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## Lost ship reappears from Bermuda Triangle

Researchers have unraveled a Bermuda Triangle mystery 94 years in the making. Unfortunately for those who love conspiracy theories, it had nothing to do with any ghosts, devils or little green men.

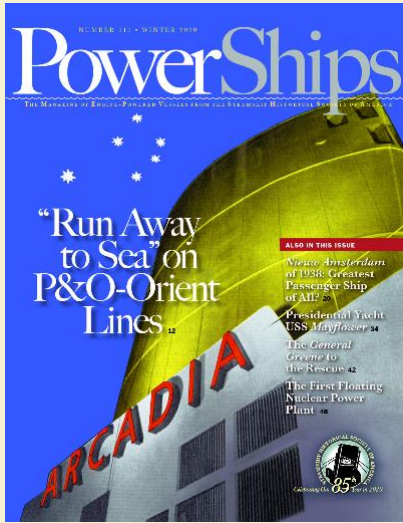
The SS *Cotopaxi* left Charleston, South Carolina, in 1925 with a crew of 32 and a load of coal. But on its journey to Havana, Cuba, it crossed through the area popularly known as the Bermuda Triangle and was never seen again. Rumors of unusual disappearances in this area – which forms a loose triangle between Florida, Bermuda and Puerto Rico – first appeared in a 1950 article in the Miami Herald. Those stories grew throughout the years and began taking on supernatural elements the more they were retold.



The legend of the *Cotopaxi* even caught the attention of Steven Spielberg, who had the ship mysteriously appear in the desert during his 1977 movie "Close Encounters of the Third Kind."

In reality, the *Cotopaxi* was about 35 nautical miles off the eastern coast of St. Augustine, Florida. Known only as the Bear Wreck, it has been known by divers for decades. Suspecting the area might contain the remains of the *Cotopaxi*, biologist Michael Barnette took measurements of the wreck, looked at historical newspaper articles and insurance records, and examined artifacts found at the site. He worked with the Science Channel to produce a show about the find, which aired earlier this month.

The real reason for the ship's disappearance was a storm off the coast of the eastern United States. Distress calls sent on December 1, 1925, were received in Jacksonville, Florida, not far from where the wreck is today. There was also a lawsuit filed by surviving family members that



## The Winter issue of *PowerShips* has landed

Issue #312 of *PowerShips* features articles about the P&O-Orient Lines, the 1938 *Nieuw Amsterdam*, the *General Greene*, the presidential yacht *USS Mayflower*, and the first floating nuclear power plant. 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

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.

alleged the hatch covers were broken on the ship, allowing water to easily enter the cargo holds.

[You can see the entire Science Channel episode online right now by clicking here.](#)

**Photo: Michael Barnette diving the Bear Wreck, which was ultimately identified as the missing *Cotopaxi* (Science Channel, Discovery Communications LLC).**

## Project Liberty Ship teams with maritime corporation to find *John W. Brown* new home

Project Liberty Ship and the *SS John W. Brown* have a new home after working with Maritime Applied Physics Corp. (MAPC) on an \$18 million plan to revitalize a portion of the former Bethlehem Steel Fairfield Shipyard. The project will provide a home base for the ship's education and cruise activities, and support MAPC's growing shipbuilding and maritime technology operations.

The proposal will utilize federal and state funding, in addition to corporate and individual donations, to rebuild a fitting-out pier at the former yard in South Baltimore. The pier would be owned and administered by a non-profit entity.



Project Liberty Ship operates the *John W. Brown* as a memorial to the vital wartime role of the U.S. Merchant Marine, U.S. Navy Armed Guard, and American shipbuilding personnel, three groups instrumental to victory in World War II as well as world-wide sealift operations in support of U.S. national security interests ever since. Its aim is to honor the legacy of all veterans.

The ship, a familiar sight on Baltimore's Canton waterfront since it returned to the city in 1988, was launched at the Bethlehem-Fairfield shipyard on Labor Day in 1942. Since restoration began, it has sailed more than 25,000 miles, visiting 29 North American ports with its trademark "living history" cruises that feature 1940s-era entertainment and fly-bys from vintage aircraft.

It was just a couple of months ago that Project Liberty Ship officials reached out to the public asking for waterfront space or connections that could keep the ship in Baltimore. With its lease set to expire at the end of January, the organization had been looking for a new home for years, but couldn't find an area large enough to accommodate the ship. Named after a shipbuilding labor leader, it is listed in the



## Weekend to honor sailors of *Daniel J. Morrell* disaster

More than 50 years after the *Daniel J. Morrell* broke up in a strong storm on Lake Huron, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum and Great Lakes Lore Museum are honoring the 29 men who were aboard with a first-of-its kind exhibit.

