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Eight Bells: Dr. Robert G. McNeil

We regret to report that Robert McNeil, one of SSHSA's most ardent preservationists, died last month. Many of you may remember him from a 2009 *Steamboat Bill* article detailing his efforts to restore the steam yacht *Cangarda*, which was named our Ship of the Year in 2011. Bob was 77 years old.



The son of Leone and Robert J. McNeil, he attended Los Angeles High School and graduated from University of California Irvine with doctoral degrees in biochemistry, molecular biology and physics. His passions for investment and science led him to a long career as a biomedical venture capitalist. He co-founded Sanderling Ventures, where he led the growth and development of several companies that advanced important medical technologies.

Bob grew up sailing with his family, beginning with many memorable trips to Catalina. He developed a passion for racing boats big (*Zephyrus IV* and *Zephyrus V*) and small (505s and Starboats). Notable sailing achievements include winning the 505 North American Championships in the mid-1960s, being a finalist in the 1984 Starboat Olympic Trials, sailing multiple transpacific and transatlantic races, and breaking records in the Cape Town to Rio de Janeiro and Montego Bay races. Later in life, his love of history led him to the world of classic boat restoration, where he found joy in collaborating with talented teams to bring beautiful yachts back to life.



Devoted to his family and loved ones, he enjoyed bringing everyone together



The Summer issue of *PowerShips* has landed

Issue #318 of *PowerShips* magazine is on sale now, featuring the following stories:

- Steamer *Alpena*: The Tale of Two Careers
- Recollections of the *QE2* & Her Early Years, Part II
- The Founding of the United States Lines: Part II
- The Great Race Between the *Natchez* & the *Robert E. Lee*
- The SS *V.A. Fogg* Explosion

Whether you're new to SSHSA or your membership has lapsed, it's not too late to come on board! Sign up or renew today by [clicking here](#) or calling our headquarters at (401) 463-3570. Don't miss out!

What you're missing on social media

by hosting elaborate holiday dinners, sharing in sailing adventures, and woodworking with his children, nieces and nephews. This love of community led him to Islesboro, Maine, where he was able to focus on woodworking, family and racing in classic wooden boats.

He is survived by three daughters, two siblings, many nieces and nephews, and a community of friends and colleagues in California, Maine, and around the world.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations in memory of Bob McNeil to Big Tree Boating (P.O. Box 273, Islesboro, ME 04848) or the Islesboro Island Trust (P.O. Box 182, Islesboro, ME 04848).

[Click here to read about Executive Director Matthew Schulte's visit with Bob](#) aboard the *Cangarda*, and [click here to read longtime SSHSA member Richard Rabbet's tribute to the yacht](#) when she was named Ship of the Year.

Photo: Top, Dr. Robert McNeil in the engine room of the *Cangarda* in 2009. Below is a picture of Bob (second from right) at the wheel of the yacht in 2013. Joining him at the helm are (from left) SSHSA Executive Director Matthew Schulte, William McLin and John Pagenstecher (SSHSA photos).

Women take the wheel for two historic tour boat operators

The stereotype of the grizzled old sea captain with a pipe and a long white beard continues to become a thing of the past as two longtime tour boat operators recently named their first female captains. And the appointments are particularly historic considering that each company has been in business for well over a century.



The honors went to Rhode Island native Patricia Quinn, who was named the first female captain in Mount Washington Cruises' 149-year history, and Kaitlynn McHenry, a New Yorker who became the first and only woman to command the *Maid of the Mist* tour boat at Niagara Falls in 175 years.

The two captains came to their respective posts from different directions. Quinn spent 40 years in the U.S. Coast Guard and New Hampshire Marine Patrol before joining the New Hampshire-based Mount Washington Cruises in 2013. The company operates the 230-foot *MS Mount Washington*, along with the *MV Doris E.*, the *Sophie C.*, and the *Winnepesaukee Spirit*.

