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## Ship History Center hosting Distinguished Speakers series this fall

Summer may be coming to a close soon, but there's still lots to look forward to here at the Ship History Center. We'll be kicking off a monthly series of programs beginning with a great lecture about ship preservation on **September 24 at 1 p.m.**

There have been many stories about efforts to save historic ships lately, from the SS *Columbia* to the SS *United States*. Come hear the story of one man who took on a renovation project of his own, literally rescuing a historic vessel from the bottom of a river.

SSHSA member **Sandy Thomson** will recall his work to restore the *Wanda III*, the largest steam yacht in Canada at the time and a reflection of the grand style of living enjoyed by the upper class. Built in 1915, she was commissioned for Mrs. Timothy Eaton of the Eaton department stores. She was constructed by Polson Iron Works of Toronto in 1915 and shipped north by rail to Muskoka, a cottage region of Central Ontario. Her engine was made to the same specifications as the ones built for Canadian Navy minesweepers during World War I, and as a result she was one of the fastest boats on the lakes with a top speed of 24 mph.

Despite her grand style, the vessel was in poor shape by the time Thomson acquired it in 1966. It took five years to get her moving again and nearly 20 years of work overall before he was ready to donate it to the Muskoka Steamship and Historical Society in Canada.

what's happening in SSHSA's new headquarters.

Like SSHSA on Facebook to read about current and historical maritime events and updates on SSHSA's new headquarters.

Follow SSHSA on Twitter and receive tweets on historical and current maritime events.

Add SSHSA as a friend on Instagram to view pictures of new finds in the archives and images of SSHSA staff and volunteers at events and conferences.

Follow SSHSA on Tumblr to view maritime-related posts, ship images, and latest archive finds.

Sandy is a third-generation owner of the Thomson-Gordon Group, Chairman of Thordon Bearings Inc., and owner and CEO of Cinema Sixteen Film Productions. His maritime roots go all the way back to his great, great grandfather, who was a deep sea and Great Lakes captain. His father founded the Thomson-Gordon Group, a marine and industrial supply firm, in the 1940s and 1950s, allowing Sandy to work along with him and visit many of the great Muskoka Lakes steamers in his youth, kindling his maritime passion.

In addition to the presentation, **September 24** is also a great opportunity to come out and see what we've been doing at the Ship History Center over the last couple of months. We've been going through the archives this summer and interpreting new and unique items to add to our displays, and there will be something new to see even for those who have visited before.

The lecture is free and open to the public, but space is limited and you must reserve a seat in advance. Many of our events have filled up quickly, so register early by calling the SSHSA at 401-463-3570 or emailing [blucier@sshhsa.org](mailto:blucier@sshhsa.org).

Top photo: *Wanda III* (SSHSA Archives)

## Report: Container ship scrappings may double in 2016

Shipping analysts are anticipating an increased number of vessels to be scrapped this year as companies adjust to fluctuations in the economy and the opening of the new Panama Canal in June. According to a recent study in Drewry's Container Forecaster, 450,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) of container ship capacity will be pulled out of service this year, which translates to roughly 150 old and medium-sized vessels. If this number proves accurate, it would more than double the demolitions that took place just last year.

Analysts say the opening of the new locks at the Panama Canal has helped contribute to a surplus of 3,000 to 4,500 TEU ships. With the expanded capacity of the new canal, ship owners are looking to replace them with newer and more efficient 8,000 TEU vessels.

Favorite SSHSA on Flickr to view images of conferences, events, and meetings, and scans of images from SSHSA's photo archives.

## The Summer 2016 *PowerShips* has landed

The latest issue of *PowerShips* features a first-hand account of the *Andrea Doria* rescue effort, the *Stella Solaris*, Grace Line's M-Ships, tales from the Grand Saloon and more! It's not too late to come on board if your membership has lapsed or if you would like to join SSHSA. Sign up or renew today by [clicking here](#) or calling our headquarters at (401) 463-3570. Don't miss out!

As large as the number may seem, 450,000 TEU only accounts for about two percent of the global market and only begins to correct the overcapacity that built up over the last six years when 4.5 million TEUs were added worldwide.

The nine-year, \$5.4 billion Panama Canal expansion project opened in June, adding a third lane that accommodates ships large enough to carry 14,000 containers. While the full impact of this work won't be known for years, it is already influencing decisions on global trade beyond the number of ships in the water.

The canal handles about a third of the trade between Asia and the Americas, and the increased capacity is expected to shift about 10 percent of that traffic from the West Coast of America to the East Coast by 2020. To prepare for these added ships, East Coast and Gulf Coast ports have invested an estimated \$150 billion to deepen harbors, expand terminals and improve intermodal connections with the docks.

