

hanging up on people because I didn't know how to work the phone." At Couser's, a meat-and-three, she refilled the salt and pepper shakers and the ketchup bottles in exchange for food.

For a time, in the eighties, Parton shared an apartment in New York with her former manager, Sandy Gallin. ("He's gay—he had one end of the house and I had the other. We were like Will and Grace.") Now she has her own place, on York Avenue ("It's on a high floor, and I get a little leery"), but often she prefers to sleep on her tour bus (parked in Newark), which is equipped with a mirrored wig closet and a refrigerator filled with homemade meatloaf and mashed potatoes. Parton's long shifts at the theatre have prevented her from getting out much, but, that afternoon, she'd been to a lunch at Michael's, where she ran into Les Moonves, an old acquaintance. "Some guys look better as they get older. He's one of 'em," she said. "I thought, Wow, he's still so handsome." In recent years, she has also got to know Mayor Bloomberg—"a very nice man"—a little bit. "In fact, I guess Shania Twain, one of our country stars, he called her 'Shenowia,' or something," Parton recalled. "He said to me, 'I felt so bad saying your girl's name wrong,' and I said, 'That's O.K., Mr. Bloomingdale.'"

Dolly, never go away again.

—Lauren Collins

CITY ISLAND POSTCARD AT SEA



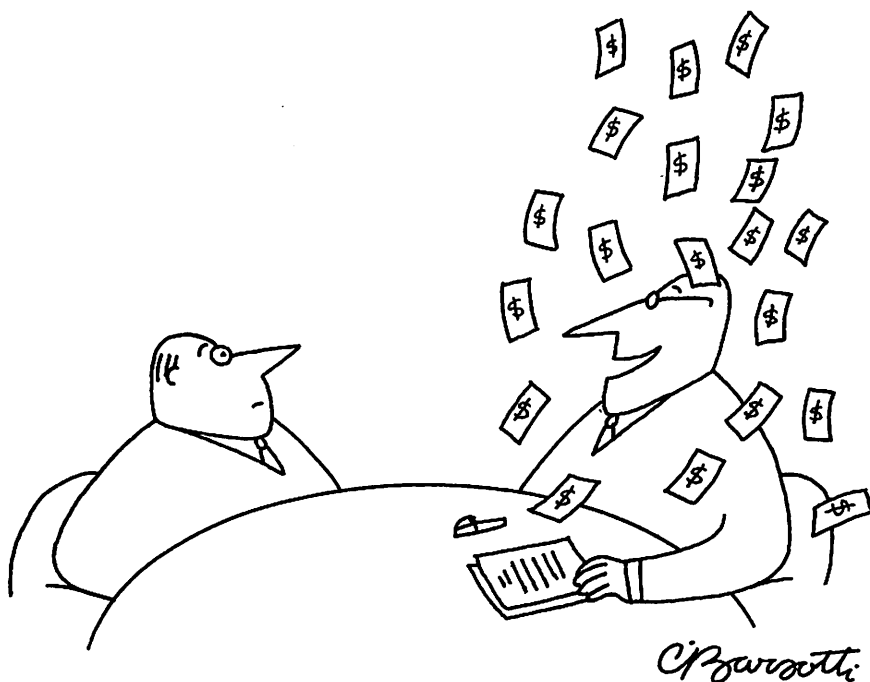
Shortly before nine o'clock on the evening of July 13, 2007, a fire broke out on the front porch of the City Island Nautical Museum. The fire was most likely set by local teen-agers, for whom the porch was a favorite hangout. "We think they were setting off firecrackers inside a rotten column," Barbara Burn Dolensek, a trustee of the museum, said recently. Backup firefighters had trouble negotiating the traffic on City Island Bridge, which has connected the island to the rest of the Bronx since 1873, and by the time they got the fire out the museum's façade was deeply charred, and smoke and water had damaged several exhibits. The museum was closed for repairs for almost a year and a half. It reopened in mid-December, thanks, in part, to a thirteen-hundred-dollar gift from the fourth graders at P.S. 175, a few blocks away, who were determined not to endure a second academic year without a full complement of field trips.

City Island, which is at the western end of Long Island Sound, just south of Pelham Bay Park, looks like the illegiti-

mate child of Nantucket and Hunts Point Avenue. It contains what is probably the city's densest concentration of yacht clubs (six of them) and seafood restaurants (Johnny's Reef, Tony's Pier, Sammy's Fish Box, Sammy's Shrimp Box), yet the restaurants' parking lots tend to be enclosed by tall, barbed-wired-topped chain-link fences, and knowledgeable seafood-loving locals often order lamb chops or steak. The Nautical Museum is on Fordham Street, in a nineteenth-century building that used to be a public school. It's a few doors up from the tiny ferry that runs between City Island and Hart Island, a half mile to the east. Hart Island served as a prisoner-of-war camp toward the end of the Civil War and currently contains a vast city-owned cemetery, a potter's field, which is used for the interment of still-born infants, unclaimed and indigent people of all ages, and amputated limbs. The deceased—among them the novelist Dawn Powell, who died penniless, in 1965—are buried in long trenches, in stacked pine boxes. The burials are conducted by prisoners from Rikers Island, who, on their way to and from the ferry landing, travel past the museum in blue-and-white buses operated by the Department of Correction.

Many of the museum's exhibits pertain to local nautical history. Oyster farming was invented on City Island, in the eighteen-thirties, by a Connecticut shipbuilder named Orrin Fordham. Later, the island's economy was dominated by boatbuilding and sailmaking, and the museum's display cases contain many of the gizmos required to design, construct, and operate all manner of sailing vessels. (Five victorious America's Cup yachts were built on City Island.)