If you don't follow us on social media, you may be missing out on a lot of exciting things going on at SSHSA. Click the icons and links below to check us out on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Tumblr](#) to stay up to date on all things #shiphistory.



Judge: Cruise lines can mandate guests be vaccinated

Norwegian Cruise Line is scheduled to send its first post-pandemic cruise ship out of Miami on Sunday, and it can now require everyone on board be vaccinated thanks to a temporary injunction issued by a U.S. District Court judge.

Judge Kathleen Williams ruled that Norwegian would likely succeed in

One of Quinn's fellow captains, Jim Morash, told the *New Hampshire Union Leader* that she was the first woman to apply for a captaincy, and that her impressive resume made her more than qualified for the position. She served four years on active duty with the Coast Guard and 28 years in the Coast Guard Reserve, and ran the Coast Guard's search-and-rescue operations along the East Coast from Eastport, Maine, down to Cape May, N.J. She commanded both 44-foot motor lifeboats and 41-foot utility boats.

"This is a special vessel and this is a special moment for me," Quinn said during her surprise promotion ceremony aboard the *Mount Washington*.



McHenry took a more roundabout way to the helm. She started out at 13 working for her neighbors, who were the owners of the *Colonial Belle* tour boat. She helped get the ship ready for its seasons on the Erie Canal and eventually became a deckhand, doing everything from handling dock lines to boarding passengers and serving food.

She enjoyed her time there, but didn't think of it as a career and enrolled in college to become a pharmacist. Three semesters later, she realized that life wasn't for her and continued to work her way up to senior deckhand aboard the *Belle*, which involved training and managing staff. When she earned her captain's license at 21, she started working in that role aboard the ship as well.

In 2018, McHenry got a call from a former coworker who suggested that she apply for one of the openings aboard the *Maid of the Mist*. She told the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* that she initially had her doubts.

"It had nothing to do with whether I was qualified. It was almost like, 'Am I worthy enough to run this boat?' Because this is the most famous tour boat in the world. It was almost laughable."

Unbeknownst to her, two people recommended her for the job, and the company interviewed her and immediately offered a position.

To read more about these pioneers, [click here for the *Union Leader's* story about Quinn](#), and [click here for the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle's* story about McHenry](#).

Photo: Above, Capt. Kaitlynn McHenry, with *Maid of the Mist* Boat Tour, holds the controls for the large cords that charge the electric boat between tours to

a court trial against Florida's so-called vaccine passport ban, which threatened businesses with a \$5,000 fine for asking customers to prove that they were vaccinated against COVID-19. Frank Del Rio, president and chief executive officer of Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, said in a statement Sunday that the company welcomed the ruling. He said it "allows us to sail with 100% fully vaccinated guests and crew which we believe is the safest and most prudent way to resume cruise operations amid this global pandemic."

Confirmed coronavirus cases and hospitalizations in Florida are at an all-time high as the delta variant surges around the nation and the world. On Sunday, approximately 1 in 4 hospital beds in Florida had a COVID-19 patient in it. Despite this, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis continues to fight more sweeping coronavirus measures such as mask mandates.

Norwegian said it implements a 100% vaccination level rule for guests and crew members in each port it sails out of around the world. The company is relying on "robust science-backed health and safety protocols" in which vaccines are the "cornerstone" to provide what Norwegian believes is the safest experience for travelers.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, and the latest surge in Florida, the state prohibited Norwegian from implementing its vaccine documentation rule. The company filed its lawsuit in July against Florida's surgeon general and the head of the state's Department of Health after failing to reach an agreement with officials over vaccine requirements. Neither office issued a statement on the judge's ruling Sunday.

Horseshoe Falls on June 29, 2021 (Rochester Democrat and Chronicle). Below, Patricia Quinn shakes hands with Capt. Bob Duffey aboard the MS Mount Washington moments after she was named the first female captain of the ship (New Hampshire Union Leader).

