing success.
- **July 21** – Second Annual Chapter Sail on fireboat John J. Harvey traveled to the Kill van Kull and other areas around Staten Island.
- **August 11** – The tour of the passenger ferry Yankee with onboard barbecue had low attendance. The boat served as both a Liberty Island ferry and a Block Island ferry.
- **September 21** – Intrepid members traveled to Bannerman's Island by canoe for a tour of the "castle," once a military surplus depot, and then went on to Croton-on-Hudson for the annual corn roast at the home of Gerry Weinstein and Mary Habstritt.
- **October 17 to 20** – The national fall tour of the SIA was in our area this year, visiting many sites in the Lehigh Valley that have been toured by the Chapter in years gone by.
- **October 22** – Consolidated Edison Waterside Steam Generating Plant near 5th Avenue and \$1st Street in Manhattan was toured by a small number of Chapter members at the invitation of the local community board. Interest far exceeded the limit on group size.
- **November 2** – 22nd Annual Drew Symposium

In addition to tours, Paul saw three issues of the newsletter go to press in 2002. He thanked Joe Macasek for his graphic design services and Kay Bartczak and Aron Eisenpress for help with mailing the publication.

Charles Scott, Treasurer, reported on the status of the chapter's finances:

<b>January 1, 2002</b> (balance)	\$29,065.55
<b>December 31, 2002</b> (balance)	\$17,966.86
<b>Income</b>	\$6,511.28
– Membership Dues and Donations	\$ 4,130.00
– Book or Product Sales	201.28
– Symposium Registration	2,180.00
<b>Expenditures</b>	\$17,609.97

– General Operations	\$756.46
– Insurance	457.00
– Annual Meeting	561.00
– Newsletter (Print/Postage)	731.64
– Year 2001 Expenditures	
Paid in 2002	2,651.49
– Check from 2002 to be Cashed	22.72

#### Advances for National Conference

– Kino Restaurant	\$3,125.00
– Fjord Catering	1,000.00
– National	6,311.25

#### Drew Symposium \$1,993.41

After various announcements, the date of the next Drew Symposium was set for October 25, 2003.

The election of officers was held. Tom Flagg announced the slate of candidates, all of whom ran unopposed and were elected:

**Mary Habstritt**, President  
**Lynn Rakos**, Vice President  
**Charles Scott**, Treasurer  
**Aron Eisenpress**, Secretary

Mary then made a few remarks, beginning by thanking Paul for his leadership contributions. She also thanked Charles and Aron for serving again and recognized Tom for working on nominations and on the Drew Symposium.

She then presented ideas for upcoming tours. She hopes to take advantage of contacts made for the Brooklyn conference and arrange tours of the Domino sugar refinery, among other sites. She is discussing co-sponsoring tours with the Brooklyn Historical Society. Michigan Tech, site of SIA's national headquarters, has a team of graduate students working on the West Point Foundry in Cold Spring, New York again this summer. They are interested in getting the Chapter involved at the site.

The Brooklyn conference attracted over 300 attendees and we showed them a really good time. Books are not yet closed, but it looks like we netted about \$20,000, which will be split with the Chapter. The annual meeting is intended as an educational event, not a fundraiser, but we exceeded our expectations on attendance, planning our budget to break even at only 225.

Now that the work of planning the conference is past Mary hopes to return to pending projects, including the Chapter website. Joe Macasek has been asked to design a Chapter logo as part of this effort.

She asked for approval of the Roebbling Award committee (see call for nominees elsewhere in this newsletter): Ed Rutsch, Mike Raber, and Mary Habstritt. A majority of members did so.

Aron then gave the membership report:

Total current members: 420

2004 dues paid: 8  
2003 dues paid: 70  
2002 dues paid: 277  
Prior year(s) paid: 37  
Complimentary ("NA"): 28

19 people were dropped for not renewing since 2000

We then viewed four slide presentations: Tom Flagg showed photographs of rooftop water tanks. Aron Eisenpress presented images from the Lehigh Valley fall tour. Bierce Riley reviewed a summer trip up the Hudson River on the John J. Harvey fireboat. Fred Heide showed documentation of the restoration of the 20th Century Limited's "Hickory Tree" salon car.

The meeting ended at about 4:30.

## ROEBLING AWARD Call for Nominations

The first annual John Augustus Roebbling Award for Contributions to Industrial Archeology will be awarded at the 2003 Drew Symposium on October 25th. The Award committee seeks your nominations.

The award is intended to recognize an individual, group, or organization that has made an outstanding contribution to documenting or preserving the industrial heritage of the greater New York-New Jersey area. The honoree will receive a cash award of \$250 and a certificate.

Nominees must have displayed an extraordinary effort to save or preserve a site of industrial or engineering interest, or created unique or outstanding documentation through archeological research, photography, written history, or other means that provides a record of such a site. Nominees are not required to be Roebbling Chapter members. Individuals who are nominated must be living.

