

RESTORATION QUARTERLY

Spring, 2005



Freedom

By Earl McMillen III



Mystic Rosenfeld

ON DECEMBER 5, 2001, I RECEIVED AN EMAIL FROM MY FRIEND ROSS MACTAGGART WHO WAS IN A PANIC OVER A PRE-WAR MATHIS-TRUMPY MOTOR YACHT THAT WAS SLATED TO SOON BE DESTROYED.

Ross is the author of the recently published book *The Golden Century - Classic Motor Yachts, 1830-1930*, which featured a couple of pages on the 1926 fantail motor yacht *Freedom*. He immediately piqued my interest, but when I learned that the boat was 104 feet, I quickly had doubts. We have had some success over the years in organizing groups of partners into a number of syndicates interested in restoring and maintaining classic yachts in the 60 to 80 foot range. However, when classic wooden yachts reach the 100 foot class, the prospect of restoration becomes a daunting logistical and financial challenge!

Nevertheless, after several discussions with interested parties, I decided to run down to Jacksonville for a closer look. As it turned out, Ashley Howes, *Freedom's* owner for the previous 20 plus years had passed away, and his heirs were reluctant to take on this massive liability. I found that the "old girl" was hanging on for dear life at a marina in Palatka, Florida where the management was concerned that if

the boat sank at their dock, they would be faced with a serious clean up expense. Needless to say, after a brief inspection, it was apparent that we had to do something to save this magnificent yacht.

My first call had been to Chuck Parrish, one of our most enthusiastic partners, who was and is currently involved in all of our syndicates. After some discussions of various options, Chuck spoke those memorable words, "let's go get her!" While feelings of tremendous excitement took over during our phone call, they were quickly overcome by the questions of logistics. For this particular yacht, her saving grace had been the fact that during Howes' ownership, the bottom was fiber-glassed up to the rub-rails. While this added to the further deterioration of her original construction, it had kept her afloat over the years and helped preserve her original shape.

We began to make plans for a haul out in Jacksonville, where we hoped to ready *Freedom* for

a late spring delivery to Newport. Upon hauling the boat on a slightly undersized railway, we quickly learned, as the twenty foot section of unsupported bow "drooped" two feet, that the questionable structural integrity of the boat would never hold up on a 1000 mile passage. The decision was made to tow *Freedom* to Savannah, Georgia where we constructed a cradle on top of a barge. We then sank the barge and cradle on a large railway and positioned the boat on top of the cradle. We hauled *Freedom* on top of the barge and cradle, while pumping the salt water out of the barge. The rest of the delivery was relatively uneventful. *Freedom* arrived in Newport in May, 2002 and then patiently awaited her restoration, which began in August, 2004.

One extra step was needed in the relocation process to Newport. The seagoing barge that was required to make the voyage from Georgia to Rhode Island was several inches wider than the travel lift bay at the Hinkley Yard in Portsmouth,

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1950-1970 *Sunset* is sold to Mr. Lewis M. Adams and for the next 30 years is held in a Delaware corporation called Yachts, Inc., while home ported in Miami.

1970-1974 Through the early 1970s, *Sunset* is in the possession of the International Oceanographic Foundation, which is part of the University of Miami.

1974-1976 *Sunset* is sold to Eileen and Carl A. Rose.

1976-1981 During this period, *Sunset* is owned by the Meeting Place Ministries, Inc. and later Fellowship Church and Ministries, Inc.

1981-2002 *Sunset* is sold to Mr. Ashley Howes of Pinehurst, NC and she continued to be home ported in Miami. In the early 1980s, it is purported that Mr. Howes made more than one crossing to Cuba in the effort to transport refugees to the United States, bringing back in excess of some 300 Cubans on one trip alone.

2002-Present In January of 2002, *Sunset* is purchased by the Yacht Freedom, LLC and her name returned to *Freedom*. She is currently undergoing a \$3.5 million restoration, which is scheduled to be completed in late 2006.

