Remembering the
La Guardia

from General Richardson & Leilani to Roosevelt, Atlantis & Emerald Seas

ICEBOUND!
RMS Britannia at Boston, 1844

Century-old Motor Yacht, Mar-Sue

From Peonies to Pirates: The Amazing Story of Jane Shelley

Captain Cobb’s Steamer, the Despatch
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[At top] Crew of the steamer Mackinac, Proctucker, Rhode Island. – Jess Welt Collection, SSHSA Archives.
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ON THE COVER  The liner La Guardia arrives in New York, 1949. Background illustration from a travel brochure during her career as Atlantis. – SSHSA Archives. ABOVE  The cover image in its original form. – Edward O. Clark Collection, SSHSA Archives.

This quarterly magazine has been continuously published by The Steamship Historical Society of America since first appearing as The Steamboat Bill of Facts in 1940.

The Steamship Historical Society of America, Inc. (SSHSA) was organized in 1935 as a means of bringing together those amateur and professional historians interested in the history and development of steam navigation, past and present, and incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1950 as a tax-exempt education corporation.

In addition to PowerShips, the SSHSA produces other books and publications of marine interest, a list of which is available online and from the Warwick headquarters.

SSHS A MEETINGS are normally held annually. Several local chapters also meet regularly.

MEMBERSHIP in SSHSA includes subscriptions to PowerShips, the Telegraph, and Ahoy! Dues are in various classes, beginning at $50.00 for Annual Members.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS, write: Steamship Historical Society of America, 2500 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886

Visit our website at www.sshsa.org
This is the 300th issue of PowerShips/Steamboat Bill. We wouldn’t exist without the herculean efforts of our members who have produced the first-rate articles and columns that have filled 300 issues of our magazine. We thank you and look forward to your continued contributions.

Inside this Issue

- **Captain Nathan Cobb** wanted to start an American trans-Atlantic steam packet line in 1836. Cobb’s steamboat, the Despatch, featured a unique steam propulsion system designed by Phineas Bennet that was especially efficient. James Brown tells us why the effort was doomed from the start.

- **In February 1844**, in the midst of one of the coldest winters in New England memory, hundreds of people from all walks of life came to the icebound Boston harbor to dig a 7-mile long, 100-foot wide channel through the ice so the RMS Britannia could head out to sea. David Longshore tells a compelling story of that freezing event.

- **Steven Duff presents** the amazing story of Jane Shelley, a Chief Officer with the Maersk Line. Her ship is the Maersk Alabama, made famous by its hijacking in 2009 by Somali pirates and the telling of the tale in the movie Captain Phillips. Shelley’s story is a true saga.

- **In Lives of the Liners**, William Miller offers a brief history the extraordinarily varied career of the La Guardia, which began its days in the fall of 1944 as the U.S. troopship General W. P. Richardson. The ship was designed to be adapted as a commercial liner in peacetime, and though there were many challenges, La Guardia (which had 11 different names) had a long and successful career.

- **In 1975 Butch Baxter** bought an old, 65-foot, double-ender motor yacht named Mar-Sue II. He tells us the story of his determination to keep the Mar-Sue going through her 100th birthday, a goal he achieved in April 2015.

- **In “From the Collection,”** Don Leavitt quotes SSHSA benefactor George Hilton’s must-have 1968 book The Night Boat. If you’re interested in reading more from Mr. Hilton’s book, a limited number of copies are still available at HQ through our SSHSA Store!

From the Pilot House
Jim Pennypacker, Editor-in-Chief

**Articles Wanted**
We’re continually looking for articles for the upcoming issues of PowerShips. If you would like to write an article, send me a note (editor@sshsa.org) describing your article idea and we’ll talk. In addition to articles on engine-powered ships of all kinds we’re interested in articles on Ocean Liners, Ship Design, Ship Models, Merchant Marine, Ship Preservation and Memorabilia. Of course, we welcome articles on all topics of interest to SSHSA members.
On SS Philadelphian

Q My great uncle was drowned while firing on a submarine that had torpedoed his ship, the SS Philadelphian. I would be very grateful for any information or photos of this ship.

