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## Viking's new expedition ship largest ever to cruise Great Lakes

The 2022 Great Lakes cruising season has just started, but it's already setting records.

Viking Cruises' new expedition vessel, the *Viking Octantis*, is turning heads as it makes its maiden voyage to the Midwestern United States and Canada this month; mainly because the 665-foot ship has earned the designation as the biggest passenger ship ever to ply the lakes.

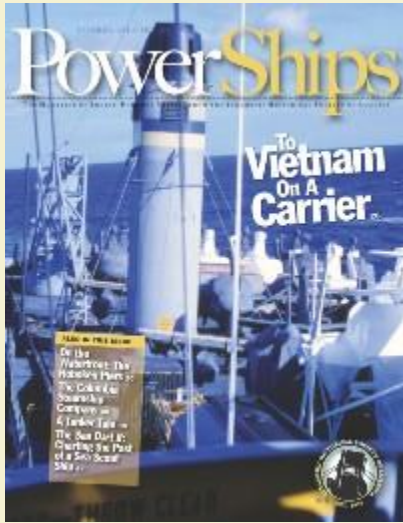


This is Viking's first foray into the Great Lakes and exciting news for an industry that has seen two years of disrupted service because of the COVID pandemic. The ship currently offers six itineraries that range from 8 to 16 days and makes multiple stops around Michigan, Wisconsin and up into Canada.

Viking took delivery of the new vessel at Fincantieri's VARD shipyard in Søviknes, Norway, in December. An identical sister ship, *Viking Polaris*, is expected to join the fleet in August for journeys to the Arctic and Antarctica. The ships were designed by the internationally acclaimed interior design firm Rottet Studio of Los Angeles, who also designed Viking's award-winning Longships and ocean ships. SMC Design of London contributed with their expertise in the maritime sector.

The new polar-class ships host 378 guests in 189 staterooms. The new ships are purpose-built for luxury expeditions and feature several high-end amenities, including an enclosed, in-ship marina that allows passengers to be shielded from wind and waves when they leave for excursions. The vessels also boast an onboard science lab that works in partnership with the University of Cambridge and Akvaplan-Niva to carry out environmental research during the voyages.

For more information, visit <https://www.vikingcruises.com/expeditions>.



## The Spring issue of *PowerShips* has landed

Issue #321 of *PowerShips* magazine is available now, featuring the following stories:

- To Vietnam on a Carrier
- On the Waterfront: The Hoboken Piers
- The Columbia Steamship Company
- A Tanker Tale
- The *Sea Dart II*: Charting the Past of a Sea Scout Ship

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

**Caption:** The *Viking Octantis* is making its way around the Great Lakes this month as Viking Cruises debuts its first cruises in this area of the United States and Canada. (Photo: Viking Cruises)

## National Maritime Day event offers last look at intact *Savannah* engine, reactor components

For the first time in three years, officials aboard the NS *Savannah*, the *John W. Brown* and other historic Baltimore-based ships are welcoming the community for its annual National Maritime Day celebration.

The event will take place this Sunday, May 22, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Canton Pier 13, 4601 Newgate Street, Baltimore. Maritime enthusiasts will have a chance to see local working tugs, pilot launches, fire boats, U.S. Coast Guard vessels and police marine units in addition to tours aboard the *Savannah* and *John W. Brown*. Maritime industry groups will host exhibits throughout the day, and a National Maritime Day Commemoration will take place on board the *Savannah* beginning at 11:30 a.m.



This is also an opportunity to take a peek at the *Savannah* before she takes the next steps in an extensive decommissioning project. Visitors will be able to see the engine room and reactor compartment as they have in years past, but this will be the final year that all of her components will be intact inside the containment vessel. Some small pipes and other equipment were dismantled last year as part of the project, and larger components will be removed in sequence beginning next month. The nuclear reactor itself is scheduled to be taken out by the end of this year.

The decommissioning and decontamination are necessary steps as officials look to turn the National Historic Landmark into a vibrant waterfront attraction.

