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CLASSIC *Yacht*

ISSUE ONE

for those who love great boats

BROOKLYN BOATWORKS

SMALL YACHTS FOR
A GOOD CAUSE

NEW CLASSICS
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MASTERS OF MAHOGANY

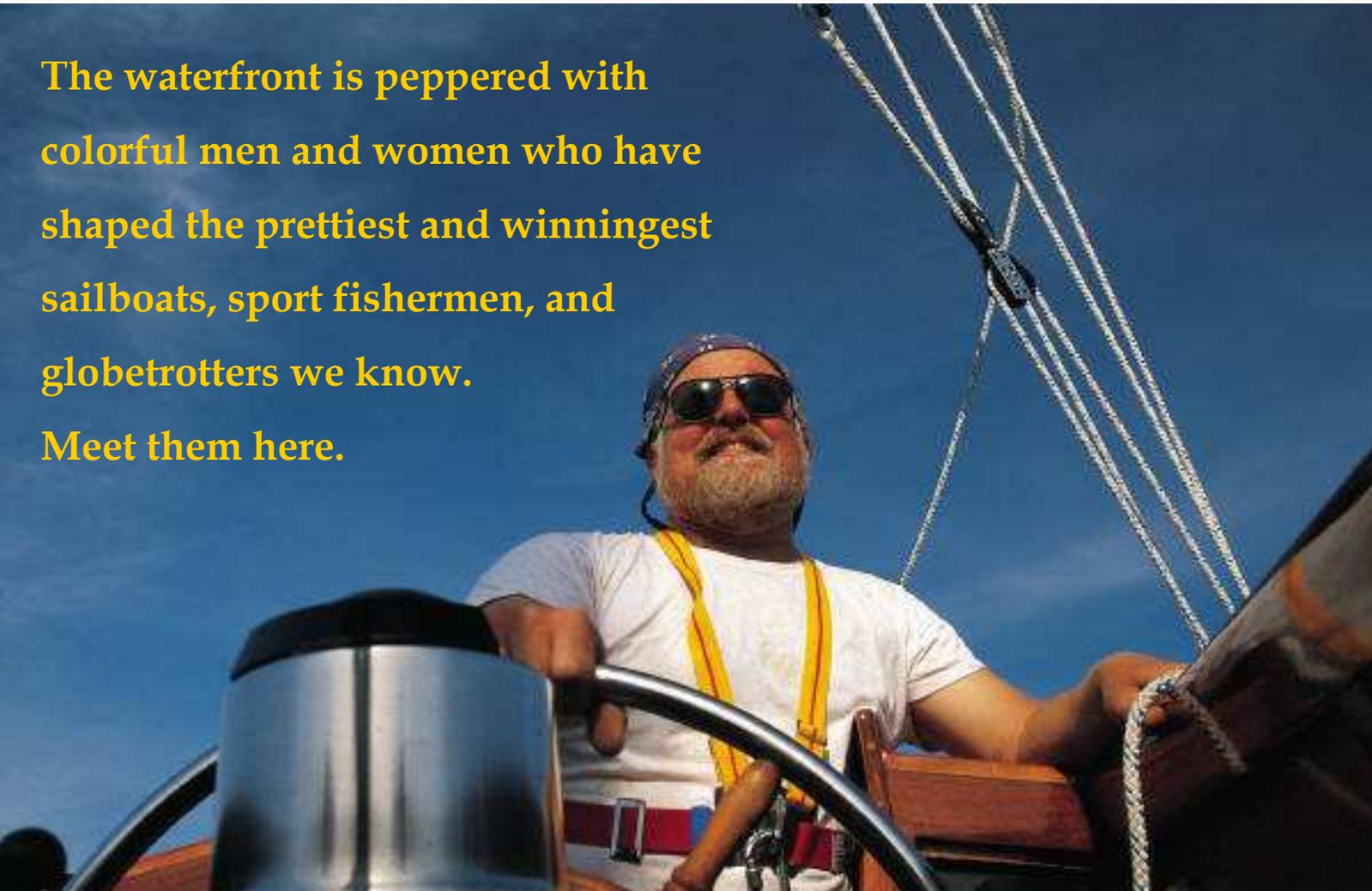
VICTORY
IN SEATTLE

Winter 2007

classicyachtmag.com

LIVING LEGENDS

The waterfront is peppered with colorful men and women who have shaped the prettiest and winningest sailboats, sport fishermen, and globetrotters we know. Meet them here.



Designer of the Lord Nelson Victory Tug,
JIM BACKUS sits down with

CLASSIC

Yacht



Jim Backus greets Tom Blackwood, right, author of “Victory in Seattle”, page 26

James Backus began his yacht design career in 1975 when he enrolled as a student in the Westlawn School of Yacht Design, now called Westlawn Institute of Marine Technology. At the time Jim was employed by National Lumber of North Haven, Connecticut, as an inside salesman.

With the support of his wife Helen, a registered nurse at Yale-New Haven

Hospital, Jim applied to Pearson Yachts as a draftsman/designer after having completed half of the Westlawn course. At Pearson, Jim worked in the Engineering department on such designs as the 365 motorsailer, 424 ketch sailboat, and the 535 ketch sailboats and did redesign work on others. Additionally, he worked with the prototype crew as the informal liaison learning well from an experienced crew.

A move to Seattle occurred as Bob Perry of Robert H. Perry Yacht Designers, Inc. offered Jim a position as designer in his firm. While there, Jim worked on such designs for the Nordic and Norseman sailboat companies as well as several private client designs.

After graduating from Westlawn School of Yacht Design in 1981 Jim struck out on his own, opening a design office on Lake Union in Seattle after receiving his first commission, the 37' Lord Nelson Victory tug. The 37 was followed by the Lord Nelson Victory 49' tug, the Gatsby 39' Lake Union Dreamboat and a combined effort by Jim and Gary Grant, the 45' Cherubini trawler. At this time design work was also done for Sunnfjord Boats, Livingston, Glaspoly Boats, Skookum Yachts and other regional builders. Private designs included a 60' dining gondola, fire rescue boat and what was at that time ultra-modern powerboat designs.

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In 1989 Jim moved back to Stamford, Connecticut to take the position of Education Director at Westlawn as it became Westlawn Institute of Marine Technology. During this time, Westlawn upgraded its existing texts, wrote new texts and integrated computers into the school. In 1997 Jim became president

of Westlawn and during this period the Lite design course was developed, more marine industry training courses were offered and marketed with great success. Jim maintained close contact with Westlawn students throughout their education, and many under his tutelage have gone on to enjoy great success in the marine industry.

Jim actively designs through his firm of Backus Group LLC, 45 Edgerton Street, Darien, Connecticut 06820. 203-656-1144.