Spring Continuing Ed Program Begins

In the fall of 2004, after considerable market research, IYRS announced the launching of an expanded continuing education program with two tracks: for serious classic boat enthusiasts, and for boatyard employees seeking professional development. We are pleased to report that the program is attracting both groups.

The spring term began the weekend of February 19-20 with two workshop classes. IYRS Program Director, Clark Poston, taught a lofting workshop with students from as far away as Atlanta, GA. In another part of Restoration Hall, Kevin McKiernan, IYRS class of '02, taught tool use and sharpening.

The following weekend, professional development was in the air: the U.S. Coast Guard sent eight people to IYRS for wooden boat survey training. Marine surveyor Paul Coble and IYRS senior instructor Warren Barker taught a course designed to familiarize Coast Guard inspectors with traditional wooden boat construction, reasons why wooden boats deteriorate, and what to look for when inspecting either old or new wooden boats.

Shipsmith Walter Scadden was back at IYRS, teaching welding techniques to a class made up mostly of boatbuilders. Walter taught the basics of welding, including mild steel, cast iron, stainless steel, aluminum, brass and bronze brazing. The students included boatbuilders from Mount Hope Boatworks, Oldport Marine, New England Shipyard, a U.S. Coast Guard inspector, and IYRS instructor Lew Davies who was getting a little "staff development" training. ▽



Above: The Coast Guard Survey Class at IYRS.



Left: Teak Ackman of Oldport Marine in the welding class.

KEEP YOUR CLASSIC AT IYRS FOR SUMMER 2005

Dockage is available to classic yachts in the heart of Newport's historic waterfront. Favorable rates, great doings, good security and spectacular ambiance in the shadow of the *Coronet* project and IYRS. For information, contact Mike Martins, mikem@iyr.org or 401-848-5777.



Freedom

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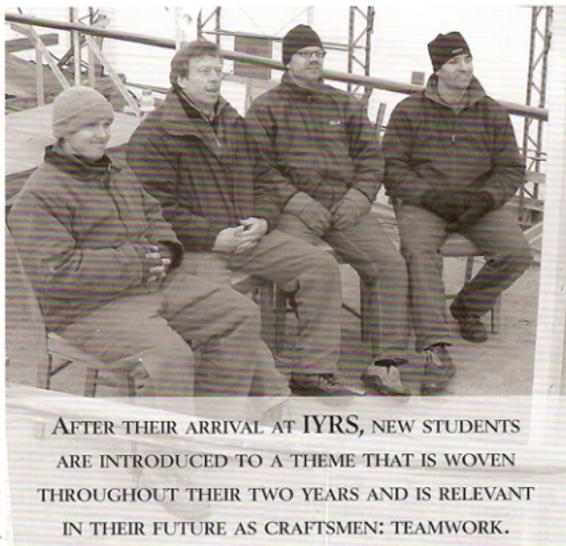
RI. For this reason, we had to haul the boat at the Newport Shipyard, where we wound up storing *Freedom* for a year. The following spring, we reloaded her on a slightly smaller barge and towed her up to her restoration location at the Alden Yard in Portsmouth. After considering all options, the folks at Alden were willing to provide us with a reasonable ground lease on which we constructed a temporary building. It is their hope to make their yard an eventual haven for classic yacht storage and restoration work.

I would never have considered a project of this magnitude without the participation of two very talented men that have worked with me for a number of years. First on the list is Dan Roten, who has

been involved with every major restoration we have undertaken over the past 13 years. Dan is the lead shipwright and has a wonderful understanding of wooden boat construction and the ability to successfully direct a crew working with him. Secondly, Jeff Jacobson, who began working with us 6 years ago, is our captain on the 1929 77 foot motor yacht *Belle*. He quickly became our fleet's port captain and has been instrumental in the construction of our building and engineering the logistics of the entire *Freedom* restoration.