Built in the 1950s at a cost of \$46.9 million, the *Savannah* was a demonstration project for the potential use of nuclear energy. She was in service between 1962 and 1972 as one of only four nuclear-powered cargo ships ever built. She spent time as a museum ship in South Carolina in the 1980s and 1990s and resided with James River Merchant Marine Reserve Fleet near Newport News, Virginia, before heading to Baltimore.

SSHSA also held its 2019 annual meeting aboard the *Savannah*. [Click here to see a photo album from the event.](#)

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.



## Port negotiations underway with key West Coast union

With the United States already greatly affected by supply chain woes, officials are keeping a close eye on negotiations with West

**Caption:** A portion of the NS *Savannah's* engine room is seen here during a tour held in 2019 when SSHSA held its Annual Meeting on board the ship. Some components will be removed or altered beginning next month as part of the decommissioning process. (Photo: SSHSA Archives)

## SSHSA seeking stories for new oral history program

Would you like to play a game with us? Our new educational video program based on oral histories is moving full steam ahead, and we're looking for members, friends and family to share their memories of fun at sea.

SHIPS (Ships, History, Influence, and Power Series) focuses on SSHSA's three themes of immigration, trade and leisure. The first set of videos on immigration, available at



[www.shiphistory.org/SHIPS](http://www.shiphistory.org/SHIPS), included a harrowing tale of someone who fled Czechoslovakia as the Nazis advanced through Europe and another from a woman who came to America post-World War II aboard the SS *United States*. Give them a watch when you get a chance and let us know what you think.

The next topic will be on deck games! Do you have an interesting story to tell about what leisure was like on board? Tell us about it by filling out the form at [www.shiphistory.org/SHIPS](http://www.shiphistory.org/SHIPS) and we will be in touch. Those who participate will briefly discuss their recollections of deck games in an interview with Education Director Aimee Bachari. If you have any questions, please email her at [steam@sshsa.org](mailto:steam@sshsa.org).

Also keep an eye out for a new video coming soon with former SSHSA President Ted Scull, who is generously funding this wonderful program. We just wrapped an hour-long interview with Ted about his first transatlantic journey at the age of 17. This film features images and video from our archives, as well as photos from Ted's personal collection. We hope you enjoy it!

**Caption:** A couple plays shuffleboard in a promotional piece for Cunard. (Photo: [www.cunard.com](http://www.cunard.com))



Coast port workers who were responsible for moving more than 26 million containers of goods last year alone.

The International Longshore and Warehouse (ILWU) and the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) began discussions this month on a new pact to replace the one set to expire on July 1. Both sides have remained cautiously optimistic in the press thus far, saying that they are looking for a fair outcome that avoids any further damage to America's fragile economy. The stakes are high for each group, with the ILWU representing more than 15,000 workers and the PMA acting for 70 ocean carriers and terminal operators that handle goods up and down the West Coast.

One of the key hurdles will be the implementation of automation. ILWU members fear that implementing technology like software-assisted cranes, autonomous vehicles and digital checkpoints will lead to fewer hours on the docks. But a study commissioned by the PMA says that automation is a critical step for the ports to remain competitive and help the country negotiate its supply chain issues.

The reported stated that the last two years have shown that the increased demand cannot be handled by workers alone. And since there are limitations on how much the ports can grow physically, emphasis must be placed on becoming more efficient.

"[The ports] handled record levels of cargo, but backlogs – at times more than 100 ships anchored offshore awaiting berths – underscored the need for the country's largest port complex to enhance terminal efficiency and

## New World Ship Society program to discuss 400 years of ferry history

After recent programs that traveled to Scandinavia and Africa, our friends at the World Ship Society — Port of New York Branch are keeping the next program a little closer to home.

**Patricia M. Salmon will present "History of the Staten Island Ferry" this Friday, May 20, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Eastern on Zoom.** SSHSA members are welcome to attend, but registration is required. [Click here to sign up.](#)

Most people do not realize that ferries to and from Staten Island have existed since the time the indigenous Lenape tribe inhabited what is now New York City. As the island evolved and its transportation system became more elaborate, the ferries that operated also changed. The program will cover more than 400 years of Staten Island ferry service, including the entrepreneurs involved, the ferryboats themselves, and the landings that existed all around what was once an isolated island.