A The Philadelphian was built in 1891 by Harland & Wolff in Belfast for the Leyland Line and is listed as a steel screw ship of 5,120 registered tons. She had one funnel and four masts. Her dimensions (in feet) were 442.5 by 43.2 by 31 and her master was listed as N. McCallum. Her official number was 99330, and her signal letters were M JWJ. She was registered in Liverpool. She operated under the Leyland Line until about 1915, when she was acquired by the Atlantic Transport Line. She was torpedoed and sank around February 21, 1918, off the Lizard Peninsula (Southern Cornwall, England).

1891 Albemarle

Q Do you have any photos of the Albemarle, built in 1891 for the Old Dominion Steamship Company? I’m interested in any further information, especially whether she was steel or wood built.

A Our archives include an image of the SS Albemarle in the Thomas H. Franklin Collection. The 1915 edition of American Bureau of Ships tells us that her official number was 106893, she was 396 gross tons and she was built in Wilmington, Delaware, by E. Moore, Sons & Company. In 1915 she’s listed as 185 feet long and being constructed of oak and/or hard or yellow pitch pine with iron and copper fittings. By 1920 she was owned by a Greek company, G. Lykiardopulo, which operated her for coastwise shipping in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. In 1920 she foundered off Cape Tuzla.

Researching Hargraves

Q I’m researching a ship that was called Hargraves, built in either 1841 or 1842. Do you have any information about this ship? Do you know if she was American or not?

A In SSHSA’s library we have a register compiled from the National Archives called “American flag vessels enrolled or registered in New York 1789–1867.” A ship called Hargraves is listed, registered as a sailing vessel on October 6, 1847. In this list she is stated as having been built in 1841 in Pittston, Maine, and was 484 tons. This sounds like the vessel you’re looking for, in which case she was indeed American built. 🚪

Do you have a question for Steamboat Bill?

Just email him at...
info@sshsa.org

SS Philadelphian of the Leyland Line was torpedoed in February, 1918. – SSHSA Archives.

SS Philadelphian

1891 Albemarle

Albemarle, built in Wilmington, Delaware. – Thomas H. Franklin Collection, SSHSA Archives.
A Night to Remember!

Come join us in Rhode Island on Saturday, April 8, 2017, as we get together to pay tribute to the Titanic at our second annual Ocean Liner Dinner to benefit the SSHSA Ship History Center.

“Mr. Ocean Liner” Bill Miller will be our guest of honor for the evening, recalling some of the great Atlantic liners that crossed the ocean like floating palaces. Miller is an international authority on the subject of ocean liners and cruise ships, writing nearly 100 books on the subject from early steamers and immigrant ships to liners at war.

The event will be held at the Casino at Roger Williams Park in Providence, Rhode Island. Built in 1896, the building harkens back to the time of Titanic.

Tickets are available right now for $150 each or $250 per couple.

To reserve a spot, or for more information about available sponsorships, call 401-463-3570 or email blucier@sshsa.org. Rooms are available at the Radisson in Warwick by calling hotel sales manager Cheryl LaBanca at 401-598-2119. This is one event that you don’t want to miss.
Full Steam Ahead

10 Years at the Helm

IT’S HARD FOR ME TO BELIEVE THAT MY JOURNEY TO SERVE as Steamship Historical Society of America’s executive director began a decade ago. At the time, back in December of 2006, SSHSA leadership had already greased the skids for major changes. Most importantly, the Board decided that they would make sometimes difficult decisions so that the organization would at least have the opportunity to thrive. That choice to persevere, rather than giving up the ship, was nothing less than daring. The challenges were not easy to overcome – overall membership was declining, new people were not joining, and there were far too many “silos” scattered around the country, causing the revenue stream to continue to diminish. When I was selected for this role in early 2007, I thought that it would take two to three years to set the course for success and turn this great organization around. Boy, was I ever wrong!

YET SOMEHOW, with many setbacks causing course corrections along the way, we have made headway. Our library and archives, with SSHSA’s infallible Astrid Drew being a constant for eight years now, has re-emerged from its years of inaccessible storage. One of the worst days of my job was overseeing the packing and moving of the dormant Baltimore library, heading to Providence for more years of slumber. And one of my best days was just a little while ago, experiencing the first of those same boxes being re-opened and shelved here at The Ship History Center. And what a splendid time it was to have the honor of taking our Rhode Island Congressional Delegation around our new center for personal tours!

