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USCGC icebreaker clears the way for medical emergency in Michigan

The Coast Guard responded to an urgent request for medical assistance on Mackinac Island earlier this month in an unusually improvisational way.

On Monday, February 7, the Coast Guard received notification of a woman in need of critical medical attention on Mackinac Island.

While helicopters are generally used for such missions, difficult weather conditions at the Coast Guard's air station in Traverse City made that impossible. Fortunately, Coast Guard Cutter *Katmai Bay*, a 140-foot icebreaker, was underway clearing a path on the St. Marys River, and the crew immediately altered plans and set a course for Mackinac Island.



Katmai Bay arrived at the island's main dock about 11 a.m. and transported the woman with the help of local medical staff. The ship then used its icebreaking capabilities to plow a course to nearby St. Ignace in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where an emergency crew was waiting. The woman was successfully transported to a local hospital where she is receiving next-level care.

"Today's efforts by our crews demonstrate the flexibility and ingenuity of our search and rescue planners in finding solutions to complex cases, regardless of the weather," said Capt. Anthony Jones, sector commander of Sector Sault Ste. Marie, which encompasses all of Lake Superior and the northern portion of lakes Huron and Michigan. "My hat is also off to the crew of the *Katmai Bay*, who shifted from icebreaking to search and rescue in a matter of moments to help this woman get the critical care she needed."

The Winter issue of *PowerShips* has landed

Issue #320 of *PowerShips* magazine is available now, featuring the following stories:

- Passport to Romance: A Collector's Obsession with Ships on LP Covers
- Carnival's Inaugural Ship: The *Mardi Gras*
- Big Mama: Towboat *Sprague*
- Long-Forgotten Ships & Two Italian Legends

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](#), [Tumblr](#) and [YouTube](#) to stay up to date on all things #shiphistory.



Caption: Crew members from Coast Guard Cutter *Katmai Bay* and emergency workers escort a patient on Mackinac Island, Michigan, on February 7. The ship diverted from its icebreaking mission on the St. Marys River to offer assistance when helicopters were grounded because of the weather conditions (Photo: U.S. Coast Guard).

Navy makes historic promotion aboard 'Old Ironsides'

Commander Billie J. Farrell assumed leadership of the USS *Constitution* during a historic change-of-command ceremony held late last month. As the 77th commanding officer, Farrell is the first woman to serve as captain in the ship's 224-year history.

Farrell is a native of Paducah, Kentucky, and a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and the University of Arkansas. She previously served as the executive officer aboard the Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS *Vicksburg* (CG 69).



"I hope to strengthen the legacy of USS *Constitution* through preservation, promotion and protection by telling her story and connecting it to the rich heritage of the United States Navy and the warships serving in the fleet today," she said.

"I know the crew is in great hands with Commander Farrell," said former Commander John Benda, who has been at the helm of the *Constitution* since February 2020.

"This historic barrier is long overdue to be broken. I cannot think of a better candidate to serve as USS *Constitution*'s first female commanding officer. I look forward to watching what she and the crew accomplish in the next few years."

The first female crew member was Rosemarie Lanam, an enlisted sailor, who joined USS *Constitution*'s crew in 1986. The first female commissioned officer to serve aboard the ship was Lt. Cmdr. Claire V. Bloom, who served as an executive officer and led the historic 1997 sail, the first time Old Ironsides sailed under her own power since 1881. Today, women comprise more than one third of the 80-person crew.

USS *Constitution* is the world's oldest commissioned warship afloat and played a crucial role in the Barbary Wars and the War of 1812, actively defending sea lanes from 1797 to 1855. It was undefeated in



Burning cargo ship feared total loss

As the saga of the *Felicity Ace* continues to unfold, some industry experts say the extent of the damage may extend far beyond the cargo onboard.

The Panama-registered vessel caught fire on February 16 while on its way to Rhode Island from Germany carrying thousands of luxury cars. Pictures of the ship burning in the Atlantic Ocean off the southwest coast of the Azores have circulated the globe for days before the flames were finally extinguished.

Part of the challenge in putting the fire out was the fact that several of the vehicles on board were electric. The captain of the port in Faial, Azores, told Reuters that the lithium-ion batteries were “keeping the fire alive,” and that “traditional water extinguishers do not stop lithium-ion batteries from burning.”

