

Let there be LIBERTY for All.

by Jeff Sublett

They call it Liberty State Park and it includes Liberty Landing Marina, Liberty Science Center, Liberty House Restaurant, the Statue of Liberty and much more. If you are in the lower Hudson River, north of the Statue of Liberty and Manhattan's Battery Park City is to your east, you are there. From the west side of river you can't miss the huge Colgate clock at the base of a giant glass obelisk that is the Goldman Sachs tower on the north corner of the entrance to Morris Canal. Follow the buoys west up the canal and you will soon arrive at the gas dock of the 520 slip Liberty Landing Marina or Lat 74-02.59W and Long 40-42.64N on your GPS. Before you land, it's a good idea to contact the marina ahead of time as you enter the canal. They monitor VHF ch72, and telephone at 201-985-8000 just for that purpose. The entire south side of Morris canal is the Liberty Landing Marina. Unless otherwise instructed by the staff, go to the gas dock first and meet Senior Dockhand Kwame, a seventeen-year veteran of Liberty Landing and probably the most famous dockhand in the area, he'll take good care of you.

The canal gets busy at times, especially on a nice weekend, so it's good to know where you plan to go once in the canal. For your boating needs, this is truly a full service marina. ValvTect gasoline and diesel are pumped at the gas dock 24/7. There's a well stocked marine center at the top of the gangplank, and just in case you run into any boat or engine problems navigating through the New York Harbor area they maintain a full service yard and haul out facility at the western end of the canal. In the canal, the water is still, deep, the breezes are muted and you will have courteous and skilled staff to assist you on the dock. All this makes getting your boat docked a piece of cake. Once your boat is secure, head off to explore, there is far more than you can see with a Dock-n-Dine stop, but it's a good start. By the way, the first two hours are free of charge, courtesy of Liberty Landing Marina, so lets get started. If you decide to stay longer, please inform the Dockmaster, Carolyn Lyman, as we would all like to see that D-n-D courtesy continue.



A Bucket List Destination



Kwame, the dockhand.

It's hard to know where to begin, you'll probably be in the transient slips south of the gas dock, so let's start right there on the docks. If you've never had any experience with Jet Skis or are an old hand, "Sea The City" has jet skis waiting to take you out for a most unique way to see the city, riding a jet ski in New York Harbor. After a full briefing on Jet Ski safety, you are off on the tour of your life seeing the City from a totally different perspective. Take them up on the option of a wet suit If the weather is cool. Adam Schwartz the founder of SEA THE CITY, and your guide will take you to all the sites of lower Manhattan, from the World Trade Center and up the East River to the South St. Seaport and up to the Williamsburgh Bridge, then along the Brooklyn waterfront to Governors Island and out to the Harbor to see the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. If you want to see more there is also a 2.5 hour tour all around Manhattan to take in all the sites, including the views up the Hudson. Adam has over 30 years of experience on the waterways and harbor of New York, through his knowledge and experience, he will make sure your trip is exciting, fun and SAFE.

New York Media Tours

A little further up the dock you'll see the boats of the "NEW YORK MEDIA BOAT" company, looking like something the Navy Seals might use but are there to take you on an exciting adventure sightseeing tour of the city. The powerful 24 foot boats are quite fast but the aim is not a thrill ride where you have to hang on to feel comfortable. The boats can reach speeds of 25-30 knots conditions permitting which allows passengers visit some 40 sights around the local waterways, with stops for photo opportunities within the 90 minute tours. They only take six passengers per boat so everybody has a seat and never feels crowded. Life jackets are provided and wind/waterproof pants and jackets are available for everyone aboard. The Captains, Bjoern, Eric, Ken, Joel and Matt are all Coast Guard certified to operate these boats and all have licenses, skills and experiences far beyond anything that might be needed or that we have space to enumerate.



New York Media Tours.



Liberty Landing Marine Store

Through the gate at the top of the gangplank directly in front of you is the fully stocked marine center for all your boating needs. They have everything to outfit your boat as well as your crew, even a replacement for that elusive bolt you dropped overboard or in the bilge. Apparel and accessories, safety and cleaning products, spares, flares, you name it, all just up the dock from your boat. If you have any questions call or visit manager Ivan Garcia or his associate Irene, they are thoroughly knowledgeable about the stock, and a wide range of other boating products. I got my new topsiders there opening day, my wife looked at the old ones I was wearing and insisted.

Maritime Parc

Right down the hall from the Marine Center, in the same unique octagonal shaped building, is an upscale restaurant and event space, Maritime Parc. Executive Chef and owner Chris Siversen told me they bring "food and service like that of the "W" hotels of Manhattan" to Liberty Landing. One step inside and you know these guys are serious about bringing the style and sophistication of NY City to Jersey City. Look for a menu emphasizing seafood and fresh produce from local sustainable farms and a clean, open, nautically inspired decorating theme featuring natural materials with a large casual outdoor dining space overlooking the marina. There's nothing I enjoy more than good food and drink sitting outside on a nice day with a view of my boat. They will even provide you with gourmet take out if want eat on your boat for a true Dock-n-Dine experience.