IT HAS TAKEN YEARS, but our library catalogue has now been totally re-constructed, and the database is searchable online via our website, www.sshsa.org. I recall vividly the day USCG CDR Marc Cruder called me just after I had started, and asked, in a very professional but assertive way, “When are you going to open up the library again? Don’t you know that you have resources in there that can’t be found anywhere else?” Wow, did that stoke the fire under my boiler! It was awfully kind of him to come here years later for our Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony.

WHILE ONLY A FRACTION of our holdings are available online (a little more than 60,000 through our image porthole), tens of thousands of other documents are available by contacting us or by scheduling a visit to personally examine these materials. Our unique collections are vast. We’ve been fortunate to have a crew of great staff, and interns from several area universities, as well as work-study students from New England Institute of Technology. Our coveted Hudson River Line Collection is finally being processed and stored in museum-quality archival containers. It has over 150 years’ worth of correspondences, documents, and corporate records going back to as early as 1812 and the era of Robert Fulton. What a treasure this will be for researchers, students and members to explore.

MANY GRANTS have been solicited, and thankfully a good percentage have come into reality. The Posner Fine Arts Foundation, The Dibner Family, and The Champlain Foundations grants are the largest commitments to date from private funders. Just last spring we announced our first federal grant, funded through MARAD and administered by the National Park Service.

THROUGH THE YEARS we’ve enjoyed great accomplishments. The one constant is that we’ve always had a group of dedicated people working with us – sometimes small, but always stalwart. People who volunteer their time and provide financial support to this cause. The names and faces of these people have changed over time, sometimes due to unfortunate circumstances, and sometimes due to the natural progression of life. But the vision remains. The concept is becoming reality. And the future is bright. Thanks for a wonderfully interesting, dynamic and never dull 10 years. I’m looking forward to the future working together as we continue to fulfill the mission of SSHSA and advance our essential messaging into the hearts and minds of the next generation.

Kind regards,

Matthew S. Schulte, M.S.
Executive Director
Steamship Historical Society of America
LIVES OF THE LINERS

by William H. Miller

At the Museum of the Merchant Marine at Kings Point, New York, amidst a fine ship model collection, there’s a very fine, highly detailed version of a 1944-built, P2-class troopship in a peacetime passenger configuration. The model is painted in an unidentifiable scheme because the U.S. Maritime Commission was promoting the potential conversion of such ships for commercial use as passenger liners in 1946–47. It was just after World War II ended and the mood was quite optimistic, with the government thinking that the United States lines and others would be quite willing to take on such converted troop transports.
PowerShips

The ship began her days in the fall of 1944 when she was completed as the U.S. troopship General W. P. Richardson by the Federal Shipyards in Kearny, New Jersey. She was one of a series of 11 big, powerful troopers, with a capacity of more than 5,000 military passengers, intended to assist in the quick end of World War II. They were also designed to be adapted as commercial liners in peacetime. That second idea wasn’t easily realized, however, since few American shipping companies seemed interested in running such heavily-built and therefore fuel-guzzling ships like the Richardson.

Assisted by Moran tugs, La Guardia departs New York. – Edward O. Clark Collection, SSHSA Archive.

Troopship General W.P. Richardson in World War II camouflage. – U.S. Navy photo.
In 1948–49 the Richardson was the sole experiment, restyled for 609 passengers in first- and tourist-class quarters as the renamed La Guardia (honoring Fiorello La Guardia, the beloved, late mayor of New York City) for charter to the American Export Lines. She sailed on the reviving New York-Mediterranean passenger trade, running three-week round trips between New York, Gibraltar, Naples and Genoa. She proved very costly and therefore unprofitable, however, and once Export’s new Independence and Constitution were in service in 1951, the La Guardia was returned to the government and used for further troop duties. Afterward she was laid up.
Leilani at Pier B, Port of Vancouver, British Columbia. — Walter E. Frost photo, City of Vancouver archives.
Leilani

The 622-foot Liner returned to commercial passenger service in 1957 as the Leilani for the short-lived Hawaiian-Textron Lines in their service between San Francisco and Honolulu. She was soon out of work again. After being laid up in San Francisco she was seized by the federal government in May 1959 to be put up for auction.

Artist Ray Sullivan’s colorful illustrations, along with creative lettering, lend a festive air to travel brochures for Leilani. — SSHSA Archive.
President Roosevelt

In 1961 the former Leilani went to American President Lines and was refitted to a more luxurious standard for 456 all-first-class passengers as the President Roosevelt. She made trans-Pacific crossings out of San Francisco and Los Angeles, as well as around-the-world cruises.