Photo: Expanded Panama Canal ([micanaldepanama.com](http://micanaldepanama.com))

## Eight Bells

We're sad to report that we lost several longtime members of the SSHSA family in the last couple of months. Please join us in offering condolences to their families and remembering their distinct contributions to our organization and maritime history as a whole.

**Helen Delich Bentley** – A former Congresswoman and Chairwoman of the Federal Maritime Commission, Helen Delich Bentley was a champion of maritime and shipping issues for nearly 70 years – so much so that the Port of Baltimore now bears her name.

Born on November 28, 1923, in Ruth, Nev., she began her career as a reporter with the Baltimore Sun and was assigned to cover the ports. She was a tireless worker who quickly earned the reputation as one of the most informed writers within the maritime trades, a status that would earn her a stint in Vietnam focusing on the difficulties in delivering supplies to the U.S. troops. That work led to the development of more modern port facilities in Vietnam caught the attention of President Nixon, who offered her an appointment to the Federal Maritime Administration.

Bentley's involvement with the government did not end there. She entered into politics after failing to convince former Maryland Rep.

## Contribute now and help secure SSHSA's future

SSHSA's Board of Directors and staff would like to thank everyone who has donated so far to our Summer Appeal. It's only been a little more than a month and nearly \$15,000 has been raised to help share the history of engine-powered vessels with the rest of the world.

Haven't had a chance to donate yet? There's still time! [Click here to make a tax-deductible contribution today](#) and bring us closer to our goals of opening the Ship History Center on a more regular basis and developing an education program that can be used by students all over the world. It's all about connecting people to maritime heritage, an integral part of our nation's history and economic growth.

Our new home gives us a great opportunity to fulfill these missions, but we can't do it on membership dues alone. Please give generously and contact us directly if you would like to arrange a personal visit to the Ship History Center to discuss the benefits of donating to SSHSA. Each contribution that we receive helps preserve maritime heritage for the

Clarence Long that the Port of Baltimore needed to be dredged to a depth of 50 feet to accommodate the world's largest cargo ships. It took her three tries, but she was elected to the Congressional seat in 1984 and served for 10 years.

Here at SSHSA, she is perhaps best known for her relentless efforts to preserve maritime history. She was the keynote speaker at the very first ShiPosium conference in 2012, held on the NS *Savannah* in Baltimore. In her strong, distinct speaking style, she thrilled the audience with a brief history of the Port of Baltimore and a no-holds-barred account of the maritime industry and where it should be heading in the future.

Going even further back, we found an article from the Summer 1968 *Steamboat Bill* (issue #106) in which Bentley presented the builders' nameplate from the dismantled Liberty Ship *John Fitch* to SSHSA at our Annual Dinner. An ardent defender and supporter of the U.S. Merchant Marine, she was representing the Liberty Ship Memorial Program. [Click here to read the full article](#) and stop by the Ship History Center in Rhode Island to see the nameplate in person.

**E.B (Edwin Barry) "Skip" Gillham** – Skip Gillham's name should be a familiar one to most of our longtime readers. A recipient of the 2011 Jay Allen Award for Distinguished Editorial Service, he was a dedicated volunteer and editor of the Great Lakes/Seaway Regional column in *Steamboat Bill* and *PowerShips* for more than 37 years. He faithfully covered the region in rich detail to the delight of readers everywhere.

He wrote numerous books, thousands of articles for a variety of newspapers, historical journals, corporate newsletters and online websites, and is also well-known for his "Ships That Ply The Lakes" column in the *St. Catharines Standard* from 1970 until 2016.

Born in Toronto, Skip taught high school in Waterford and Beamsville for 33 years and continued to coach for another 10 years after retiring in 1997. He enjoyed his work as guidance counselor and physical education teacher and developed lifelong friendships with many of his former students and athletes.

next generation. Don't let the story of steam become a thing of the past – help us keep it alive!

## New direction sought for SS *United States*

Efforts to preserve the SS *United States* suffered a setback this month, as Crystal Cruises announced it will not pursue its option agreement to purchase the ship following an intensive six-month evaluation. Despite the fact that the vessel was found to be structurally sound, the technical and commercial challenges associated with returning the historic liner to service as a modern cruise ship were too costly and would have imposed major changes to the ship's historic design well beyond what was initially envisioned.

In a statement sent to its supporters, the SS *United States* Conservancy said that this was not the end of the line for the historic flagship. In addition to making a \$350,000 donation, Crystal Cruises has agreed to provide much of the data that it compiled over the last six months, including underwater inspections of the hull by divers, examinations of her fuel and salt water ballasting tanks, three-dimensional scans of the entire vessel, preparation of a vessel tow plan, and a series of intensive engineering and technical studies. Armed with this data, the Conservancy plans on

**Alan Douglas Frazer** – A 40-year member, Alan Frazer was a former SSHSA board member and copy editor for *Steamboat Bill* and *PowerShips*. Maritime history was in his blood, and he worked for several museums and historical causes.

