

Club planning a special boat ride for some special people

By POLLY KUMMEL

With sailor hats, balloons, ice cream and thousands of hot dogs aboard, the ferryboat John F. Kennedy will take some very special people for a ride July 13, thanks to the Anchor Club Department.

On that day, more than 400 mentally retarded persons, aged 9 to 40, from Willowbrook State School, Staten Island Aid to the Mentally Retarded, the Exceptional Children's Club and the Freehold (N.J.) Retardation Center will take buses to the St. George terminal.

It's a massive effort of philanthropy, involving people from all over the state, in celebration of the M and A Anchor Club's 15th anniversary.

The boat will be manned with volunteers from the club membership, and Marine and Aviation Commissioner Vito Fossella is donating the fuel to run the boat.

Al Foster, club president, and Don Pariseau, vice president, have worked on the project for months, finding donors of both cash and supplies, signing up volunteers to help that day, and

tending to those details which make the difference between a well-run event and bedlam.

Why are they doing it? Well, the Anchor Club has always done charitable work but wanted to find a big project for their club's 15th birthday. And after kicking around several ideas, they struck upon the boatride — finding, to their surprise, that it has never been done before.

"If it goes well, it'll probably become a yearly event," Pariseau remarked. "Some people would like to see it done twice a year, but I don't know if we could handle that — but we'll see."

So far, donations have come in from the Reese Bros. Organization, Manhattan; Trans-America Trailer Transportation, Inc.; Murphy

Trucking; Riccardi Trucking; Gourmet Purveyors: Victory Van Lines, Inc.; Terminal Snack Bar of Manhattan, and Whitehouse Distributors.

Volunteers are coming from all over the Island, including past and present staffers of Willowbrook Scout Troop 122 of the Elks Club of Staten Island will also be on hand. In addition, the state organization of the Anchor Club is bringing several registered nurses, doctors and family members to help out. Pariseau and Foster anticipate nearly a one-to-one ratio of volunteers to guests.

Two rock bands, "Ronald Rossi and the Gladstones" and "John Savoca and the Witnesses;" a country music group, "The Muleskinners;" Jay Green, the National All-Around Champion Unicycle

Juggler and a dance group, the "Polka Dolls" will entertain. "Bettle-Bum" the clown will also be aboard. All of the entertainers have donated their time and talent, though they are being reimbursed for travel expenses.

With the boatride underway, food and hats passed around and music blaring, there will be a special treat — the Goodyear Blimp "Mayflower" is going to pass overhead, exchanging salutes with the ferry — and then over 500 multicolored helium balloons will be released over the harbor.

Invitations have been extended to Mayor Beame, Fossella, and Transportation Administrator Michael J. Laza. Also aboard will be the Supreme and State officers of the Anchor Clubs of America.