While there is still work to be done on the vessel itself, industry experts are already speculating on what the incident will mean to the marine insurance industry as a whole. The Ireland-based company Skytek, which uses satellites to track asset movement and offer risk analysis, released a report this week that states the financial implications of the *Felicity Ace* fire will be massive.

“The estimated market value of the *Felicity Ace* is \$24.5 [million]. The 3,965 cars onboard are confirmed to be 189 Bentleys, along with brands like Porsche, Audi, and Lamborghini, with a starting value from \$99,650 that could exceed a total of \$500 [million],” the report reads. “After a few days of uncontrolled burning, there are fears that the vessel and its cargo may be written off as a total loss.”

battle and destroyed or captured 33 opponents, earning the nickname of Old Ironsides during the war of 1812 when British cannonballs were seen bouncing off the ship’s wooden hull.

The ship partners with the USS Constitution Museum to promote maritime heritage, naval service and the legacy of Old Ironsides, with active-duty sailors providing free tours to the public.

Caption: USS *Constitution* Commander Billie J. Farrell, who became the first female captain of the historic ship late last month. (Photo: U.S. Navy).

SNL stars buy former Staten Island ferry for laughs

An iconic New York ferry found new life last month thanks to the efforts of some well-known locals.

Saturday Night Live stars Colin Jost and Pete Davidson teamed up with comedy club owner Paul Italia to purchase the decommissioned MV *John F. Kennedy* in late January for a reported \$280,100. Jost and Davidson were both raised in the borough, with Davidson even starring in the “The King of Staten Island,” a movie loosely based on his upbringing.



Plans are still in the early stages, but the overall goal is to preserve this piece of New York history by transforming it into a multi-use arts and entertainment venue that will be docked somewhere in the city.

“Everybody involved had the same ambition — not to see this thing go to the scrapyard,” Italia told the New York Post.

The MV *John F. Kennedy* is the last remaining *Kennedy*-class ferry, formerly carrying passengers between Whitehall Terminal in Manhattan and St. George Terminal in Staten Island. Built by the Levingston Shipbuilding Company between 1963 and 1965 for the Department of Marine and Aviation, the 277-foot ship was delivered on May 14, 1965.

The MV *John F. Kennedy* was retired from service in August 2021, and was recently replaced by the MV *Staff Sgt. Michael H. Ollis*, the lead ship of a new trio of ferries collectively known as the *Ollis*-class.

The vessel has been docked at the St. George Ferry Terminal in Staten Island since it was removed from service. Although the buyers were

All 22 crew members were safely evacuated from the ship with the assistance of commercial ships and helicopters in the area. The ship is still believed to be stable, and MOL Shipmanagement Singapore, managers of the *Felicity Ace*, report that there has been no oil leakage observed so far.

Two large tugs have been spraying the vessel to cool the hull so that an assessment team can get on board for an initial salvage estimate. Two additional salvage vessels with additional towing capabilities are on the way to move the ship once it is safe to do so.

Caption: The *Felicity Ace* car carrier burns off the coast of the Azores. Experts say the total losses could be more than \$500 million (Photo: Portuguese Navy).



Two more *Fantasy* ships go to breakers

The scrapping of Carnival's *Fantasy*-class ships continued this month, with one former ship already on the beaches and another one on the way.

The former *Carnival Fascination*, which was sold to Chinese operators Century Cruises and renamed *Century Harmony* in late 2020, arrived at Gadani, Pakistan, earlier this month for shipbreaking. Century intended to use her for cruises along the Yangtze River or as a floating hotel, but those plans were scuttled as the pandemic wore on. She was sold to a company in Singapore that, in turn, sold her off as scrap metal.

The *Fascination* was the fourth ship in the *Fantasy* Class. She was built by Kvaerner Masa-Yards at its Helsinki New Shipyard in Finland and launched in 1994. The 70,367 gt ship supported a crew of 920 and carried more than 2,600 passengers while largely operating out of Puerto Rico.

required to move it 10 days after purchase, city officials have granted a time extension while the group searches for a pier to begin the renovations.

