

Lohud 9/19/12

24 hours

Book of photos captures day in the life of New Rochelle



From left, photographers Susan Russon, Christina Cerone, Anna Piliro, Karla Hessel and Deborah Haley. JOE LARESE/THE JOURNAL NEWS

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NEW ROCHELLE — How do you capture the life of a city on a mild autumn Sunday: its skateboarders, sailors, churchgoers and train riders? A project spearheaded by New Rochelle resident Karen Hessel did it with an army of photographers in the parks, on the streets and in the air.

The result is a 160-page book, "One Day: Photos of Life in New Rochelle."

There's the shot of brightly colored kayaks at the city marina, the one of a man wading at the beach at Hudson Park with a metal detector, and another of a young couple chatting on a bench at the Library Green.

"To me, it looks like she's meeting the guy for the first time," Hessel said, showing the Library Green shot. "And he just seems like a really cool dude."

Another shows a skate-

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Above: The Sound at dawn. CHARLENE P. GOLDBERG



Left: They city from 1,000 feet. PHOTO BY JOHN HESSEL; PILOT: DR. ROBERT PERLER



Below: The New Rochelle skyline. JOSEPH D'ERASMO

BOOK: Photos document a day in city

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boarder, an in-line skater and a cyclist all in mid-hop, appearing suspended over the pavement at the Sidney E. Frank Skate Park.

"It's a beautiful shot," Hessel said. "A lot of energy."

Hessel came up with the idea for the book at a family function when a niece showed her a similar book done in New Hampshire on Sept. 9, 2009. She also thought of the book "A Day in the Life of China."

She started the 10-10-10 Project, sending out the shutterbugs on Oct. 10, 2010. To put it together, she reached out to photographers, sometimes approaching them on the spot, as when she found Cristina Cerone taking photos of a concert in Hudson Park with a Canon 60D and asked her to be part of the project.

"Anybody with a good-looking camera, I would approach," she said.

Cerone, a freelance photographer, said she thought the idea would be fun. She took her camera with her through a typical day, starting with Mass at Blessed Sacrament Church on Shea Place.

"This is my day, and I am New Rochelle," said Cerone, 45. "This is what I did."

They lucked out with a sunny, mild fall day. Dozens of photographers spread out through the city, and Dr. Robert Perler, a dentist, took to the sky in his private airplane with John and Jack Hessel, Karen's husband and son, respectively. John Hessel snapped aerial photographs of downtown, New Rochelle High School and boats on Long Island Sound.

Forty photographers had agreed to take part,



Karen Hessel stands by a photo exhibit at AJ's Burgers in New Rochelle with the book she organized, "One Day: Photos of Life in New Rochelle." JOE LARESE/THE JOURNAL NEWS

although some of those didn't make it, Karen Hessel said. Cerone saw a couple of others in the parks.

Together, they submitted more than 4,000 photos.

A six-member committee that included Hessel and Cerone chose the photos to fill 160 pages, most with one photo, some with two or three. (One page shows photos of St. John's Wilmot Church, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church and Young Israel synagogue.)

In the end, 27 photographers' shots made it in.

And who knows how many were taken? Cerone said she took "hundreds" herself but submitted only 50 to 100.

So what happened in New Rochelle that day? A couple got married. A baby was christened. Weary Yankees fans returned

home on a midnight Metro-North train.

Todd Pekats explored the city with his wife and two sons: Sam, who is 12, and Harry, who is 9. They were all equipped with cameras. When one son took a shot of a clock tower at the Marshall's store on Petersville Road off Palmer Avenue, Pekats took a shot of that.

The clock was showing 10:10 a.m., he said.

"It was me taking a picture of my son, and it was just this really surreal perspective," he said. The project also gave him the chance to look at familiar scenes in a new way.

"Honestly, I never even knew there was a clock there until I took the time to look around," he said. "You kind of stop time and you look at things differently."

Most of the captions

were written by resident Bill Mullen.

The caption for a shot of I.B. Cohen, a clothing store downtown for more than a century, says, "Norman Rockwell and Lou Gherig shopped here. So would have Rob and Laura Petrie if they weren't fictional characters."

The book can be ordered through the website www.101010nr.com. Profits will go to the Thomas Paine Cottage and the Huguenot & New Rochelle Historical Association, Hessel said.

Some of the original photographs will be exhibited at AJ's Burgers, 542 North Ave., on Saturday and Sunday for New Rochelle ArtsFest. The New Rochelle Public Library will display them in an exhibit from 6 p.m. Oct. 28 through Nov. 10.