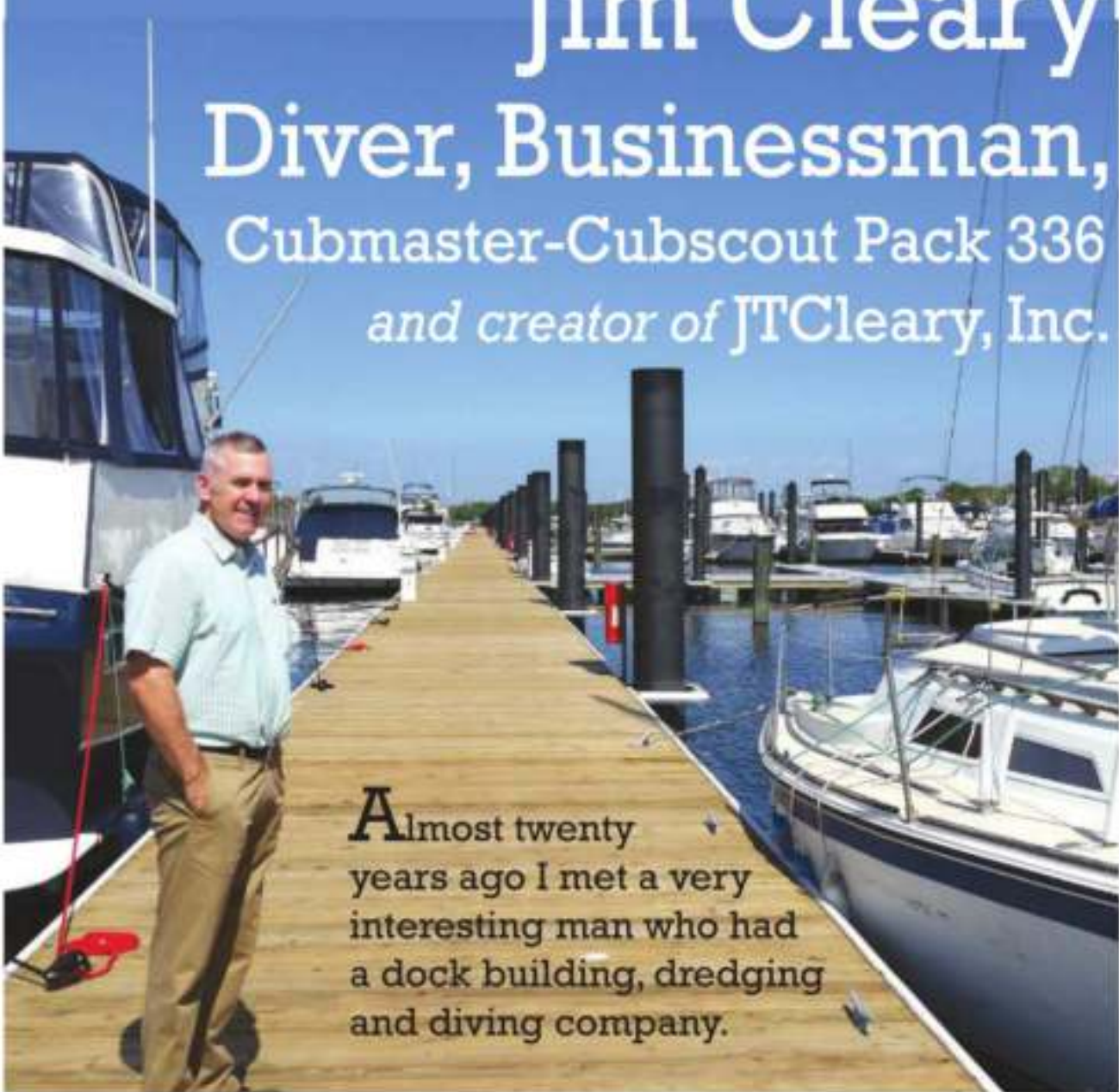


A SELF-MADE MAN AND HIS COMPANY

by John H. Vargo, *Publisher*

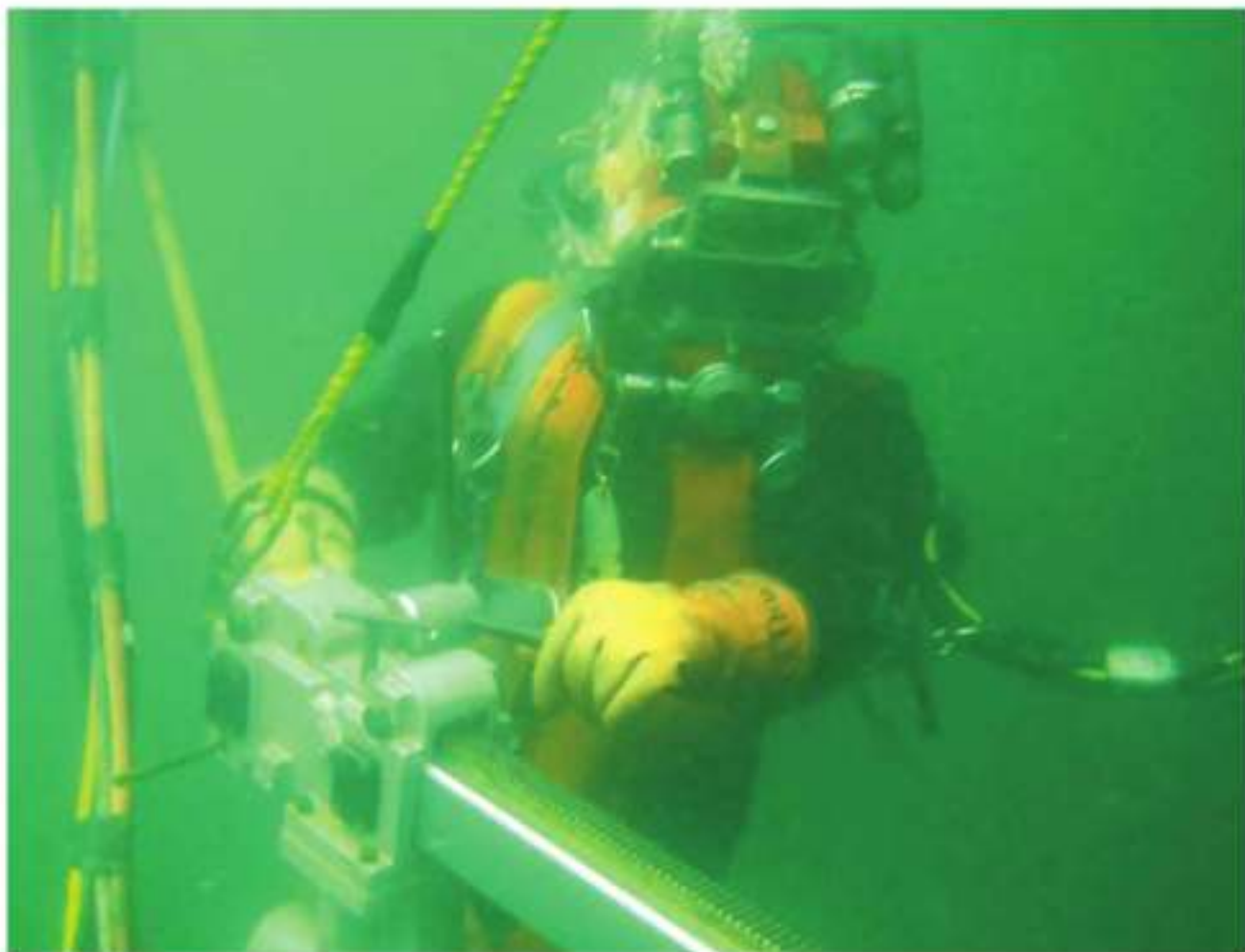
Jim Cleary

Diver, Businessman,
Cubmaster-Cubscout Pack 336
and creator of JTCleary, Inc.



Almost twenty years ago I met a very interesting man who had a dock building, dredging and diving company.

JT Cleary at Great Kills Marina Project.



Instantly we bonded, and while I have not seen him over the years I have watched his company JTCleary, Inc. grow into a formidable operation in New York Harbor and the Hudson River.