Museum sounds *Andrea Doria* foghorn to remember lost ship

The New Jersey Maritime Museum recently marked the 65th anniversary of the sinking of the *Andrea Doria* by sounding the ship's foghorn for the first time since the Italian Line vessel went down on July 25, 1956.

The artifact was recovered by divers in 2017 and has spent the last several years being painstakingly restored. The process included shipping the foghorn overseas to its original manufacturer - Kockumation based in Malmo, Sweden – and soaking the foghorn's brass parts for two years to remove the corrosion. The museum, located in Beach Haven, brought the divers, *Andrea Doria* survivors and shipwreck historians together for the event.



The ship was approaching the coast of Nantucket when she was hit by the Swedish American Line's *Stockholm*. The *Andrea Doria* stayed afloat for more than 11 hours, allowing the majority of the passengers and crew to be rescued. However, 46 people were killed by the impact, making it the worst maritime disaster to occur in United States waters since the sinking of the *Eastland* in 1915.

In 2016, two New Jersey divers, Joe Mazraani of Millstone and Tom Zajac of Washington Township discovered the foghorn within the ship's debris field. The vessel sits in 250 feet of water and is classified as a dangerous dive because of the depth, strong currents, poor visibility and deteriorating condition. Officials say 22 people have lost their lives exploring the ship. When they returned in 2017, it took Mazraani and Zajac a week to raise the horn because it was stuck under a bridge.

Although the wreckage is owned by Tom Moyer, Mazraani said he was allowed to keep the foghorn and showcase it at exhibits. For more detail on the ceremony, or to hear the foghorn for yourself, [click here for a great story in the Asbury Park Press](#).

Norwegian is just one of many cruise lines that operate out of Florida, and many are eager to get back to business. To date, the halt in operations during the pandemic cost Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, which operates the Norwegian Cruise Line, Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises brands, more than \$6 billion.

Photo: The *Norwegian Gem* is scheduled to cruise from Miami on Sunday with only fully vaccinated crew and passengers after a federal judge granted an injunction from a Florida law ([Meyer Werft shipyard](#)).

New WSS talk to focus on Italian Line glamour

Our friends at the World Ship Society – Port of New York Branch are celebrating the glitz of the Italian Line in a **virtual presentation on Friday, August 27, at 6 p.m.** Wolfsonian chief curator Silvia Barisione will discuss the Italian Line collections from both The Wolfsonian–Florida International University in Miami Beach, Florida, and The Wolfsoniana–Palazzo Ducale Fondazione per la Cultura in Genoa, Italy. [Click here to register now.](#)

Posters, brochures, design drawings, and furnishings will illustrate the history of the Italian Line, which began in 1932 when Benito Mussolini merged the Genoa-based Navigazione Generale Italiana with Turin's Lloyd Sabaudo and Trieste's Cosulich line.

Photo: The New Jersey Maritime Museum displays the foghorn from the *Andrea Doria* on the 65th anniversary of its sinking (Asbury Park Press).

Nominations sought for 2021 SSHSA Awards

[Nominations are now open for the next round of SSHSA Awards](#), which recognize vessels, individuals and organizations for their contributions to maritime history. The following categories will be considered this year:

Candidates for **Ship of the Year** may be submitted for all types of vessels, including tugboats, yachts, cruise ships and museum ships. Not all categories may be awarded, depending on the number of submissions we receive.

Jay Allen Award for Distinguished Editorial Service to SSHSA publications. Jay Allen, one of SSHSA's seven founders, published the first Steamboat Bill of Facts in April 1940, assisted by C. Bradford Mitchell. Steamboat Bill of Facts, subsequently renamed Steamboat Bill, and now PowerShips, has been published continuously without fail, and today is recognized as the most comprehensive and best publication of its kind.



The **C. Bradford Mitchell Award** is bestowed upon an individual, institution or agency in recognition of a single achievement, such as an important book, or founding of an institution contributing to the goals, objectives and mission of the Steamship Historical Society of America.