Salmon retired as Curator of History at the Staten Island Museum in 2012 and has been a Staten Island resident for almost 50 years. Ms. Salmon has authored the books *Realms of History: The Cemeteries of Staten Island*, *The Staten Island Ferry: A History, Murder & Mayhem on Staten Island*, and *Staten Island Slayings: Murderers & Mysteries of the Forgotten Borough*.

**There will also be a replay of last month's World Ship Society program, "The Cruise of the *Bou El Mogdad*," this Saturday, May 21, at 1 p.m. Eastern on Zoom.** Tom Rinaldi spoke about the ship, which was built in 1950 to carry passengers, freight and mail on overnight voyages up and down the Senegal River and still makes weekly trips following just about the same route. [Click here to sign up.](#)

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 at the link above.

productivity to accommodate growing container volumes.”

The study focused on automation at two of the 13 container terminals in Los Angeles and Long Beach and found that the higher output resulted in a 31.5 percent increase in hours and an 11.2 percent increase in the number of workers.

In an open letter posted on Facebook, ILWU International President Willie Adams said automation has not gone well in other areas and that it was risky to tamper with an existing system that supports an additional 10 million jobs nationwide and accounts for 12.5 percent of the country’s gross domestic product.

“Other ports have tried this and found that automation not only kills good jobs but does not move more cargo,” he wrote. “In addition to a loss of jobs, automation poses a great national security risk as it places our ports at risk of being hacked as other automated ports have experienced. These attempts should be a concern for our nation as the intention behind them isn’t what’s best for America, but rather what’s best for foreign profits.”

**Caption: Containers are unloaded from ships at the Port of Long Beach-Port of Los Angeles complex on April 7, 2021. (Photo: Reuters, Lucy Nicholson)**

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## Cruising increasingly seen as new retirement goal

Retiring to a life at sea might seem like a reachable goal only for the wealthiest of people, but several

If you have any further questions, please contact us at 401-463-3570 or [info@sshhsa.org](mailto:info@sshhsa.org).

(Photo courtesy of Patricia M. Salmon)

## Queen Mary lifeboats to be broken up as city seeks plan for long-term care of historic ship

An attempt to preserve more than a dozen *Queen Mary* lifeboats has come up short, and officials with the City of Long Beach announced earlier this month that they are moving forward with plans to dispose of the historic crafts.

The lifeboats – which measure 36 feet and 12,000 pounds – were removed from the *Queen Mary* because they were causing undue stress on the vessel’s outer shell. The city kept two lifeboats for restoration and opened up a bidding process to offer the rest to interested preservationists and historical groups.



The boats were offered free of charge, but bidders were responsible for transportation from Long Beach and for lead paint remediation. This proved to be a sticking point, as *The Los Angeles Times* reported that only two bids were received and neither one was finalized. One bidder withdrew their request, while the other did not submit documentation required by the city.

Long Beach officials say the ships will now be safely disassembled. Long Beach Public Works Department spokesperson Joy Contreras told the *Times* that the city “will work to identify potential creative solutions to repurpose elements of the lifeboats.”

Meanwhile, the fate of the *Queen Mary* is also hanging in the balance while officials figure out how to properly repair the historic liner and provide for its long-term care. A proposal to transfer the ship to the Port of Long Beach is coming under criticism after a fiscal study showed that the port would stand to lose \$354 million over the next five years under the arrangement.

The *Long Beach Post News* reported that capital expenditures and repairs are estimated at \$236 million, along with another \$146 in operating expenses. At the same time, the ship is only expected to bring

recent news articles have portrayed it as a sensible move given the recent spike in housing costs.

For some, the move was unintentional. Jeff Farschman, a retired Lockheed Martin vice president who details his travels at <http://amazingvoyages2.blogspot.com/>, told CNBC that his outlook on cruising changed when he was stuck on a Caribbean cruise when Hurricane Ivan struck back in 2004.