A streamer-bedecked Roosevelt on the cover of a 1960’s brochure. – SSHSA archive.
The distinguishing feature of the liner’s transformation to President Roosevelt were her streamlined smokestacks with their angled trailing edges. – Author’s collection. (Below) President Roosevelt. – Braun Bros. Collection, SSHSA archive.
**Atlantis**

**In 1970 the 20-knot ship changed hands again, this time leaving the American registry for Greece.** She was greatly rebuilt this time, becoming the 1,069-berth *Atlantis* for the Chandris Lines. As the more modern-looking twin-stacker, she spent half of her year running seven-night cruises between New York and the Bahamas and the remainder on seven-day itineraries out of Freeport, Grand Bahama.

**A New Career**

**But more changes were ahead. In October 1972 she was sold to Eastern Steamship Lines, raised the Panamanian flag and became the *Emerald Seas*. Because of her heavy steel hull, which created extra drag and, therefore, added fuel consumption, she was probably in her most profitable stage in the short, overnight run between Miami and the Bahamas. This kept her employed for the next 20 years.**

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*The former La Guardia underwent a radical modernization of her profile for conversion to Atlantis. – Braun Bros. Collection, SSHSA archive.*
A blend of contemporary artistic styles was used to illustrate the cover of Atlantis brochures. – SSHSA archive.
Stateroom. – Brochure photo, SSHSA archive.

Dining Room. – Brochure photo, SSHSA archive.

Rendevous Bar. – Brochure photo, SSHSA archive.

Picadilly Game Room. – Brochure photo, SSHSA archive.

Mayfair Bar. – Brochure photo, SSHSA archive.

French Cafe. – Brochure photo, SSHSA archive.

Suite aboard Emerald Seas. – Brochure photo, SSHSA archive.

Aquarius Club. – Brochure photo, SSHSA archive.
Aboard Emerald Seas

“We took our very first cruise on the Emerald Seas. We were just beginning, we were young and so we took a short voyage, only three days from Miami to Nassau and Freeport and back,” remembered Mr. and Mrs. George Jordan. “The year was 1973 and the price was right for our budget at the time, only $65 each for a twin-bedded cabin with private shower and toilet. In all, it was quite good: pleasant entertainment, great food and very nice service. The ship had especially large public rooms and so there seemed to be very little crowding.”

Ship of Rumors

When Eastern was being phased out in 1992, the Emerald Seas became a ship of rumors. Would she become a Florida luncheon and gambling ship, making short trips each day? Would she turn into a moored hotel at St. Petersburg in Russia? Or would she run short, one-night cruises out of New York?

Photo of Emerald Seas from a travel brochure. – SSHSA archive.
Nassau with (from left to right) Sunward II, Carnivale, Emerald Seas, Dolphin IV & Galileo in port. – Author’s collection.

The ship’s final days in lay-up in Greece. – Author’s collection.

No pier pressure here, but please make a donation to get us steaming back to sea.

- Ruff Waters

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Other Names

Her owners were unsure and she went through a quick succession of other names: Fantastica, Funfastic, Terrifica and Sapphire Seas. She headed for the Mediterranean, had further repairs and modernization, and then began, in 1997, making short cruises in the Eastern Mediterranean, usually from Cyprus over to Israel and Egypt with groups of budget tourists. A year later she was renamed Ocean Explorer I and spent several months at Lisbon, serving as a floating hotel for the city’s Expo 98.

$95-a-Day

A year after that, in 1999, she was chartered to run inexpensive, $95-a-day, four-month cruises around the world. Her high operational expenses were again a big problem. She was soon replaced by a smaller, more economical ship. Later, in May 2001, she was used as a hotel ship during the economic summit of world leaders at Genoa.

Out of Work

From then on the former La Guardia was mostly out of work. There were rumors that she would serve as a floating hotel during the Athens Olympics in August 2004, but she remained idle instead. She finally reached the end of her days in December 2004, when she was delivered to scrappers at Alang in India.

The General Richardson had an extraordinary career. She had 11 different names, surely close to being a record for any passenger ship.