The **Samuel Ward Stanton Award for Lifetime Achievement** recognizes the accumulated value of on-going work in our areas of concern.

The **H. Graham Wood Award for Distinguished Service to SSHSA** recognizes an individual for their long-time dedication and service to the Steamship Historical Society of America.

SSHSA may also honor additional heritage ships, longtime SSHSA members, and maritime leaders worthy of special recognition.

[Click here for the rules and a nomination form.](#) **Please submit by October 15, 2021**, for this round of consideration.

Featuring its two largest pre-war liners, the *Rex* and *Conte di Savoia*, the Italian Line carried out an extensive advertising campaign, drawing attention to technological innovation and luxurious interior décor, characterized by exuberant historicist furnishings.

When you have registered for a program, you will receive an email that includes a link to join the meeting. If you do not already have Zoom on your computer, you will be prompted to download and install the software. If you do not wish to install it, you can also click on the “Join from your browser” link. A Zoom account is not necessary to attend; however you do have to register with your name and a valid email using one or both of the links above.

If you have any further questions, please contact us at 401-463-3570 or info@sshsa.org.

AMMV to unveil new mariner honor at annual meeting

After a two-year wait because of the pandemic, the American Merchant Marine Veterans National Convention is set to return September 21-24 at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, Maryland. In addition to an action-packed lineup of speakers and special guests, the event will also unveil the design of a special Congressional Gold Medal for World War II merchant mariners and celebrate the life of Captain Hugh Mulzac, the first African-American captain in the Merchant Marine.

Photo: The *Delta Queen*, SSHSA's 1998 Ship of the Year (Braun Brothers Collection, SSHSA Archives).

Underwater expedition seeks info on packet boats lost in Erie Canal

The State of New York recently launched an underwater exploration project to capture never-before-seen images of intact shipwrecks on the bottom of Seneca Lake, some dating all the way back to the early 19th century. The discoveries made will enhance future curriculum and educational material for students learning about the iconic Erie Canal and the state's canal system, and provide additional information on water quality and the lake's ecosystem.



Launching from the marina at Sampson State Park, the research team is working in Seneca Lake this summer with newly acquired deep-water remote-operated vehicle technology, which enables the capture of high-resolution imaging of a collection of intact canal shipwrecks in the deepest regions of Seneca Lake. Earlier expeditions in 2018 and 2019, previously uncovered the remains of up to 16 canal boats from the early 19th century—including what is believed to be the first-ever identified intact remains of a canal packet boat dating back to the early 1800s.

Packet boats were the marvel of their age as they moved travelers east and west along the new Erie Canal route across New York State between the Hudson River and the Great Lakes. Even before the Erie Canal was completed in 1825, these passenger-carrying packet boats began operating on the newly completed sections of the canal. They were an instant success, extending travel to every community served by the new Erie Canal and the adjoining smaller canals.

Packet boats revolutionized travel until the new railroads began to offer passenger service along many of the same routes. Most packet boats disappeared before the age of photography and most of what is known of their design comes from paintings and other illustrations from their time.

"We are merging historical and technological achievements to bring the story of a New York State gem, the Erie Canal, to life," New York Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul said. "Not only will the history we uncover help us build a deeper bond with the bold and audacious legacy of our state, but it will also further aid in our mission for a greener

Conference fees are \$50 for the first registrant and \$25 for each additional person. Tickets to the Congressional Gold Medal Dinner on September 23 are \$30 for registered conference attendees or \$60 for the general public. Visit www.ammv.us for more details.

Among those scheduled to attend and speak are: Dave Yoho, a World War II veteran and motivational speaker; radio and television personality Rita Cosby; maritime historian Dr. Salvatore Mercogliano; author William Geroux; maritime artist and SSHSA member Captain Brian Hope; and the descendants of Captain Mulzac, who will be displaying memorabilia.