It may help that one high-ranking politician is already behind the plan.

"I love this idea. What a great way to give an NYC icon a second life. Let us know how we can help and we'll be there for the maiden voyage," New York City mayor Eric Adams tweeted shortly after the sale was announced.

Caption: The Staten Island ferry *John F. Kennedy* at Whitehall Terminal in Manhattan in 1969 (Photo: Braun Brothers Collection, SSHSA Archives).

Expedition searching for lost research ship runs into familiar foe

An expedition searching for the wreck of Sir Ernest Shackleton's *Endurance* in Antarctica experienced a bit of déjà vu this week when it became stuck in a patch of ice near the spot the famed explorer's ship was believed to have sunk more than 100 years ago.

The Endurance22 Expedition, headed by the Falklands Maritime Heritage Trust, seeks to locate, survey and film the wreck of the *Endurance*, which was crushed by pack ice while in the Weddell Sea off of Antarctica. Crews left Cape Town, South Africa, earlier this month aboard the SA *Agulhas II*, an icebreaking polar supply and research ship owned by the South African government, and reached the presumed wreck site around February 16.

But in a twist of irony, the *Agulhas II* found itself encased in ice for several hours after a sudden temperature drop. Fortunately, the ship had modern technology on its side and the crew was able to free it using mechanical cranes, engine power and a case of aviation fuel.



"After a tense few hours stuck in the ice, the experience of Captain Knowledge Bengu and his crew really shone through as SA *Agulhas II* broke away and was able to continue the search for *Endurance*," the expedition tweeted on February 22.

This is just the latest loss for the class after *Carnival Fantasy*, *Carnival Imagination* and *Carnival Inspiration* were all sent to the breakers at Aliaga, Turkey, in 2020. In its 2021 Annual Report, Carnival highlighted its efforts to move away from its older stock and be more efficient as cruising returns around the world.

“Our decision to accelerate the exit of 19 ships as part of our fleet optimization strategy resulted in a more efficient fleet overall ...,” the report read. “We achieved a unit cost benefit from the removal of these less-efficient ships from our fleet, which will grow from the delivery of the larger and more efficient ships.”

According to company officials, nearly 15 percent of Carnival’s capacity at the beginning of this year consisted of these recently delivered, larger ships. It also boasted that it was operating the only six cruise ships in the world currently powered by LNG.

Given these statements, it was not a surprise to hear this week that the former *Carnival Sensation* is headed for the same scrapyard in Turkey as the *Fantasy*, *Imagination* and *Inspiration*. The company announced that she would be leaving the fleet earlier this year, but it was unknown at the time whether she would cruise for another line. Like the *Fascination*, she never returned from the industry-wide pandemic pause.

The *Carnival Sensation* was launched in 1993 from the Kværner Masa-Yards. She was 70,367gt and carried more than 900 crew and 2,000 passengers to the Bahamas, Cuba and other Caribbean destinations. She also was chartered to assist with the response to Hurricane Katrina, providing housing for displaced residents and relief workers.

With *Fascination* and *Sensation* out of the picture, the only remaining ships from the *Fantasy* Class are the *Carnival Paradise*, the *Carnival Elation* and the *Carnival Ecstasy*; however, the *Ecstasy* will be retired in October. No further plans have been announced as to whether she will be scrapped or sold.

Caption: The *Carnival Sensation* in better times. The former *Sensation* and *Fascination* will be the fourth and fifth *Fantasy*-Class ships to be scrapped since the beginning of the pandemic (Photo: Carnival).

The *Endurance* headed for the Antarctic under steam and sail on the 1914–1917 Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. It was within 200 miles of its destination in January 1915 when it ran into ice floes and gale winds that eventually left it icebound until the following spring. Shackleton and the crew spent months trying to free the ship and continue the expedition, but the *Endurance* was crushed in the ice and lost in November 1915.

Plans for the *Endurance22* Expedition call for 35 to 45 days at sea using state-of-the-art underwater search vehicles to locate, survey and film the wreck without touching or disturbing it. The technology combines the attributes of autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), which follow a pre-programmed course with no physical link to the surface, and remote operating vehicles (ROVs), which send digital signals through a fiber optic cable to the surface in real time.