The success of a project is clearly defined by those people working on it. Early on in the project, Dan and Jeff were fortunate enough to benefit from the resources of the International Yacht Restoration School. Not only did we enlist the employment of several recent graduates, but we were also able to bring in one of IYRS' talented instructors in an advisory capacity. ▽

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AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL AT IYRS, NEW STUDENTS ARE INTRODUCED TO A THEME THAT IS WOVEN THROUGHOUT THEIR TWO YEARS AND IS RELEVANT IN THEIR FUTURE AS CRAFTSMEN: TEAMWORK.

Jay Picotte

Four Graduates Find That The Learning Never Stops and That Teamwork is Key

By Jay Picotte

'04 IYRS graduates David Love, Walter Baetjer, Nick Eide and Carter Richardson.

Within weeks of the first safety and bench projects, incoming IYRS students are paired to complete what might be one of the biggest challenges they've ever faced: restoring a Beetle Cat®. These traditional sailboats, though small, represent many of the hurdles in rebuilding any plank on frame vessel. The teamwork dynamic is an integral component of this process and continues in the second year as students work on larger and more complex boats.

When they first came to IYRS in September of 2002, Carter Richardson, Walter Baetjer, Nick Eide and David Love, all graduates of '04, were from widely different backgrounds. Carter, who had been

a lieutenant in the Navy, was paired with Nick, a church youth director and furniture maker from Minnesota. Walter was a graphic designer and adjunct professor at the pre-eminent Rhode Island School of Design, and he was paired with Dave, formerly a financial analyst in Virginia. None would have guessed that long after launching their Beetle Cats® in their first year at IYRS, they'd remain working as a team in a 130' X 60' building.

IYRS instructors are faced with a challenge when matching students. "I was lucky when they put me with Nick," Carter says. "He had a lot of experience, and I didn't know a thing. I learned a lot." Walter is the father of 8-year-old twin

boys, and he decided early on that he was going to buy as a family boat the Beetle Cat® that he and Dave were restoring. This ensured a level of quality and working hours above and beyond all others, and Dave received a lesson in perfectionism that not all IYRS students get. He and Walter are still working side by side. "You just learn how to work together, because it is important and part of the process," according to Walter.

As expected, when all four neared graduation, their search for employment took them in different directions. None could have guessed that when Carter had dinner at a restaurant in Newport, he

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FREEDOM: A TIMELINE



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1926-1933 *Freedom* was designed by John Trumpy and built by the Mathis Yacht Building Company of Camden, New Jersey for Mr. Aubert J. Fay of Boston, Massachusetts. Mr. Fay cruised between his homes in Lowell, Massachusetts and Miami, Florida. She was the Fays' second Mathis-Trumpy and was christened on the 150th anniversary of our country's independence. She is a near sister-ship to the Presidential Yacht *Sequoia*.

1933-1939 The Fay family sells *Freedom* to Mr. J.W. Donahue, who made a gift of the yacht to his wife. The Donahues resided at the Pierre Hotel in New York City.

1939 - 1942 *Freedom* is sold to Mr. S.A. Lynch and she moves for the next 60 years to Miami, Florida. At this time her name was changed to *Sunset*.

1942-1950 *Sunset* is sold to Mr. Herbert M. Plimpton, and she remains in the Plimpton family until 1950.

Four IYRS Graduates Team Up Again

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would leave the meal with a job restoring a 1926 Trumpy motor yacht. It was weeks before graduation, and despite several job opportunities, the only decision Carter had made was to stay in the Newport area.

Earl McMillen is well known in classic circles and is the founder of McMillen Yachts. The firm restores classics yacht and charters them, mostly in Newport during the warm months. Earl was about to begin the massive restoration of the 104' 1926 Mathis Trumpy motor yacht *Freedom*, and would be hiring shipwrights. Not only did Carter secure employment, but following several conversations with Earl and fellow IYRS teammates, so did Walter, Nick and Dave.