The Merchant Marine, often referred to as the "Fourth Arm of Defense," has long fought for recognition among America's armed forces. During World War II alone, an estimated 215,000 merchant mariners delivered nearly 270 billion long tons of cargo while suffering more than 9,500 casualties. Despite this, members of the merchant marine were not given veteran status until 1988.

The bipartisan Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act was passed and signed into law in March 2020. Awarded by the Congress, the Congressional Gold Medal honors those whose dedication, heroism, and public service has created a lasting impact on American history. The United States Mint will design and strike the medal, and it will be awarded by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Contact Us

tomorrow - protecting our state's environmental interests and helping us better understand our local ecosystems."

The research group's discoveries come at the same time of the ongoing state-supported replica construction of the Seneca Chief, Governor DeWitt Clinton's 1825 Canal packet boat, at Buffalo's Canalside Longshed Building, as well as the recent announcement by the United States Mint of a new \$1 American Innovation Coin from New York featuring a packet boat navigating on the historic Erie Canal. The coin will be available for public purchase from the U.S. Mint this summer.

Photo: New York Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul (left) and New York State Sen. Pamela Helming are briefed on the history of canal packet boats and the discoveries of vessels that shipwrecked in Seneca Lake (New York State Canal Corporation).

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.

August 21 to December 18

Virtual Chantey Sing

Saturdays at 11:00 AM

Free to participate, but donations are accepted; [click here for more information](#)

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

San Francisco, CA

<https://www.nps.gov/safr/index.htm>

August 22

Morro Bay "Once" the Abalone Capital of the World!

6:30 PM

\$15 for general admission, \$10 for museum members; tickets available by calling 602-526-4367

Morro Bay Maritime Museum

Morro Bay, CA

<https://morrobaymaritime.org>

August 26

Evening Lecture: The Coast Guard Art Program (COGAP)

7:00 PM

Free virtual lecture; [click here to register](#)

The Mariners' Museum and Park

Newport News, VA

www.marinersmuseum.org

August 27

Italian Line Glamour

6:00 PM

Free virtual lecture; [click here to register](#)

World Ship Society - Port of New York Branch

New York, NY

www.worldshipny.com

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August 28 and 29

Seaport Maritime Weekend
10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
\$10 for adults; \$8 for senior citizens, members of the military and children ages 6-17; and free for Seaport members and children age 5 and younger
Foss Waterway Seaport
Tacoma, WA
www.fosswaterwayseaport.org

August 28

SS *City of Milwaukee* 90th Anniversary Celebration
11:00 AM
RSVP to Linda Spencer at linjoyspencer49@yahoo.com
SS *City of Milwaukee*
Manistee, MI
www.carferry.com

August 20 to 22

29th Annual Wooden Boat Show
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
\$28.95 for adults, \$26.95 for senior citizens, \$24.95 for children ages 13-17, and \$18.95 for children ages 4-12
Mystic Seaport Museum
Mystic, CT
www.mysticseaport.org

September 12

Haydn Voyages: Music at the Maritime
Held aboard the steamer *Berkeley*
4:00 PM
\$50 for VIP reserved seating, \$25 for general admission, \$20 for museum members, and \$10 for students and the military; [click here for tickets](#)
Maritime Museum San Diego
San Diego, CA
www.sdmaritime.org

September 12

Thinking About Climate Change: History and Policy
2:00 to 5:00 PM
Free, but donations are accepted; [click here for tickets](#)
Maine Maritime Museum
Bath, ME
www.mainemaritimemuseum.org

October 22 to 30

Haunted Harbor Tours
[Click here for times](#)
\$25
Galveston Historic Seaport
Galveston, TX
www.galvestonhistory.org



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Bryan Lucier, Editor, *Ahoy!*

SSHSA is a nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization funded by donations from members and friends. SSHSA is dedicated to sharing the maritime heritage of powerful ships, legendary passengers and hardworking crews. Gifts to SSHSA are appreciated and may be considered tax-deductible.

[Renew Your Membership Today](#)

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