Alan was raised in Medford, N.J. and graduated from Mt. Holly High School. After graduating from Hobart College in Geneva, N.Y., in 1953, he served in the U.S. Army prior to taking a position with the New York Central Railroad. In 1967, he began a new career as the first curator of the South Street Seaport Museum in New York City. He later worked at the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark, N.J. He moved to Virginia in 1988 to become a curator at The Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Va., where he retired in 1996.

Alan was a superb ship model builder, whose work won competitions in New York and Virginia. Following his retirement in 1996, he volunteered at the model-making booth at The Mariners' as a member of the Hampton Roads Ship Model Society. In addition to SSHSA, he also served as a board member of the Nautical Research Guild and wrote and edited articles for the Nautical Research Journal. A special SSHSA award was presented to Alan for his tireless service in 2012.

**Norman R. Seidelmann** – A member for more than 50 years, Norm was the Vice Chairman of SSHSA's Delaware Valley Chapter. He is survived by his wife, Ruth M. (Baker); two sons, Erik R. Seidelmann and Kyle R. Seidelmann; three daughters, Karen R. Emmett, Heather R. Richards, and Elizabeth R. Collier; and a sister, Karolyn Masters.

Norm enjoyed visiting and sharing his experiences on railway, maritime and transportation history with one and all. He regularly had his camera on hand and often sent photos of his subjects to local, regional and national historical organizations for their reference and archives.

## San Francisco maritime park introduces new sensory experience

Summer is a great time to get out and go sightseeing, particularly at all of the historic sites along America's coastlines. But there's often more to these places than what you can see, and one California park is branching out to include as many senses as it can.



immediately resuming its aggressive outreach to qualified developers and investors to show that the ship still has enormous potential as a stationary mixed-use development.

The contribution from Crystal Cruises is an important one, as it is estimated to cost \$60,000 a month to keep the ship afloat in Philadelphia. In addition to the donation, the company also covered all costs associated with preserving the ship while the feasibility studies were underway. This was a huge benefit for the Conservancy, which put a call out to its supporters last October saying that if it didn't raise a significant amount of money by the end of the month it would have to consider selling the ship for scrap. The public responded overwhelmingly, with about \$600,000 pouring in by the deadline.

Along with its efforts to preserve the ship, the Conservancy is continuing to build a major museum collection and archives surrounding the *SS United States*. Just this year, they announced the acquisition of a rare panel from the ship by artist Charles Tissot and hundreds of artifacts from the Mariners' Museum of Newport News. They are also planning a national reunion of former crewmembers and passengers for Philadelphia on September 17. For more information on the event, [click here](#).

**Photo: *SS United States* (Wikipedia)**

## Contact Us

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The San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park is piloting a new program aimed at engaging visitors with visual impairments to learn about its vessels in a new way – through smell, sound and touch. Using a descriptive narrative tour, rangers guide visitors through a sensory experience on board the 1886 tall sailing ship *Balclutha*.

Groups are taken back to a time when sailors risked it all, bringing cargo from San Francisco around Cape Horn to Europe for meager pay. Visitors can feel the large, rough, twisted ropes in their hands as they haul away on the lines, smell greasy meat cooking in the galley, and hear first-hand accounts from Captain Alfred Durkee's journal. At the close of each program, visitors will be invited to engage in self-guided tours of the park's other historic vessels.

Although the sensory tours are free with regular admission, they are intended for small groups (around 10 people) and must be scheduled at least two weeks in advanced. Assisted listening services are also available on request, and sign language interpreters can be requested at least five days in advance.

The San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park is located at the west end of Fisherman's Wharf. For more information about the park's offerings, contact the Accessibility Coordinator/Chief of Interpretation at 415-859-6797 or email [safra\\_accessibility@nps.gov](mailto:safra_accessibility@nps.gov).

**Photos: Top, *Balclutha* (Wikipedia); Bottom, *Hercules* (Wikipedia)**

## Nonprofit takes Gold Star Teens on sailing journey

A Rhode Island nonprofit recently hosted a special group of teenagers for a week of sun, sailing and adventure on Narragansett Bay. Headed by SSHSA Board Member Captain David Pickering, 13 surviving children of military members killed in action spent the week at the helm of two sailing ships, learning team-building and leadership along the way.