In addition to the archeology work taking place, scientists from a variety of world-leading research and educational institutions are conducting studies on sea ice, deep-sea submersibles and the effects of sea ice thickness and strength on the hull and engines of the *SA Agulhas II*.

For live updates on the expedition, visit www.endurance22.org.

Caption: Sir Ernest Shackleton looking overboard at *Endurance* being crushed by ice in 1915 (Photo: The Royal Geographical Society).

Ship that aided daring Dunkirk rescue sold at auction

One of the most historic “little ships,” which aided the evacuation of British troops from the beaches of Dunkirk in World War II and was featured in the Hollywood film recounting the extraordinary tale, was sold at auction this week.

The *Mary Jane*, a 42-foot cabin cruiser, played an important role in the Dunkirk evacuation, which rescued British Expeditionary Forces from northern France while Hitler’s armies advanced. British naval vessels did what they could to evacuate the thousands of soldiers who were trapped, but then a desperate rallying call went out to boat owners across the south coast to help in the effort.



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Hundreds of skippers responded and a flotilla of vessels, ranging from fishing boats to pleasure craft, made the perilous journey across the English Channel under constant bombardment from Hitler's Dive bombers and heavy artillery. The *Mary Jane* was used to get close to the beaches, and then ferry troops to awaiting Naval and larger vessels, making trip after trip, until all had been successfully evacuated.

Details of the sale are not yet available, though the listing stated that bids would start at \$150,000. Because the ship came with a permanent mooring in the heart of London's Docklands, it was touted as "a Central London family home at an extremely affordable price."

The vessel, built in 1926 by Prince Philip's sailing companion and leading boat designer, Uffa Fox, is in various scenes and the end credits of Christopher Nolan's 2017 blockbuster "Dunkirk," which featured Cillian Murphy and Harry Styles. She also participated in the 70th anniversary re-enactment in 2010 and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant in 2012.

The listing for the *Mary Jane* said the ship offers very comfortable accommodation, with berths for five, a galley and a fully functional bathroom. It has been maintained to a high specification throughout and meets full sailing specifications – so it's not just a London home, but a sailing vessel that can be taken out on the rivers and oceans.

Caption: The *Mary Jane* participates in the 75th anniversary celebration of the Dunkirk evacuation. (Photo: mullocksauctions.co.uk).

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 25

The Royal Family and Ships of State: The Politics of Ocean Liner Design and Decoration
6:00 PM
Free; [click here to register](#)
World Ship Society – Port of New York Branch
New York, NY
www.worldshipny.com

March 3

History Happy Hour: The Women Who Made the Lakes Great
5:30 to 7:30 PM
\$30 for members; \$35 for nonmembers
[Click here to register](#)
National Museum of the Great Lakes
www.nmgl.org

March 9

Port of Baltimore: The Wealth in our Water (virtual presentation)
1:00 to 2:00 PM

\$7.50 for nonmembers; 20 percent discount for members

[Click here to register](#)

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

St. Michaels, Maryland

www.cbmm.org

March 10

James Stilphen: Art in the City of Ships

6:00 to 7:00 PM

Free; [click here to register](#)

Maine Maritime Museum

Bath, ME

www.mainemaritimemuseum.org

March 12

Leisure on the Lakes (virtual presentation)

10:30 to 11:45 AM

\$12 for members, \$15 for nonmembers

[Click here to register](#)

Detroit Historical Society

Detroit, MI

www.detroithistorical.org

March 17

Team Sail Like a Girl: True Grit – Winning the Race to Alaska (virtual presentation)

7:00 PM

\$12 for members, \$17 for nonmembers, free for students

[Click here to register](#)

Mystic Seaport Museum

Mystic, CT

www.mysticseaport.org

March 21

Interview with Commander Billie J. Farrell, Commanding Officer,
USS *Constitution* (virtual presentation)

12:00 to 1:00 PM

Free; [click here to view the presentation on Facebook](#)

National Museum of the U.S. Navy

Washington, D.C.

<https://www.history.navy.mil/>

April 23 and 24

Maritime Carving

10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

\$100 for members, \$150 for nonmembers

Independent Seaport Museum

Philadelphia, PA

www.phillyseaport.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.

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