About the Author

Bill Miller, long-time SSHSA member, is an international authority on ocean liners and cruise ships. He has written some 80 books on the subject; from early steamers, immigrant ships and liners at war to their fabulous interiors and about the highly collectible artifacts from them. He has written specific histories of such celebrated passenger ships as the United States, Queen Mary, Rotterdam, France, Queen Elizabeth 2 and Crystal Serenity. A native of Hoboken, New Jersey, Miller was named Outstanding American Maritime Scholar in 1994 and received the U.S. Maritime Preservation Award and the Ocean Liner Council’s Silver Riband Award in 2004.
ICEBOUND!
It was just before dawn on Thursday, February 1, 1844, when beneath overcast skies and in the midst of one of the coldest winters in New England memory, the citizens of Boston, Massachusetts, again gathered on the shores of their renowned harbor and set to work protecting their city from a mighty invader, one seemingly determined to destroy their prosperity and all it entailed. Despite the bitter cold and relatively early hour, one by one, and most often in groups, they traveled from all parts of the city and hailed from all its socio-economic layers. From the monied summits of Beacon Hill and rocky Nahant, or the offices on harborside wharves that often bore their names, came top-hatted merchant princes, men like John Hill, Frederic Tudor, Jacob Hittinger and Benjamin Rich, carrying contracts, drawings and other documents important to resolving the current emergency. From the long, clapboarded housing enclaves along the waterfront came burly laborers and stevedores bearing pick axes, long saws and broad-headed axes, while scores of women with folded tents, cooking implements and bands of excited children in tow shortly followed them. Some used carts and wagons, others sleds and even a few horse-drawn sleighs, as several inches of snow had blanketed the city a few days earlier. And it was terribly cold, the frigid morning air weighty and still beneath a dull white.
As smoke from a forest of chimneys slowly drifted across the wintery cityscape, the people of Boston endured the start of another Arctic-like day. As had been observed during the bone-fracturing winter of 1835–36, the winter of 1843–44 in Boston had been long, tedious, destructive and deadly. Accounts of each include such harrowing details as frozen birds dropping from the sky, and people freezing to death just a few steps from the relative warmth of their houses. Food stocks and other commodities were soon in short supply, as ice-paved roads and sub-zero wind chills disrupted horse-drawn transportation routes. Not surprisingly, weariness began to seep into the city’s populace, fostered in part by the realization that the city was essentially powerless against the depredations of wild weather.

**Throughout the Morning** of February 1, nearly 400 men from nearby Spy Pond and Fresh Pond in Cambridge joined the growing crowds along the harbor’s edge. But unlike the multitudes of sightseers, ice skaters and horse racers, they came in productive earnest. Equipped with horse- and ox-drawn plows, as well as an arsenal of cutting and excavating tools, one group of men set up a camp near India Wharf, while another gathered in East Boston at the foot of what was then called Marginal Street, at a relatively new pier belonging to the East Boston Pier Company.

**The Effort Takes Shape**

*Earlier in the day these men, who earned a seasonal living cutting ice from the fresh water ponds around Boston, had been enlisted in the city’s efforts to overcome the invader by a special contract drafted at the Merchant’s Exchange, a newly-constructed, neo-classical temple on State Street that served as a meeting place for the city’s elite commercial and maritime interests. Authorized by then-mayor Martin Brimmer and signed by Captain Benjamin Rich, the chairman of the ad hoc committee empowered to address the emergency, a contract was both a tangible and symbolic way for Bostonians to overcome this latest challenge to the city’s economic future.*

**While Mayor Brimmer** and Captain Rich collected and appropriated the necessary financial resources from their
fellow businessmen in East Boston and at India Wharf, the work gangs popped tents, lit bonfires, gathered their equipment, and reviewed their plan of operation. In the meantime, other men began arriving at the harbor's edge with wagons carrying heavy timbers and logs to be used as levers and for prying and smashing.

Well aware of the stakes involved for their city, journalists and illustrators emerged from the line of newspaper offices on State Street to set up their folding tables and easels at the most picturesque of locations around the harbor. They would in time capture, in words, paint and lithographs, the city’s heroic and determined stand against a pernicious and seemingly invincible opponent.

But unlike the red-coated ranks of the British invaders of the Revolutionary War, this new challenger came shrouded in shades of white and swathed in subzero temperatures. And unlike the blood-steeped muskets and cannons of half a century earlier, Bostonians responded to this second revolution – one spawned by the needs of free commerce and industry – with more intangible weapons such as committees, contracts, tenacity and unity of purpose.