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Pickering is the founder of SALTY (Seamanship and Leadership Training for Youths), which paired up with the Ocean State Gold Star Teens Sailing Adventure two years ago to bring this unique experience to as many teens as possible. Although each ship is fully supervised, the youths are expected to rely on themselves as much as possible and work together to overcome all of the obstacles you would expect in a week at sea. In addition to manning each vessel, the teens were treated to day trips at a number of spots throughout the state, including a visit to the R.I. National Guard base in North Kingstown and the Newport Naval Station. [Click here to read a newspaper article about their adventure.](#)

We are pleased to say that SALTY currently operates out of the SSHSA Ship History Center in Rhode Island. As a fellow maritime nonprofit, we are glad to have Captain Pickering on board and look forward to a fruitful collaboration that helps bring America's nautical past and present to the youth of America. For more information on SALTY, email [saltyfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:saltyfoundation@gmail.com).

**Photo: Lonnie Barham**

## Name game

Here's a little mystery for all of those eagle eyes out there. We hope it will be a regular feature in upcoming newsletters to highlight some of the unique images in our collection.

Take a close look and tell us how many different things you can identify in this picture. Can you identify the ship name, type of ship,

shipping line, port, type of plane, airline, and the year, make and model of the cars?

Send your answers in to [mschulte@sshsa.org](mailto:mschulte@sshsa.org). Anyone who can name all of the pieces will receive a digital reprint of this classic photo. Good luck!

**Photo: SSHSA Archives**

## What's Happening in Ship History?

*This is a brief listing, so make sure to check locally for what's going on in your area.*

### **September 24**

Program: Sandy Thomson and the restoration of the *Wanda III* steam yacht  
1:00 PM

Free for members, \$8 suggested donation for non-members

SSHSA Ship History Center

Warwick, RI

<http://www.sshsa.org>

### **August 18-21**

Response Performance Festival at the SS *Columbia*

6:00PM-10:00PM

\$20 for general admission; \$60 VIP pass includes champagne toast aboard  
SS *Columbia*

Silo City

Buffalo, NY

[www.tornspacetheater.com](http://www.tornspacetheater.com)

### **August 18-23**

Visit the tall ships *Hawaiian Chieftain* and *Lady Washington*

Dockside tours and sailing opportunities available; see website for details

Foss Waterway Seaport

Tacoma, WA

[www.fosswaterwayseaport.org/events](http://www.fosswaterwayseaport.org/events)

### **Through October 29**

"On the Waterfront," paintings and pastels by Peter K. Eagleton

Saturdays 1-5 p.m. and Thursdays 4-8 p.m.

Reception Saturday, September 10, 2-4 p.m.

Waterfront Museum

Red Hook, Brooklyn, NY

[www.waterfrontmuseum.org](http://www.waterfrontmuseum.org)

### **September 3-5**

Festival of Sail

Various times; see website for details

\$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and children ages 3-12

Maritime Museum of San Diego

San Diego, CA

[www.sdmaritime.org](http://www.sdmaritime.org)

### **September 15-18**

Newport International Boat Show

Thursday-Saturday 10:00AM-6:00PM, Sunday 10:00AM to 5:00PM



\$15 general admission, \$35 VIP  
Newport Yachting Center  
Newport, RI  
[www.newportboatshow.com](http://www.newportboatshow.com)

**October 6-December 16**

Beneath the Waves: Florida's Shipwrecks  
Tuesday-Saturday, 9:00AM-4:00PM  
Opening reception October 6, 5:30PM-7:00PM  
Florida Maritime Museum  
Cortez, FL  
[www.floridamaritimemuseum.org](http://www.floridamaritimemuseum.org)

**October 14-29**

Nautical Nightmares  
6:00PM-10:00PM  
Adults \$25 (\$21 members); Youth \$20 (\$16 members)  
Tickets on sale September 7 for members and September 14 for nonmembers  
Mystic Seaport  
Mystic, CT  
[www.mysticseaport.org](http://www.mysticseaport.org)

**October 28 and 29**

Haunted Sub and Pub  
7:00PM-10:00p.m.  
\$15 adults, \$12 seniors and veterans, \$8 children age 4-12  
Wisconsin Maritime Museum  
Manitowoc, WI  
[www.wisconsinmaritime.org](http://www.wisconsinmaritime.org)

**November 10**

Lecture: "Black Friday - October 20, 1916"  
Lost Mariners Remembrance  
6:00PM-8:00PM  
\$5 for members, \$10 for guests, \$25 for families up to 6  
Dossin Great Lakes Museum  
Detroit, MI  
[www.detroithistorical.org](http://www.detroithistorical.org)

*Ahoy!* is the quarterly electronic newsletter for those interested in maritime history. It is produced in February, May, August, and November and distributed by Steamship Historical Society of America to friends, members and any other individuals interested in maritime heritage.

Bryan Lucier, Editor, *Ahoy!*

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