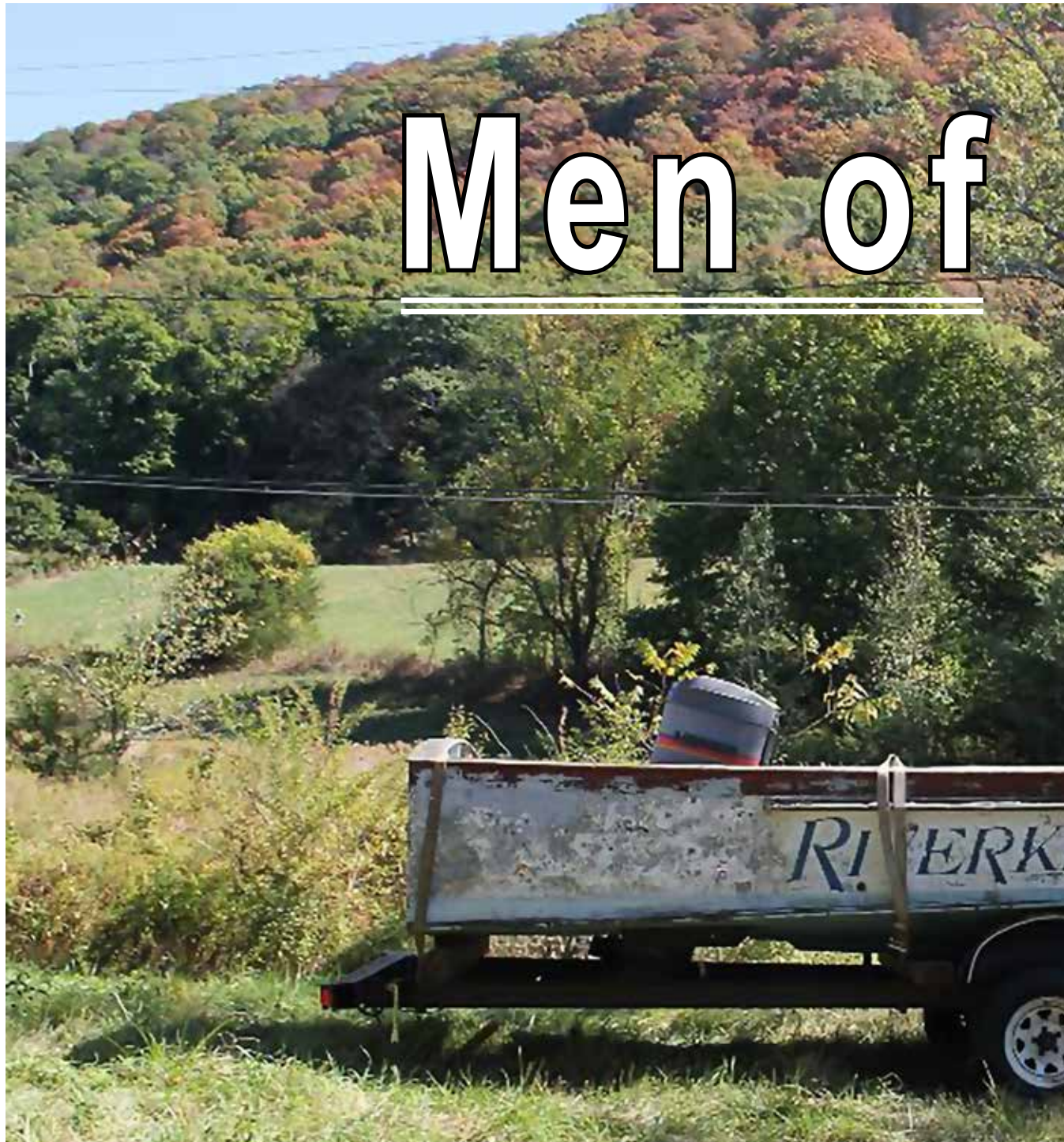


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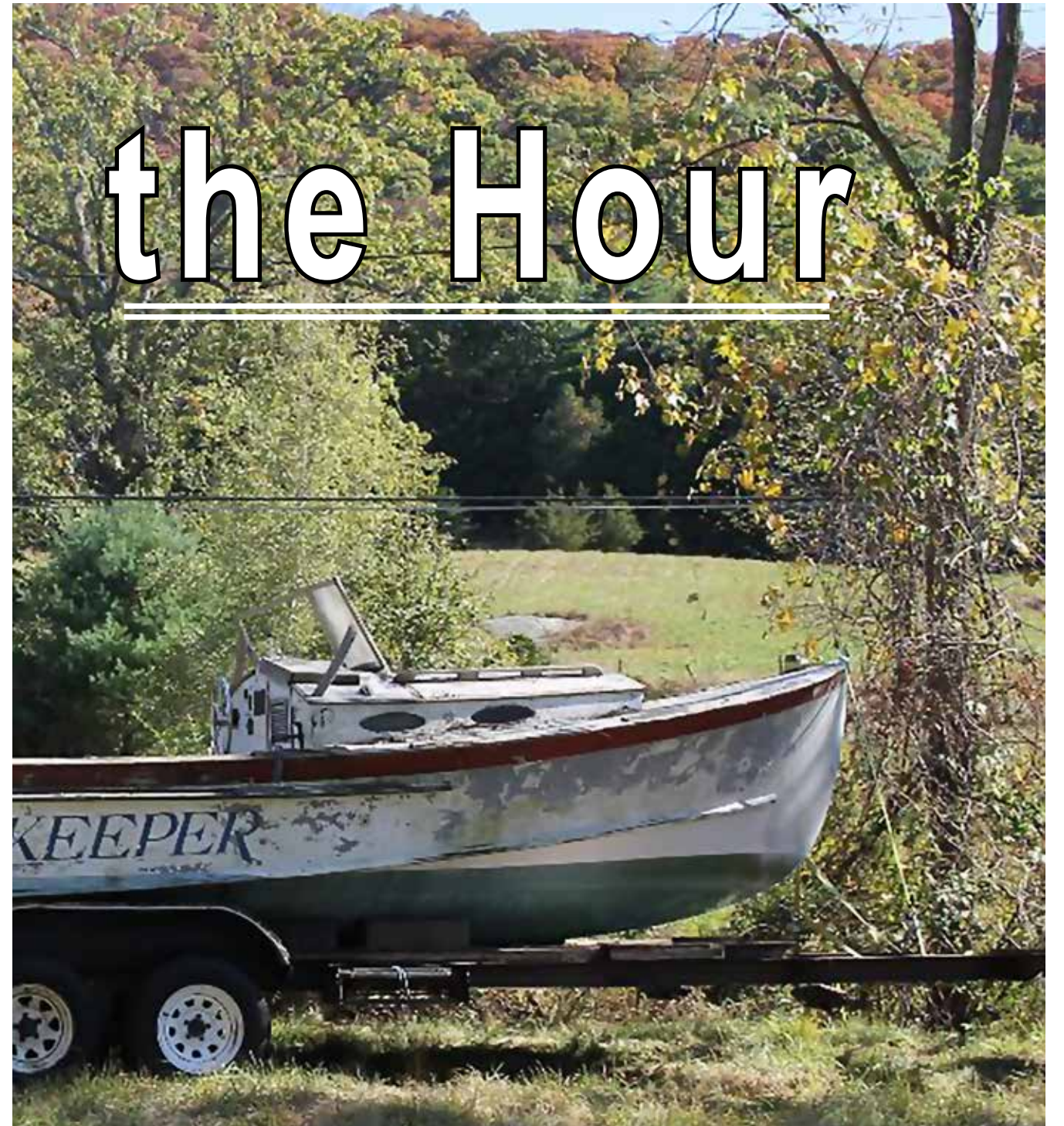
by John H Vargo, Publisher

Saturday, October 5, 2019 was a beautiful fall day to be standing in a field and witnessing a piece of history being brought back from oblivion.

