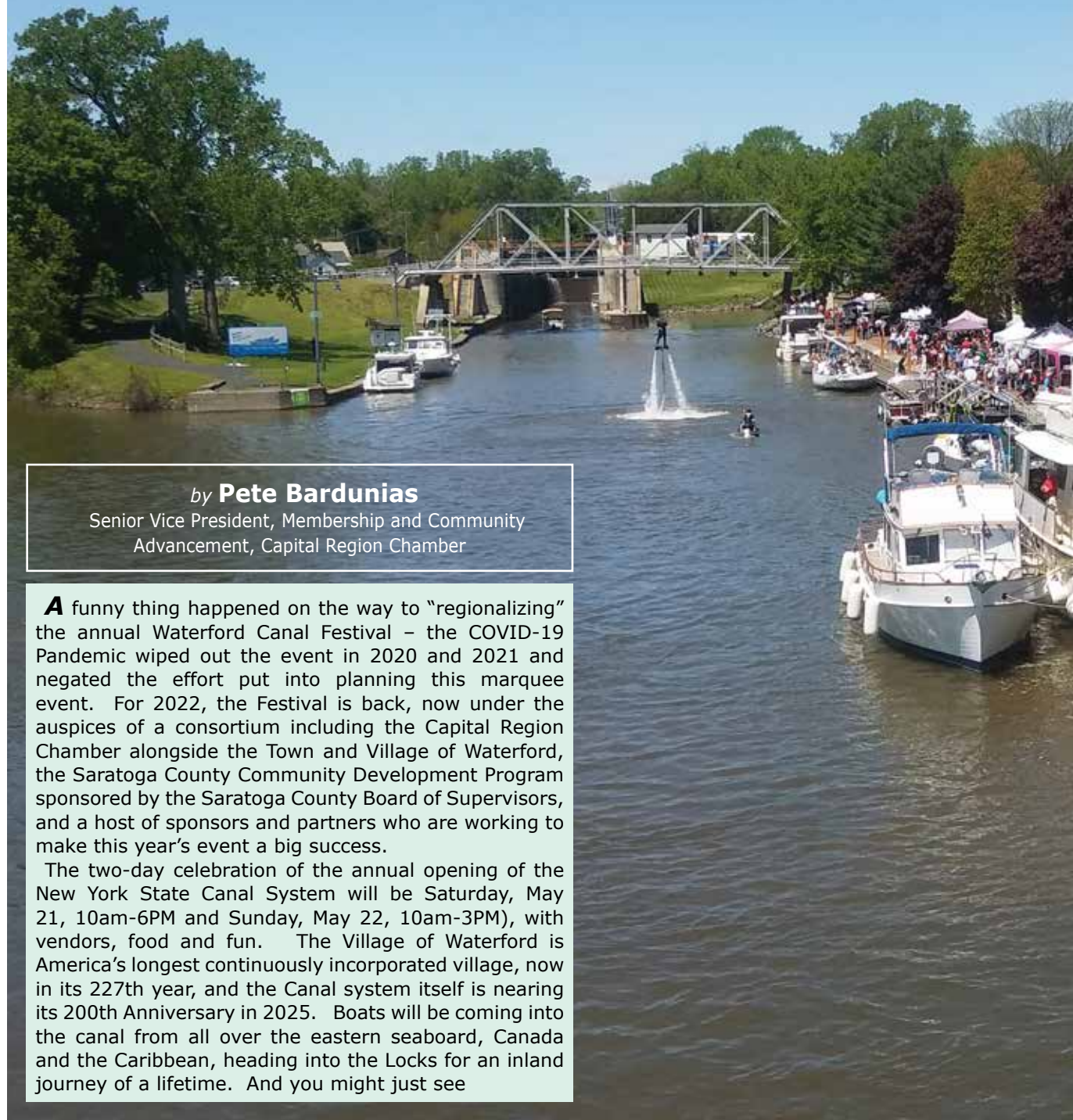


# The Waterford Canal Festival Returns After a Two-Year COVID Absence

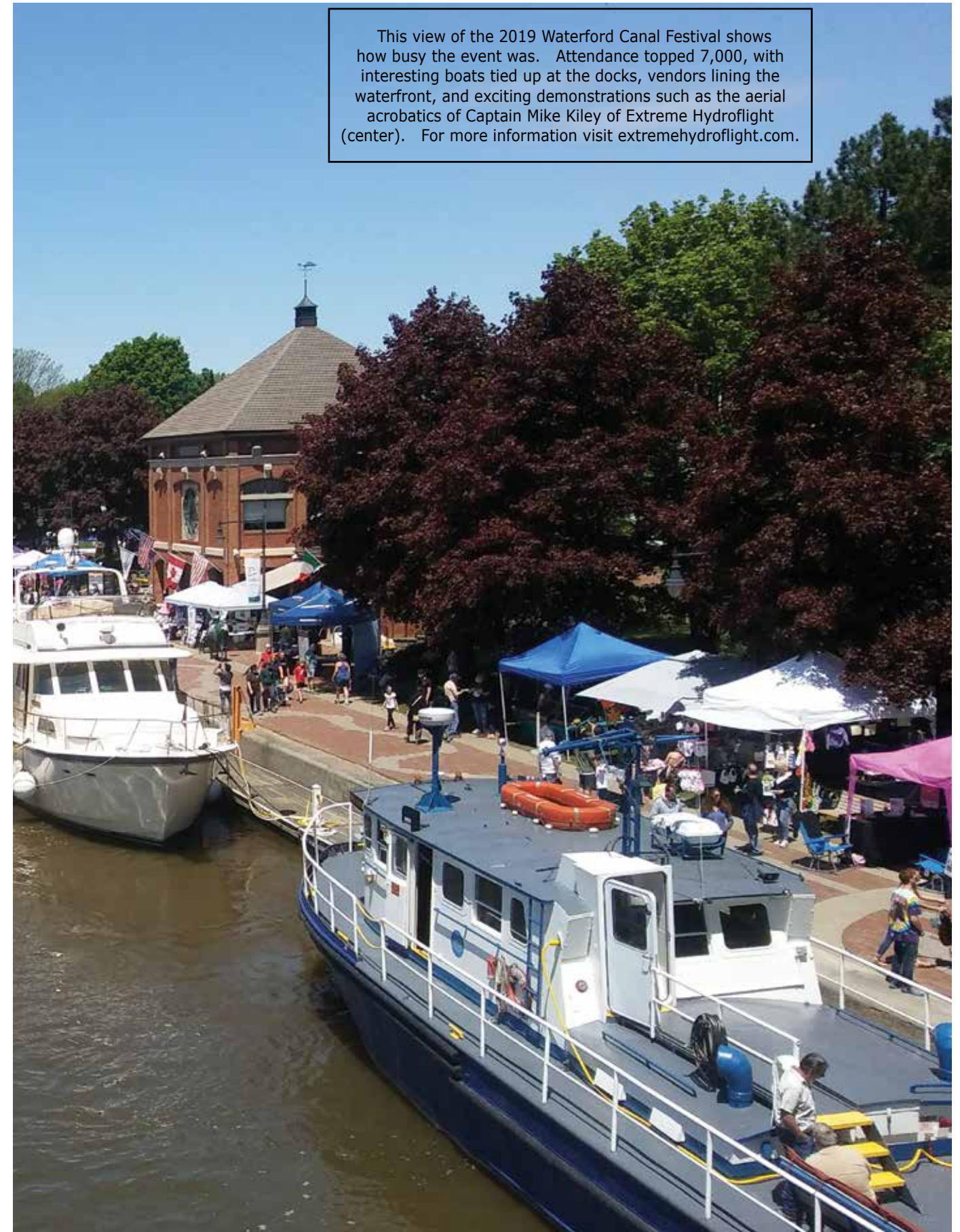


by **Pete Bardunias**

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**A** funny thing happened on the way to “regionalizing” the annual Waterford Canal Festival – the COVID-19 Pandemic wiped out the event in 2020 and 2021 and negated the effort put into planning this marquee event. For 2022, the Festival is back, now under the auspices of a consortium including the Capital Region Chamber alongside the Town and Village of Waterford, the Saratoga County Community Development Program sponsored by the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, and a host of sponsors and partners who are working to make this year’s event a big success.