Chris Siversen

**Liberty House
Restaurant and
Banquet Facility.**

If you're hungry for a more traditional fare, lets take a short walk East to The Liberty House Restaurant and Banquet Facility. Executive Chef Kenny Trickilo and his staff take their guests dining pleasure very seriously, as they have been doing for many years. Feel free to be adventurous and pick from the diverse menu, I promise you won't be disappointed. It may be fairly traditional, but I love the Sunday Brunch, that great view, live jazz, Eggs Benedict, and a Mimosa work for me every time, by boat or car. There's a good chance you will be greeted by, or seated by Carlo Santini, the restaurant manager, he seems to be there all the time and delights in making you feel right at home. As a matter of fact, under the guidance of General Manager, Orlando Ramos, the entire staff is so friendly and attentive you'll feel like you're coming home, you know, "come in, sit, eat, drink, enjoy!" Owner Jeanne Cretella, reminded me that they'll have live summer music concerts and classic movies on a 35 foot outdoor screen in their beautiful gardens again this year. The gardens are indeed spectacular, there is always outdoor seating for drinks and casual dining, and the views of the city will have

you speechless. I always enjoy Liberty House, and I think even one visit will have you agreeing with me. Yes, I'm a fan of the Liberty House family, meet them and you will be too.

As we leave Liberty House, walk out the back doors, and stroll through the lush gardens toward the river. Take time for a solemn moment at the Empty Sky September 11th Memorial, it's a powerful statement commemorating our tragic loss that day. On the path to the twin stainless walls is a sculpture created with iron girders from the original Twin Towers. A few steps East are the walls of names lost on 911 and when you are standing between them looking towards lower Manhattan you are pointed to the space where the Twin Towers once stood tall, now empty sky. It will be a moving stop along your way.

Keep going and when you get to the river look to your right at the gateway to The Historic Trilogy of Liberty State Park, the historic Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal, the Ellis Island Immigration Station, and The Statue of Liberty. Step through the doors of the Station and into history, from 1890 to 1915 this station was the gateway to America for thousands of Ellis Island immigrants. Catch a ferry to Ellis Island and walk the same floors that between 1900 and 1914 saw a flood tide of 5000-7000



immigrants a day, over 12 million immigrants entered the United States through Ellis Island from 1892 to 1954. That same ferry will also take you to Liberty Island where you will stand before Lady Liberty holding her torch 305 feet in the air as she has since 1886, welcoming visitors to New York harbor, including those of us Boating on the Hudson today. A bronze plaque at the base of the statue reads:

*Give me your tired poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless,
Tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*
Emma Lazarus

I can't even imagine the emotions the immigrants felt coming into New York Harbor seeing the Statue with her torch held high, but I can tell you how happy I was to see her after a long wet slog up the Jersey coast in an open center console, she was definitely a welcome sight and her message is even more poignant today. How about that, a living history excursion arrived at on your own

boat, you'll never feel the same about boating in the lower Hudson again. What a great way to get the kids involved with boating and history, and their parents.

While we are feeding our brains, lets not forget that a mile or so west of the marina by New Jersey Transit shuttle bus is one of the nations premier hands on science centers for kids of all ages. More than a few years back when my daughter was a youngster, we spent many a happy and informative Saturday at the Liberty Science Center and it has only gotten better. Since those days the museum has expanded, adding the nation's largest Imax dome theater, 3-D movies, and more staff and exhibits than I could have imagined. If you want to know the real deal, stop at the welcome desk, these folks know the who, what, where and when of everything going on at the museum and they'll get you right to what you need. They wouldn't let me leave without seeing the "Our Hudson Home" exhibit on the 4th floor, and I need to thank them. If you got here by boat you were "on" the river, here's a chance to see, understand, and share with the kids what's going on "in" the river, eyes, hands, and brains on. See the fish and other river inhabitants that live under your boat, learn hands on how the river constantly shapes and reshapes the land, and maybe develop a great science project for the kids. There are four floors of terrific exhibits and activities at the center, you can't do them all justice in one day, so check with the staff to make a plan before you start. As the they say "WELCOME! Explore, Learn, Play".

Liberty Science Center

If we took the long way from the historic East end of Liberty State Park to the futuristic Science Center at the West end of the park we would have passed through a lush 1200 acre park boarded on the East by the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway affording stunning views of the harbor, Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. Along the route you would have passed at least a half dozen gardens featuring various specialty landscapes and playgrounds winding up at the visitors center, the overlook lawn, and Liberation Monument in the South East corner of the park. Continuing North West on the Walkway we will end at

the boat launch ramp in the western corner of the park which is open to the public for trailers up to 23 feet with a permit from the park office. At this point we've encircled the park but if space permitted we could cover more of the picnic, fishing and crabbing, and event spaces in the interior of the park, call ahead and check their website as part of your planning.

I may have started out talking Dock-n-Dine, and that's still a good way to get to know Liberty Landing Marina, and again, the first two hours are on the house. It should be obvious by now that two hours will only wet your appetite. It might be good to plan a few visits or an overnight stay, maybe a weekend. If you do plan a longer stay, and want to include some Manhattan adventures as well, the Liberty Landing Ferry water taxi shuttles passengers back and forth to lower Manhattan from the marina every half hour from 6:00 Am to 8:30 PM weekdays and 9:00 AM to 7:30 PM on weekends, about a 15 minute ride into the city. The ferry will also take you across Morris Creek to downtown Jersey City for another assortment of landside eating, drinking and entertainment opportunities.

All the amenities, activities and services are way to extensive to cover fully in any one article, so check the websites below for more in depth information. For more marina and marine center info go to www.libertylandingmarina.com; for the Maritime Parc restaurant try www.maritimeparc.com; the Liberty House Restaurant at www.libertyhouserestaurant.com; the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island try www.statuecruises.com; the Liberty Science Center at www.lsc.org; for Liberty State Park in general www.njparksandforests.org; for New York Media Boat Tours go to www.NYmediaBoat.com; for jet ski harbor tours go to www.seathecity.com; for Liberty Landing ferry go to www.libertylandingferry.com;

All that's left to do is drop your lines and let the adventure begin, head to Liberty Landing Marina in the incredible Liberty State Park. As always, have a happy, healthy, and safe boating season.

Liberty Science Center