The original Hudson River Riverkeeper boat had been sitting in this field for over 25 years, unknown to all.

What made this particular day so poignant was the group of characters from the past who came too see this boat being made ready to be trailered to Liberty Landing Marina in New Jersey for a complete restoration!

the Hour



The original Hudson River Fisherman's Association. (Actually the only organization left of the three

Bob Boyle, Rich Garrett and many others originally formed) volunteers had come here to load the boat properly on a custom made trailer, get the permits necessary, and be on its way.

This Saturday morning was special for me as I lived most of my adult life, right through the entire episode of this very environmental movement. This included being at the original meeting at Bob Boyles house

on Finny Farm Road in Croton, N Y in 1975, to the present event taking places before my eyes.

It is amazing how much of what happened since has been either forgotten, glossed over, and purposely changed to fit certain historically correct concerns of people. Fortunately a few others and I, are still alive to: "tell it like it is"!

Despite what Wikipedia says on the Internet, much of that which took place from the very inception of the Hudson River Fisherman's Association original events has been lost either by design or accident.

This particular group of HRFA volunteers was ready and willing to help in any way they could to bring this memorable boat out of this field, and back to reality.

I remember as if it was yesterday sitting in Bob Boyles living room with Fred Dan Beck, Rich Garrett, Dome Perone, Art Golka and at least 25 other local fisherman, hunters, and trappers all wanting to help Bob Boyle form the HRFA.

Unfortunately for Bob his wife was upstairs dying in bed as he came down to attend the meeting. He would come down say a few words and then run back up the stairs to take care of his wife!

That meeting was created by the tremendous pollution that was being exposed by these very men in the room. This pollution included a 36-inch concrete pipe that daily dumped oil into the south side of the Hudson River at Croton Point, a Westchester County dump fueled by all the garbage in Westchester that had over the past 35 years filled a beautiful marsh into an unbelievable open land fill that continuously caught fire, on a weekly basis from the combination of materials that were dumped there.

Radiating out from this epicenter of pollution to the south, all the way to New York City, and to the north, all the way to Albany, were dozens of factories, villages and cities that were continuously poisoning the Hudson River with their waste.

On top of that you had Penn Central Railroad, with its coal burning steam engines, spewing out coal dust on the river to the point that the "tide lanes" those areas where wind and tidal currents forced the debris and

Sewage into narrow bands of accumulation, providing a visible display of this terrible poisoning of the Hudson River.

Yet with all that pollution, commercial fishing, as well as recreational fishing was booming up and down the Hudson River!

That original meeting, in Bob Boyles house, populated by the very commercial fisherman who would soon have their livelihood lost, (unknown to them at this meeting), worked with Bob and the nucleus of the HRFA in the hopes that somehow things would get better on the "River".

No question, the Hudson River today is a far cry from 1975, but these very men lost their way of life, and in some cases considerable amounts of money as the "River", the very reason the men were in the house that day was the downfall of their way of life!

Science and technology brought "improvements" to our lives that made it unnecessary to work as hard, or for as long hours manually, that our forefathers had before us.

Today the original Hudson River Fisherman's Association, under the present leadership of Dan Harrison, President, Gill Hawkins, past President, over 600 paying dues members promotes the very things that the original men in the room stood for.

My hat is off to them, "The last of the Mohicans"!



Gil Hawkins past president of the HRFA, (white hair in background) Janis Soto back to camera, and other volunteers all trying to help put the new wheels on the custom built trailer that would take the Riverkeeper boat to Liberty Landing Marina for a complete rebuild.



Man of the Hour, Dave Mercer who practically single handedly built a trailer, jacked up the boat, and got it ready for this big day and Aram Setian incoming HRFA president discussing what needs to be done next.



left to right: Bob Walters, John Cronin, David Mercer, Janis Soto, Aram Setian, Dan Harrison, John Vargo, Gil Hawkins and Jessica Kuonen.