The two-day celebration of the annual opening of the New York State Canal System will be Saturday, May 21, 10am-6PM and Sunday, May 22, 10am-3PM, with vendors, food and fun. The Village of Waterford is America’s longest continuously incorporated village, now in its 227th year, and the Canal system itself is nearing its 200th Anniversary in 2025. Boats will be coming into the canal from all over the eastern seaboard, Canada and the Caribbean, heading into the Locks for an inland journey of a lifetime. And you might just see



This view of the 2019 Waterford Canal Festival shows how busy the event was. Attendance topped 7,000, with interesting boats tied up at the docks, vendors lining the waterfront, and exciting demonstrations such as the aerial acrobatics of Captain Mike Kiley of Extreme Hydroflight (center). For more information visit [extremehydroflight.com](http://extremehydroflight.com).





The new, all-fiberglass Solar Sal 24 model takes shape at a Northeast USA factory. This line of fully solar-electric boats, designed in New York State and built in the USA, is designed to sustainably achieve trawler boat speeds without ever using fossil fuels or even plugging into shore power if desired. For more information visit <https://www.solarsal.solar/>.

a tugboat pushing a barge to a facility somewhere in the interior of New York State, the Great Lakes or Canada.

At press time, the event was still being finalized, but in past years there have been kids' fishing clinics with prizes, rides aboard various local charter vessels to experience parts of the Canal and its famous Locks,

and an opportunity to see the Canal in operation. This year, solar-electric boat pioneer David Borton will showcase his new 24' Solar Sal model, notable because it is his first creation in fiberglass, designed for easy maintenance, and optimized for its solar-electric powerplant that eliminates the need for fossil fuels to propel the boat.

This massive yacht, visiting from Florida, juxtaposed with a Solar Sal 40 in foreground, shows the variety of vessels one might find tied up at the Waterford docks. The adjacent Visitors Center is full of information on the area as well as the entire Canal System



Transient boaters might find tying up at the docks difficult during the Festival. There are excellent marinas and boat clubs nearby so please check them out. A really great choice is right up the Hudson a mile or so – Lock One Marina And Shipyard ([www.lockonemarinaandshipyard.com](http://www.lockonemarinaandshipyard.com) (518) 238-1321) where owners Larry and Steve Ascenzi will be happy to cater to your transient boater needs.

The Canal System is being "reimagined" with a lot of great new recreational opportunities for boaters and landlubbers alike, ranging from kayaks, bicycle trails, and interpretive/interactive experiences to accommodations and even new waterfront communities. Waterford itself boasts some interesting shops and restaurants within walking distance of the Festival, and the Chamber tent will have information available on local attractions as well as the burgeoning upstate marine industry. Come see why so many New Yorkers choose to experience the unique waterways that comprise the 524-mile New York State Canal System, and plan to visit the historic community of Waterford this May!

The Erie Canal winds in the background past a major revitalization of downtown Schenectady. The Schenectady Casino, along with hotels, apartments and mixed use developments, has turned long-empty industrial space into a waterfront community complete with a harbor for boats from near and far to visit.



Industry has thrived along the Hudson River's shores for centuries. Momentive Performance Materials in Waterford ([www.momentive.com](http://www.momentive.com)) has moved to specialize in space-age, high performance silicones in recent years, helping provide the technology needed to put Americans in space for ambitious journeys, improve aviation, and a whole host of important manufacturing uses.