On Saturday, June 6, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point, Michigan, will debut a collection that features artifacts from the ship, historical data, dive footage, photos of the entire crew and much more. There also will be guest speakers discussing findings from a recent dive study and new research from Great Lakes Marine Historian John DeBeck and vintage ship experts from the Fincantieri Marine Group.

National Register of Historic Places, which designates sites and objects worthy of preservation in America.

The plan is expected to take about two years to complete. Project Liberty Ship officials will secure interim dockage until the Fairfield pier is ready.

**Photo:** The *John W. Brown* steams off the coast of New York on March 18, 1944 (SSHSA Archives).

## Get your Ocean Liner Gala tickets before the price goes up

Ocean Liner Gala V is coming up fast, and so is your last chance to purchase tickets for \$150. Prices will increase in less than a week, [click here to lock in your seat now!](#)

The event will be held Saturday, May 2, at the historic Squantum Association in East Providence, Rhode Island. The theme of the evening is the United States Lines, a company that started with just



three ships in the 1920s and rose to prominence with some of the biggest names in transatlantic travel: the *America*, the *Leviathan*, and “Big U” herself, the SS *United States*. The *United States* launched in 1952 as the biggest ocean liner ever built in this country and the world’s fastest ocean liner – two statements that stand to this day.

Featuring a multi-course meal recreated from some of the finest United States Lines cuisine ever served, the fundraiser will also include a reception and silent and live auctions. The \$150 price is good through March 3, after which they increase to \$200. To reserve a spot, call 401-463-3570, [click here to purchase tickets online](#), or email [info@sshhsa.org](mailto:info@sshhsa.org).

Don’t miss out – we hope to see you there!



The following night, June 7, will see all 29 sailors inducted posthumously into the Sailors Hall of Fame at the Great Lakes Lore Museum in Rogers City, Michigan.

Making the last run of the season on November 29, 1966, the *Daniel J. Morrell* was caught in 70 mph winds and faced swells that topped 25 feet. The ship broke up in the weather and was reported missing early the next morning. By the time the Coast Guard helicopter arrived, there was only one survivor: watchman Dennis Hale. Hale, who wrote a book called "Shipwrecked" about his experiences aboard the ship, died of cancer in 2015.

In addition to the exhibit and the Hall of Fame ceremony, there are two boat tours taking place on Thursday, June 4, that will involve surviving family members and show how the sailors lived and worked aboard the *Morrell*.

For more information and details about how to register for the special events, email [jmdhoops@hotmail.com](mailto:jmdhoops@hotmail.com), call 920-857-9670, or write to PO Box 62, Suamico, WI 54173.

**Photo: The *Daniel J. Morrell*** ([www.twincities.com](http://www.twincities.com)).



## Former *Stockholm* may be headed for her final voyage

A ship that many assumed was already long gone may be on her way for retirement. Cruise and Maritime Voyages said it will not be renewing its contract

## SS United States Conservancy President Susan Gibbs to highlight second U.S. Lines talk

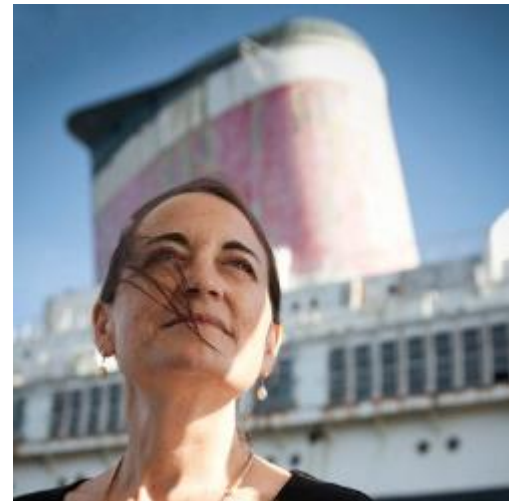
SSHSA's 85th anniversary year is starting out strong with a Distinguished Speaker Series focused on one of the most prominent names in transatlantic travel: the United States Lines. The three-program event continues with "The SS *United States*: Origins, Triumphs, and Future Prospects" with Susan Gibbs, president and cofounder of the SS United States Conservancy and granddaughter of SS *United States* designer William Francis Gibbs.

**When: Saturday, April 18, 2 p.m.**

**Where: Ship History Center, 2500 Post Road, Warwick, RI**

**Register: [blucier@sshhsa.org](mailto:blucier@sshhsa.org), 401-463-3570**

Once the crown jewel of the United States Lines, the SS *United States* has been docked in Philadelphia for 24 years as groups work to save this national icon. Since 2009, the SS United States Conservancy has been raising money and working with firms to come up with ways to turn the ship into a multipurpose waterfront complex. While she may never be at sea again, there are some key caveats that will help preserve her legacy. Any redevelopment plan that is accepted must preserve the ship's profile and exterior design, and include approximately 25,000 square feet for an onboard museum.