The Harbor Encased
They had little choice because over the course of two days, as temperatures hovered below freezing and snow flurries drifted over the city, Boston’s harbor – some 50 square miles of water – fused into one enormous sheet of ice. Scores of ships, from two-masted schooners to transatlantic packets, were locked in place beside their piers and wharfs. In a few dark hours, commerce in the harbor came to a complete halt; the gargantuan four-story brick warehouses and chandleries that stood on the stone wharfs and harbor embankments fell quiet as loading and unloading operations ground to a stop. Inexorably, but as though in a single instant, Boston was transformed as the ice blockade encircled harbor islands, wharves, pylons and buoys, and along the way added an expansive, flat plain to the city’s landscape.
MAVERICK HOUSE,
East Boston, Mass.

This new and extensive establishment, belonging to the East Boston Company, is situated on the great Eastern Avenue, opposite the business part of the City of Boston; commanding a fine view of the City, its harbor, the ocean, and the surrounding country.

The house is large, commodious, and elegantly furnished. It has dining rooms, ball room, parlors, reading room, and more than one hundred other rooms, offices, &c. &c., with its piazzas, corridors, cupola, and spacious rotunda. There are connected with the house extensive bathing rooms, barber's shop, places of amusement, stables, sheds, coach house, pleasure grounds, flower gardens, &c. Also convenient buildings on the beach, near the hotel, for sea bathing.

Ferry Boats of the first class are constantly plying to and from the City, from sunrise till 12 o'clock at night. There is also constant conveyance by omnibuses, and but a short time required in passing to and from the City Hall, Post Office, or the Tremont House.

There are delightful drives in the vicinity. Chelsea Beach, one of the most extensive on the coast, where surf bathing may be enjoyed in great perfection, is within a short ride. Horses and carriages of every description furnished at short notice.

The subscriber pledges himself that every exertion shall be made to render the "Maverick House" every way worthy the patronage of an enlightened public.

East Boston, September, 1835.

J. W. BARTON.
Armed with augers and measuring tools, teams of men who fanned out across the white fields recorded ice depths of between 6 and 12 inches, with few open spots in between, and it maintained this thickness for a distance of seven miles into the harbor. At the wharves, the ice was said to be seven feet thick. The ice sheet, which had cracked along the wharves, embankments and shoreline because of the rising and falling of the tides, reached almost to President’s Roads, the harbor’s primary Atlantic entrance, encircled much of Castle and Governor’s Islands to the east, and nearly choked closed Broad Sound to the south. It also extended to Fort Independence, an occurrence historian Samuel Eliot Morrison described as coming “hardly once a generation,” and to Fort Warren, too. During the preceding night more snow had added an additional sheen to the ice, increasing its strength.

From the beginning Bostonians found it a startling and yet attractive winter tableau. In his diary Richard Henry Dana Sr. observed, “The scene was peculiar and exciting in the extreme. The whole harbor was one field of ice, frozen on a perfect level, though somewhat roughly in parts ...” Drawn by a spectacle last seen in 1840 and before that in February of 1836, people by the droves began crossing the ice on foot and horse, and in small sleighs known as cutters that were pulled by a single horse. Many people entered onto the ice in South Boston, and, despite its more uneven patches, started racing horses and holding competitions between small, sail-powered sleds. It was picturesque enough to draw the attention of many artists and illustrators, including one of the city’s finest, John Crookshanks King.

As King and the prominent lithographer with whom he collaborated, Alexandre de Vaudricourt, prepared to record the event for history, at 99 State Street in a brick Federal-style building that has since been demolished, representatives of the British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, even then commonly known as the Cunard Line, hoped for the best but prepared for the worst as they came to grips with the emergency. At the same time that they learned of the decisions made earlier that morning at the Exchange regarding the next steps to be taken on their behalf, they were aware that a similar plan implemented the previous day by John Hill had failed.

Britannia Immobilized

It was February 1, at shortly after 9 o’clock in the morning, but instead of departing according to schedule, the Cunard steamship RMS Britannia lay alongside her East Ferry pier, immobile not by choice or mechanical deficiency, but because of Boston’s frozen harbor.

On the Britannia’s quarterdeck Captain John Hewitt observed the assembling bands of ice cutters and laborers and began dispatching updates to 99 State Street on what must have seemed a Herculean task – the cutting of a channel through the ice that would allow the Britannia to escape Boston harbor’s frigid clutches.

