

Belleville

NEWS FROM BELLEVILLE TIMES & NORTHJERSEY.COM

Belleville editorial: Goodbye, Riverwatch;

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2013
BELLEVILLE TIMES

More than a year after it became lodged under the Rutgers Street bridge, the RV Riverwatch was finally freed this past weekend.

The boat had become wedged there in the torrential waters of Hurricane Irene back in August of 2011. At 31 feet, according to the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, the boat is one of the largest the commission has pulled from the river.

RV Riverwatch was a 1968 Coast Guard vessel that had been used in search-and-rescue missions. It had a "tremendous history of rescuing lives," its owner, Capt. Paul Lerin, said in a YouTube video. The board has served as a Santa Claus boat for the Manhattan Christmas Parade. More recently, it had been used as part of an environmental survey by Montclair State University.

It's served many uses in its life, but to those living nearby, it's served as a reminder of Hurricane Irene, which caused extensive damage when the Passaic River flooded towns alongside it.

It's been a reminder of nature's fury, and strength.

It's one of 1,400 vessels that have been clogging area waterways due to recent storms. The PVSC has a tough task in front of them in removing not just garbage and dumped items that normally end up in the rivers, but removing the remains of boats that were tossed about during high winds and rain.

While the wreckage of the craft has been dislodged, we're sure it won't be forgotten for a long time.
