

ALONG THE WATERFRONT

The America's Cup Information Center

Seizing a "silver ewer" opportunity to make the sport of yacht racing more accessible to the general public, the America's Cup Information Center Exhibit opened at New York's South Street Seaport on October 6, 1986 under the auspices of the Seaport. Sponsored by Thomas J. Lipton, Inc., the exhibit traces the beginnings of America's Cup racing with photographs and text and features interactive displays that provide a "hands-on" experience of the history and technology of this event.

Designed as both a historic and up-to-the-minute record of Cup racing, the exhibit offers a short course on 135 years of racing, including a time-line, half-models of past participants, a "touchable" sailcloth display, and an actual wheel from *Courageous*. For viewers following the action in 1986-87, the exhibit includes a giant montage of all the current participants, daily race results and accumulated scores of challengers and defenders. Also presented is actual footage of the racing provided by ESPN, computer graphic programs that recreate the conditions of the course each day, and a computerized performance simulator.

As many as 5,000 people a day have come to see the exhibit since it opened, reports founder Cherie Tripp, and though it draws a large number of serious yachting types, the America's Cup Information Center has also attracted many thousands of people who know nothing about yacht racing

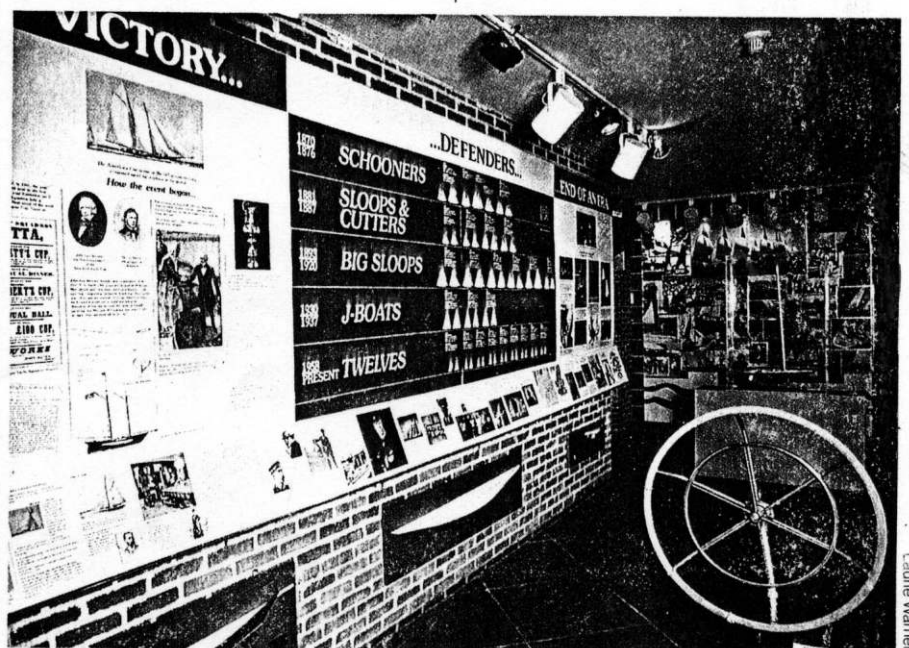
at all. It is estimated that over the five-month period of the exhibit, 50,000 school children will visit the Center, many on field trips.

Special presentations to school groups by Ms. Tripp and her associates help the uninitiated to understand yacht racing in terms of the sports they know. A familiar example, such as the World Series, demonstrates that the same principles of competition apply to the America's Cup; opposing teams, assigned positions, and a best-of-seven series to determine the world champion. Other efforts to demystify this sailing competition include a blow-up illustration of a 12-Meter and an explanation of its components, a key to crew positions and functions on board the boat, a list of the typical sail inventory on a twelve, hydraulic and rigging displays, and a glossary of sailing terminology.

"It is a window into this event called the America's Cup," explains Cherie Tripp. "Whether a person is a yacht racer or someone who has never even heard of a 12-Meter, it is exciting to see."

The exhibit will remain open until a winner is determined in the finals which begins on January 31, 1987. The exhibit is at 12 Fulton Street in lower Manhattan and is open from 10-6 Monday through Saturday and 11-5 on Sunday. Phone: 212-362-9450. Race results are available at 212-363-9461.

Exhibits, including a wheel from *Courageous* and historical photos, abound at the America's Cup Information Center in New York.



Laurie Warner