"I just kept on extending and extending my time on board because the hurricane ruined my original winter plans," [he said in this article](#). "Ultimately I ended up completing six voyages in a row."

Farschman still maintains a physical home, but estimated that he was spending seven or eight months a year at sea prior to the pandemic.

Seattle, Washington, couple Angelyn and Richard Burk took it a step further and decided to sell their home, retire early and live on ships full-time beginning last year. In [an Independent story that made its way around the international press](#), Angelyn said that they intended to stay in different countries for a month or two at a time. However, they now spend the majority of their time on board, only spending a night or two with friends or relatives on land between cruises.

Even better, they say that it is far more economical than most people think. A former accountant, Angelyn said the cost comes down to about \$43 a day, which includes the cost of lodging, food and drinks. However, it does take a little bit of work finding the best cruise sales and making sure that

in \$38 million in revenue. At that price, it would prohibit future capital expenditures around the port and may even hinder port improvements that are already underway.

For some, the risks associated with preserving the 87-year-old liner far outweigh the potential benefits. Thomas Jelenić, vice president of the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association, told the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners further preservation efforts would not be responsible.

"... The Long Beach Harbor Department analysis should be enough for the city to come to the conclusion that it is time to scrap the *Queen Mary* and allocate resources where they can provide public benefit," Jelenić said.

**Caption: Two of the *Queen Mary*'s lifeboats can be seen at right in this photo taken in February 1961. The City of Long Beach recently decided to dispose of the crafts after a failed bid process. (Photo: SSHSA Archives, Braun Brothers Collection)**

## 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.*

### May 20

Civil War Lecture: USS *Camanche* — The West Coast's Only Ironclad  
12:00 PM to 1:00 PM  
In person and virtual  
Mariners' Museum and Park  
Newport News, VA  
[www.marinersmuseum.org](http://www.marinersmuseum.org)

### May 20

History of the Staten Island Ferry  
6:30 PM  
Free on Zoom; [click here to register](#)  
World Ship Society - Port of New York Branch  
New York, NY  
[www.worldshipny.com](http://www.worldshipny.com)

### May 21 and 22

Classic Workboat Show  
10:00AM to 6:00 PM  
Free  
Historic Ships Wharf at Lake Union Park  
Seattle, WA  
[www.nwseaport.org](http://www.nwseaport.org)

### May 22

National Maritime Day Commemoration and ship tours aboard the NS *Savannah* and the *John W. Brown*  
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

they are using their loyalty points in the most efficient way.

This may be a key demographic for cruise lines going forward. A study from the Cruise Lines International Association showed that more than 50 percent of the travelers in 2018 were over 50 years old, and one-third were 60 or older. As noted in the CNBC article, cruising might provide a lot of the benefits that older folks might find at an assisted living or retirement community at a fraction of the price.

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Free  
Canton Pier 13  
Baltimore, MD  
<http://www.ns-savannah.org/>

**May 24**  
Virtual panel discussion: First Ladies of the Sea  
6:00 PM  
Free; [click here to register](#)  
SS United States Conservancy  
Washington, D.C.  
[www.ssusc.org](http://www.ssusc.org)

**May 28**  
Graffiti Pier kayak paddle  
11:30 AM to 3:30 PM  
\$75  
Independence Seaport Museum  
Philadelphia, PA  
[www.phillyseaport.org](http://www.phillyseaport.org)

**June 10 to 12**  
Spring 2022 Door County Lighthouse Festival  
Multiple tours available ranging from \$45 to \$630, [click here to view a schedule and purchase tickets](#)  
Door County Maritime Museum  
Sturgeon Bay, WI  
[www.dcmmm.org](http://www.dcmmm.org)

**June 24 to 26**  
Wooden Boat Show  
9:00AM to 5:00 PM  
Single-day passes from \$19-\$29; three-day passes from \$30-\$50  
Mystic Seaport Museum  
Mystic, CT  
[www.mysticseaport.org](http://www.mysticseaport.org)



**Steamship Historical Society of America**  
RECORDING, PRESERVING, AND DISSEMINATING THE HISTORY OF ENGINE POWERED VESSELS

**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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