The president of the City Island Historical Society, which operates the museum, is Edward Sadler, whose first name is usually given as Captain. He was born on the island in 1916, in the room that is now his bedroom, in a house, on Schofield Street, that his grandfather built in 1887. He attended grade school in the building that now houses the museum, and he spent most of his working life in New York Harbor, as the captain of fireboats and as a pilot. He tried to enlist in the Navy at the outbreak of the Second World War but was turned away as indispensable to domestic maritime



"Really? You'd like to be part of this?"

security. His fireboat—a model of which is displayed in the museum—was the first to reach the S.S. Normandie, which caught fire spectacularly in 1942, after a welder's torch touched off a pile of kapok-filled life vests.

One day recently, while some repairs were under way at the museum, Captain Sadler dropped by to look things over. He had forgotten to bring his cane but had remembered to wear his Hell Gate Pilot hat, which identifies him as a member of one of the city's most elite extinct fraternities. He had many nice things to say about Ruby Dill, his kindergarten teacher in 1922, and he recalled an especially harrowing piloting assignment, which required him to bring an enormous ocean-going ship into the East River from Long Island Sound by "bending it around North Brother Island." Then he went out front to speak with Georg Grap, the museum's building contractor. Grap pointed out a freshly installed piece of mahogany trim, up near the ceiling of the rebuilt porch, and Sadler, very pleased, said, "In all my years, I've never seen work to equal this."

—David Owen

AT THE GALLERIES ART ON THE GRASS



On a brilliant spring day last week in backcountry Greenwich, the art collector Peter Brant strolled into his new museum—the Brant Foundation Art Study Center—with the slightly bow-legged gait of a man who has spent a lot of time on horseback. He passed through the hall leading to the main galleries, on one wall of which hung Christopher Wool's 1992 enamel-on-aluminum work "Fuckem," in which the slogan "Fuckem if they can't take a joke" is displayed in large letters. Brant, who is sixty-two, hopes that the slogan will represent the spirit of the foundation's inaugural exhibit—a selection, primarily from his collection, that spans the past thirty years—which opens on May 10th.

"This used to be my indoor tennis court," Brant said, gesturing at the high, barnlike rafters. "Ivan Lendl practiced here." Richard Gluckman, the architect,

redesigned the space as a gallery, and installed the concrete floor.

In a rear gallery, Brant was greeted by a man whose pleasant face wore a large, wide-lipped grin. It was Jeff Koons. Brant, who has been collecting Koons's work since the mid-eighties, hugged him, then winced slightly, explaining that he had torn his right rotator cuff playing polo in Palm Beach recently. Koons allowed his sunny expression to show brief concern, then he beamed even more brightly.

Koons had been working on the placement of his 1988 sculpture "Pink Panther," in which the sad-eyed cartoon feline insinuates itself around the torso of a big-breasted St. Pauli Girl-esque blonde, who is naked to the waist. "I like placing the woman facing away," Koons said, "so people will walk this way, and then they'll see—'Urination!'" He gestured toward a large Warhol on the wall, part of a series that the Master created by directing male assistants and privileged Factory visitors to pee on a canvas primed with copper-based paint.

"Oxidation," Brant said, which is the correct name of the series.

The two men walked upstairs, where they were joined by Allison Brant, Brant's twenty-eight-year-old daughter from his first marriage (he is now married to Stephanie Seymour Brant, the model), who is the foundation's director and docent. "We've already had four hundred requests to visit," she said. "Including one from a Brownie troop!"

Brant and Koons stopped in front of Richard Prince's "Spiritual America," an appropriation of a Gary Gross photograph of a ten-year-old Brooke Shields, naked, standing next to a bathtub.

"It's amazing that this was so shocking when it first appeared," Brant said. "Now it doesn't seem shocking at all."

But what if one of the Brownies—or her parents—freaks out at "Pink Panther," or "Oxidation," or "Spiritual America"? (And what, for that matter, will Muffy's mother make of Paul McCarthy's twenty-foot-tall "Santa," which will be installed outside, and which portrays St. Nick holding up an enormous butt plug?) "We send all the schools a waiver telling them that there is nudity and profanity in the show," Brant said. "Now, whether they tell all the parents, I don't know."

"They're ready for you!" came a call from outside.

The foundation sits beside the Greenwich Polo Fields, a vast expanse of greenery that Brant owns. "Balloon Dog (Orange)," Koons's ten-foot chromium stainless-steel replica of the twist-ups that kids get at birthday parties—the knots and puckerings have been exquisitely rendered in steel, and the burnt-candy-orange finish makes the metal look like an



Jeff Koons

elastic membrane—was being installed in a large grassy plaza where the polo players used to gather after a match.

"It's about inhaling," Koons said, walking around the dog, "and inflating when you inhale. It's about life." He expanded his chest and beamed again. Then he busied himself with final details. He asked the crew to move the dog an inch and a half forward, because it looked "bolder" that way. There was something ritualistic about his ministrations: the art star planting the standard of the avant-garde in a stronghold of the old bourgeoisie.

Brant looked on, shaking his head in amusement. He said, "An inch and a half forward? Come on. When Jeff gets like this, I stay out of it."

When Koons was finished, he posed for a picture with one of the installers, and then he was gone, although his smile seemed to remain, like the Cheshire Cat's. Brant took a final look at the balloon dog before going back into the museum.

"It looks good," he said, raising his right arm to frame the vista, then grabbing his shoulder in pain.

—John Seabrook