As he watched a wispy trail of black smoke curl from the Britannia’s tall, thin funnel bearing Cunard’s orange- and black-banded livery, Hewitt no doubt considered all his options. According to the company’s instructions he was to always place the ship’s safety, and that of her passengers and crew, above all other considerations when deciding when and when not to leave the pier. At the same time Hewitt knew that Cunard’s reputation, and indeed the company’s existence, largely depended upon the timely and efficient delivery of the Royal Mail, at a rate of one shilling per envelope, as well as the packets of American and British newspapers that were traded between continents on each of the ship’s voyages. For this service Cunard received £85,000 per annum, per ship, from the British government.

Hewitt also knew that if the Britannia were delayed beyond two days that she would not make Liverpool in time to meet her contractual obligations, and would therefore risk large financial penalties levied against the line.

But the Britannia, while less than five years old and of stout wooden construction, would be placed at risk of serious damage if she simply tried to break her way through the ice. Not only might the 207-foot-long hull be stove-in or holed, but her twin paddle wheels, each 28 feet in diameter and constructed with wooden paddles, would suffer damage from even the slightest contact with an ice floe. Anticipating problems, Hewitt had, during the preceding day and while the harbor had been in the process of freezing, regularly deployed teams of crew members to use axes and lengths of timber to keep breaking the ice away from the paddle wheels, as well as the black-painted hull and rudder.
If a welcome warm spell started the ice melting, or a southerly wind set in and pushed the ice out of the harbor, Hewitt wanted to be ready. He optimistically decided to order the installation of a seven-foot-long strip of iron sheathing on the steamer’s stem, with some three feet of it extending below the waterline, to provide a modicum of protection for the ship’s graceful clipper bows. After observing the progress on the cutting of the ice channel, he would issue further orders designed to protect the vessel should the chance to leave her berth become a reality.

The growing multitudes of Bostonians congregating along the harbor’s edge and across its white plains would make this latest effort to free the Britannia and preserve Cunard’s strong record of on-time service. With the same spirit and vigor as an old-fashioned New England barn raising, Boston’s myriad commercial, political, cultural and industrial icons came together, devised a plan, and then implemented it. Because the Britannia’s Scottish-built hull had a beam of 34 feet, the ice channel would have to be considerably wider to ensure that few if any ice floes put the ship’s paddle wheels at risk.

In addition, the committee overseeing the operation decided, while poring over charts of the harbor, that the channel would have to be between seven and ten miles in length, taking the Britannia all the way from her East Boston pier, around a bend to the India Wharf, and then into the Atlantic. As stipulated by the committee’s contract, they would “...cut a passage from the Eastern Ferry as far as the India Wharf ...”

Further complicating matters was the understanding that it wouldn’t be enough to simply break the ice. Instead, all the ice that could pose a hazard to the Britannia’s hull or vulnerable paddles would have to be first broken and then removed from the channel before the vessel could safely proceed to sea. That meant that large sheets of ice would have to be lifted out of the water and slid onto the surrounding ice shelf. This process would be complicated in those areas where the ice was too thin to accommodate the additional weight, and there was undoubtedly the unspoken but real understanding among those involved that, at some point, someone somewhere was going to fall through or from the ice and be lost.

Everyone from the Britannia’s master to 99 State Street to the business leaders who were financing the cutting of the ice channel knew this had to be accomplished within 48 hours, or by the early afternoon of February 3 at the latest, in order for the steamer, whose operating speed was 8.5 knots, to maintain her rigorous schedule. For the contractors, among them the ruthless and controversial “Ice King” Frederic Tudor, none of the promised payment of $1,500 would be forthcoming if, in the words of the hastily drafted contract, “...they do not accomplish it as stipulated.”

Once free of Boston’s frozen embrace, the Britannia then faced a long, arduous, always dangerous voyage across the Atlantic before reaching her final destination, Liverpool. First she would steam to Halifax, Nova Scotia, her first port of call on the eastbound voyage and the birthplace and hometown of the line’s founder, Samuel Cunard. There she would spend 24 hours loading and unloading passengers, mail and cargo before setting off on the 2,898-nautical-mile voyage that on average took 12 days to complete.