Our bonding began when we collaborated on a proposed dock being built that was designed by a landscape architect and to be placed in a highly vulnerable location on the Hudson River subject to ice, tides and fetching storms.

"JT" took one look at the plans and said, "This will never work, let me make some recommendations to the powers that be!"

The "powers" listened and today that dock, 18 years later is as good as the day it was put in, yet has stood major hurricanes, the stresses of people fishing and crabbing off of it and all the other weather related ills that can destroy anything built on the Hudson River.

Today J. T. Cleary, Inc. is a major player in dock building, dredging and diving.

From Sandy Hook where a large dredging operation is just being completed to dock replacement in New York Harbor, to dive consulting on the New Tappan Zee Bridge, and underwater pipeline inspections and repair, this company has turned into a professional corporate player on anything water related.

I recently had the pleasure of interviewing JT Cleary and, knowing how dangerous it can be to dive and inspect or repair anything underwater asked about his early years.

"It was difficult starting out. Jim began. "I was nineteen, just a kid, when I got out of commercial diving school. I knew very little about the industry other than how to blow bubbles and come back alive. None of the legitimate commercial diving outfits would hire me for

lack of experience. I finally landed a job as a diver with an outfit that would never be in business today. Looking back on it I shudder at the things they asked us to do.

Our first job was to inspect a high pressure gas pipeline crossing the Mid-Hudson. The client suspected that the pipeline had been recently undermined - too much undermining and the pipes will break of their own weight.

It was in 70ft of water with a very strong ebb current. My employer told us to do it with two men, SCUBA gear, a small boat and no marine radio. Today (per OSHA) this would take a minimum of five people, hard hat commercial gear, an anchored barge and US Coast Guard notice to mariners with an exclusion zone.

I should have refused but I was desperate for experience. So we anchored

Jim Cleary overseeing dredging operation.



The Gerritsen Bridge Replacement Proj-



upstream of the pipeline and I set off down the anchor line hand over hand. The current pegged me out horizontally like a flag in a stiff breeze. Once on the bottom I tied a travel line to the anchor and, using the current as a reference, drifted downstream until I bumped into the pipe (the visibility was zero). I clove hitched the travel line to the pipe and started pulling myself along the pipe toward the center of the channel with commercial traffic overhead. The idea was to use the current and the pipe as reference and the travel line as the way home. What could possibly go wrong?

I had traveled several hundred ft west when something very large and spiny (probably a tree skidding along the bottom) hit me in the left side. It knocked me off the pipe, and pulled the regulator out of my mouth. I tumbled around with it a few times before disengaging and getting my regulator back. When I got clear of the tree I had nothing to hold onto and the current

lifted me up off the bottom. It was pitch black. I was somewhere in the water column with no idea of which direction was up. I could not use the current as reference since I was traveling with it at the same speed. I did not want to drop my weight belt for fear of shooting up underneath on oncoming barge. Luckily, I had hay fever that day which made it difficult to clear my ears. I used the pressure in my ears to tell me which way was up. When I went down I could feel the pain on my eardrum. So I swam the opposite direction.

I surfaced about a 1/2 mile downstream of the pipe. It took another mile before I could reach the west bank. I walked up the river bank for a while before flagging down the emergency response boat. They were looking for my body" Today at age 51 Jim Clarey is more of an administrator to his employees, overseeing each operation with his vast experience.

One such job is at the New Tappan Zee Construction site in Tarrytown, NY.

Involves a team of divers that are "on call" to perform whatever task they are asked to do.

JT Cleary himself, depending on his workday may come out to oversee any operations.

From dredging in New York Harbor and Sandy Hook, to Dock repair, cofferdams, drilled Piles and Tiebacks, Piers, Pile Jackets, Pipelines, revetments, underpinning an much more this company has become a major player in the Hudson River, New York Harbor and the area surrounding them.

JTCleary, Inc. is based at 100 Schoolhouse Road, Chestnut Ridge, NJ. It is convenient to the Garden State Parkway, I87 and all points north, south, east and west. For further information

visit www.jtcleary.com

or contact:

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Great Kills Marina Project after rebuild by JT Cleary.