As a student, Carter had seen some of the beautifully restored wooden yachts at the IYRS dock where Earl is a regular customer. McMillen Yachts is an interesting business whose mission is twofold: rescuing and restoring classic yachts, and providing people with an alternate means of enjoying these boats without the responsibilities of sole ownership. Earl uses the fractional ownership model, which is essentially syndicated ownership. He has put together an impressive fleet of classic wooden yachts that include motor yachts, as well as *Onawa*, a 70 foot, 12 meter sailing yacht designed by W. Starling Burgess and built by Abeking & Rasmussen in 1928.

A longtime member of the IYRS advisory board, Earl has been involved with IYRS in a number of ways for years. Shortly after IYRS was founded, Earl leased space in the school for the restoration of *Belle*, a 77 foot motor yacht built in 1929 by the New York Yacht, Launch, & Engine Company. *Belle* was completely restored by professional shipwrights working alongside IYRS students.

On a frigid day this past January, I paid a visit to the IYRS graduates working inside an enormous tent at the Alden yard in Portsmouth, RI. Since joining Earl's company, the

four IYRS graduates have experienced a variety of staging and shipwright challenges. "In the fall, before the boats went south for the winter, we made a number of different repairs on *Belle* and on *Glory*," Walter explained. "And how often are shipwrights given the opportunity to sail on their company's classic twelve meter as we did on *Onawa* last fall?"

The four then went to work with the McMillen crew removing the interior of *Freedom*. Furniture, bulkheads, plumbing, wiring and the structural floors were all removed prior to addressing the hull shape. Restoring hull shape was a complicated and challenging task considering her size, a lack of original plans, and the fact that the hull had been fiberglassed over. They accomplished this by making a number of long cuts through the planking, allowing the stiff hull to move. Then, they placed a series of timbers athwartships through the hull that could be maneuvered and fixed when the hull returned to her original shape. A new

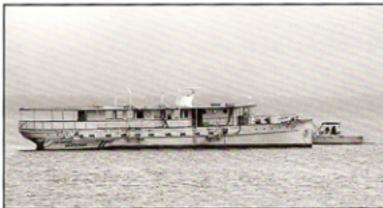
white oak backbone was constructed of a three piece stem, a keel made of five overlapping sections almost twenty feet long each, and a horn timber.

Walter and Dave have been working together the better part of the last two months making floors. "I just can't get used to the size of the timbers," Dave says. "The *Freedom* project is large in every way, and the transition from small boats has taken some getting used to." Walter adds that "right now we're building floors. The skills required are very similar to those we used at IYRS; only the scale is much larger. The physical challenge of maneuvering timbers is very different. We have to work together."

Nick and Carter have been temporarily moved over to *Scout*, a 73 foot commuter yacht designed by Eldredge McClinnis, Inc. and built by Defoe Boat & Motor Works in 1930. "Scout is in for refit work. Carter and I are replacing a number of broken frames," Nick says. The pedigree of the boats and the variety of experience is invaluable, and these guys both relish and value the opportunities. Walter points out that *Freedom* is a sistership of *Sequoia*, the Presidential yacht. "It's nice to be able to work on a boat with some history," he says.

The four have been working together as a team for three years now and have developed their own rhythm. "It kind of feels like I never left IYRS," according to Dave. "I'm still working with the same crew." The continuity has more than the obvious benefits. "We work very well together," Walter says. "When we're manhandling a huge timber through a saw, we know how the other guy is going to move. There's a level of safety in that."

They all agree that after a couple of years of school, it's nice to have a steady paycheck. Walter puts it this way: "IYRS is a rich and creative environment. There was a wealth of knowledge at our fingertips, but its great to now use that base and learn more." ▽



Freedom on her trip from Florida to Rhode Island.



New oak floors were installed by Walter and Dave.