Gibbs has given presentations throughout the country on the SS *United States* and maritime history, and has appeared in multiple media outlets, including the NBC Nightly News, National Public Radio, CNN, CBS Sunday Morning, Agence France-Presse, Channel N24 (Germany), and Al-Jazeera America. She has also worked for over two decades in the philanthropic sector with a focus on global women's issues.

The program is free and open to the public, but space is limited and this one is sure to fill up fast. It's a great chance to visit the Ship History Center if you haven't been here for a while and to meet with some of your fellow ship lovers. Register now by calling SSHSA at 401-463-3570 or emailing [blucier@sshhsa.org](mailto:blucier@sshhsa.org).

with MV *Astoria*, one of the oldest cruise liners currently sailing, and that she will finish the year with trips from England in March, April, September and October. If that is indeed the end of the line, it will just be a small chapter in a long and storied career.

Don't recognize the name? It's not surprising because she's had 11 of them. But the one that she's most famous for is her first, the *Stockholm*. Under the flag of the Swedish American Line, she was part of one of the most well-known maritime disasters in history – the sinking of the *Andrea Doria*. The two ships collided in the waters off of Nantucket in 1956, killing 46 people and sending the Italian ship to the bottom of the ocean. But despite heavy damage, the *Stockholm* lived on.

In the ensuing decades, she's been sold, chartered and attacked by pirates, but kept on steaming. This isn't even the first time she's been rumored for retirement. Cruise and Maritime Voyages initially said that the *Astoria* would be leaving the fleet in 2017, but reversed its decision and added a winter cruise from Puerto Penasco in Mexico. Its final sailing will be a 13-night cruise from Hull to North Cape in October.

Officials haven't said whether she will be sold or scrapped, though cruise experts said there may not be much of a market for a 73-year-old ship. But she's certainly survived longer odds than this.

**Photo: The former *Stockholm* steaming under the name *Volkerfreundschaft*. She has had a long career under many names following her collision with the *Andrea Doria* (SSHSA Archives).**

## Contact Us

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

**Photo: SS United States Conservancy President Susan Gibbs (@susangibbs1).**

## Longtime member offers full run of *Steamboat Bill/PowerShips*

Longtime SSHSA member Ed Ryan is cleaning out some of his maritime memorabilia and is offering a complete run of SSHSA's quarterly journal going all the way back to issue number 1. If you are interested in making a reasonable offer for all 312 *Steamboat Bill* and *PowerShips* magazines, **contact Ed directly at 860-884-2255.**

## 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.*

### February 27

Maritime Stories: Life on the Water  
6:00 PM  
\$5 for members; \$10 for nonmembers  
National Lighthouse Museum  
Staten Island, NY  
[www.lighthousemuseum.org](http://www.lighthousemuseum.org)

### March 14

Presentation: The Ships That Built the West  
1:00 PM  
Free  
Malaga Cove Library  
Palos Verdes Estates, CA  
[www.lamaritimemuseum.org](http://www.lamaritimemuseum.org)

### March 15

Winter Film Series: Angels of the Sea  
2:00 PM  
Free  
Dossin Great Lakes Museum  
Detroit, MI  
[www.detroithistorical.org](http://www.detroithistorical.org)

### March 25

Spring Lecture Series: Heroic Age of Diving  
7:00 PM  
Free for members; \$11 for nonmembers  
National Museum of the Great Lakes  
Toledo, OH  
[www.nmgl.org](http://www.nmgl.org)

### March 28

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Disco On Deck fundraiser

6:00 PM  
\$75 per person  
Battleship *Iowa*  
Los Angeles, CA  
[www.pacificbattleship.com](http://www.pacificbattleship.com)

#### **April 14**

Salty Dawgs Lecture Series: U-boats off the North Carolina Coast  
2:00 PM  
Free  
Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum  
Hatteras, NC  
[www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com](http://www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com)

#### **April 18**

"The SS *United States*: Origins, Triumphs, and Future Prospects"  
2:00 PM  
Free  
Ship History Center  
Warwick, RI  
[www.sshsa.org](http://www.sshsa.org)

#### **May 1**

"The Founding of the United States Lines: A Tale for its Time"  
4:00 PM  
Suggested donation \$25  
Ship History Center  
Warwick, RI  
[www.sshsa.org](http://www.sshsa.org)

#### **May 2**

Ocean Liner Gala V featuring the United States Lines  
5:00 PM  
\$150 per person through March 3; \$200 after that date  
Squantum Association  
East Providence, RI  
<https://www.sshsa.org/support/oceanlinergala>



*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!*

**[Renew Your Membership Today](#)**

SSHSA, 2500 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886

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