Send your nominations by July 31 to one of the Award committee members: Mike Raber, [MSRaber@aol.com](mailto:MSRaber@aol.com); Ed Rutsch, [edrutsch@ptd.net](mailto:edrutsch@ptd.net), or Mary Habstritt, [MHabstritt@aol.com](mailto:MHabstritt@aol.com).

## OTHER EVENTS

### Photography Exhibit

Starting May 3rd, the Croton Library will host a month-long exhibit "Reflecting Reality/Bending Time," a series of fourteen large color photographs by Betsy Braun Lane. The pictures are rare views of an abandoned Hudson River factory site where for decades the elements have been at work transforming the space. An opening reception will be held May 4th from 2-4pm.

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## Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges Walk

May 17

What Time????

Our guide will be "The Bridge Man" himself, Dave Frieder (<http://www.davefrieder.com/>).

The emphasis of Dave's narration will be on the technological features of each structure. He is also an expert on their history, and of course, photography.

Cost of this three-hour tour is \$10.00

### Meeting Place:

We meet at City Hall Park in Manhattan, opposite the Brooklyn Bridge. The group will walk over the Brooklyn Bridge and then come back to Manhattan via the Manhattan Bridge.

If you would like to reserve a spot on this tour please reply to Bernie Ente at [rs301@juno.com](mailto:rs301@juno.com)

## Williamsburg Bridge 100th Birthday Celebration

June 22, 2003

What Time????

When it was completed in 1903, the Bridge, with a 1600-ft. span, was the longest suspension bridge in the world. Instrumental in creating the cultural diversity of New York, the "immigrant bridge" has long served diverse populations moving out of Manhattan to seek a better life in Brooklyn.

The Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC) and The Daily News invite you to participate in the Williamsburg Bridge 100th Birthday Celebration on Sunday, June 22, 2003 from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00p.m. at Continental Army Plaza Park and along Roebling to Grand St. in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The day-long celebration will feature a flatbed-sized birthday cake topped with a model of the Bridge; engineers and historians leading walking tours of the Bridge; children's educational bridge-building activities; a music stage celebrating the local community with merengue tipico, klezmer, son, and music of the giglio; a Bridge photo exhibit; storytelling sessions; and more.

For further information about the Williamsburg Bridge 100th Birthday Celebration contact the Brooklyn Arts Council at 718-625-0080.

Do You Know Stories about Workers Who Built the Williamsburg Bridge?

The largely anonymous laborers who built the Williamsburg Bridge between 1896-1903 are rarely represented in the written historical record. Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC), which is producing a photo exhibit on the Bridge, is hoping to find stories which have been passed down to descendants of the Bridge workers. If you can provide those stories or know anyone else who might be able to, please contact Kay Turner at the Brooklyn Arts Council [ktturner@brooklynartscouncil.org](mailto:ktturner@brooklynartscouncil.org) or 718 625-0080.

## Dues/Address Changes

Please review the mailing label on your copy of this newsletter. If you have not paid your dues for 2002, kindly make out a check for \$10, payable to RCSIA, and

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Visit the National SIA web site at: [www.sia-web.org](http://www.sia-web.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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|---------------|---|
| May 9, 2003   | Domino Sugar Refinery<br>Brooklyn, New York           |
| May 28, 2003  | High Line<br>New York, New York                       |
| May 17, 2007  | Brooklyn & Manhattan Bridge<br>New York, New York     |
| June 22, 2003 | Williamsburg Bridge Celebration<br>Brooklyn, New York |

## Roebling Chapter SIA Officers

President	Mary Habstritt
Vice President	Lynn Rakos
Treasurer	Charles Scott
Secretary	Aron Eisenpress

The Roebling Chapter official telephone number is the residence number of the President: (212) 769-4946. Please leave a brief message on the answering machine.

Membership is \$10.00 per year, payable to RCSIA, c/o Aron Eisenpress, 235 West End Avenue, Apt. 14-C, New York, NY 10023

For those who want to keep abreast of IA matters at the national level, the national SIA may be reached at either of the following web addresses: [www.siahq.org](http://www.siahq.org) or [www.sia-web.org](http://www.sia-web.org).

Design: Joe Macasek, MacGraphics

send it to Aron Eisenpress, RCSIA Secretary, 235 West End Avenue, Apt. 14-C, New York, NY 10023. If you have moved or plan to move, kindly notify Aron of this fact, either by mail at the above address or by email at [AFECU@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU](mailto:AFECU@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU)

## ***General Information***

***Registration:*** If a newsletter listing contains no information regarding reservations or registration for a particular activity, the event is open to all individuals who show up at the designated time and place. You don't need to call ahead unless stated in the announcement. Unless otherwise stated, all tours will be conducted rain or shine, short of a Biblical Deluge. If in doubt, inquire at the Chapter's official telephone number (see below).