Constructed in Port Glasgow, Scotland, at the shipyards of Robert Duncan and Company, and powered by a two-cylinder side lever steam engine designed and built by the engineering wizard Robert Napier, the Britannia’s 1,154 tons made her one of the largest ships in the world. Four boilers and 12 furnaces drove two cylinders with a 72-inch diameter. Generating an indicated horse power of 740, her propulsion plant was sufficient to get her through most sea conditions, although crossing the North Atlantic during the winter months was always treacherous.

Cunard & Boston – A Warm Relationship

In his unified approach to the transport of passengers and cargo across the Atlantic, Cunard reaped enormous financial and even political benefits. And as evidenced by the similarly unified approach taken by the city and the line during the cutting of the ice channel, Boston was special to Cunard, and vice-versa.

However extravagant it may seem to modern political sensibilities, the elaborate social rituals that buttressed Boston’s warm relationship with Cunard weren’t taken lightly, because the city couldn’t afford to do so. And it went well beyond simply offering Cunard a rent-free lease on the East Boston pier. In 1840 Boston was one of the four largest metropolitan concentrations in the northeastern United States, and its harbor one of the busiest. Its primary maritime, commercial and cultural rival, New York, was some 200 miles further from Halifax, the Canadian port that was the Britannia’s first North American terminus on her voyages from Cunard’s British homeport, Liverpool.

Frederic Tudor, American businessman and merchant known as Boston’s “Ice King” because he founded the Tudor Ice Company
While this gave Boston an advantage over New York when the decision was made by the British Admiralty, at Samuel Cunard’s urging, to make the city the Royal Mail’s American terminus, the latter city’s robust and extensive waterfront infrastructure, coupled with the size of its harbor and population, always provided for an uneasy relationship with its New England cousin. Like the city-states of the Italian Renaissance, Boston and New York spent much of the 19th century engaged in a commercial and cultural rivalry that often revealed itself in strident, often virulent, screeds on the relative merits of one city over the other.

Breaking the Ice

For the remainder of the daylight hours of February 1, then well into the deep-freeze darkness of a New England winter’s night, the men worked with the precision of a military legion to overcome both the ice and the city’s frosty critics. By the glow of bonfires and torches, a team of men using bricks and sections of rope marked the outer boundaries the ice channel would follow. To save time it was decided that most of the channel would be 100 feet wide, but at one point that would need to be expanded to 200 feet to allow the Britannia to make an eastward turn toward the harbor’s entrance. Once the channel’s outer edges had been delineated, a team of men measured the halfway point between the two, and more ropes were laid out. When this had been accomplished, more workers, many of them professional ice cutters from Gage and Hittinger, carried their tools to the middle of the proposed channel and began the physically exhausting and tedious task of making an incision in the ice seven inches deep.

Once an incision was made, other men carrying long timbers and sections of heavy log, some fitted with temporary handles, stepped into place and began hammering the ice at several points along the incision. Much in the way a large sheet of glass is cut into smaller pieces, the workers used one of the ice’s own characteristics – its lack of tensility and resulting brittleness – in their battle against it. It was an operation that required constant care by the workers to avoid being injured by the heavy sheets of ice being produced and to stay out of the harbor’s cold waters.

As Friday, February 2, dawned into another astonishingly cold day in Boston, the surface of the harbor increasingly resembled, in the words of one observer, a “Russian holiday scene.”
hours since the creation of the ice canal had begun, a tent city had sprouted along the icy surface of the harbor reaches. Swathed in smoke from dozens of cook houses and bonfires, the ice, which had previously been a smooth white, was now black and scarred. A long line of canvas-sided booths covered by yet another few inches of snowfall formed an impromptu Main Street. Some served different types of food and beer, while others provided support services to the workers such as medical attention and additional winter clothing. While many of the customers were from the ranks of the workers, many others were spectators, drawn to several places along the water’s edge and on the frozen harbor itself.

They had come to see what much of the city was talking about – the “canal to freedom” as it was later described by a local newspaper. By the evening of February 2 the canal already extended two miles from the Britannia’s East Boston pier, although what had been cut remained impassable as ice-removal operations in those places had yet to be completed.

The Importance of Cunard
But they were well underway. This was due in part to the untiring efforts of Captain Benjamin Rich, the chairman, and public face (at least for a time), of the committee overseeing the creation of the ice canal. Sixty-eight years of age and recently retired from his ship-owning and banking houses, Benjamin Rich was by temperament and experience well-suited to oversee the channel-cutting committee. Born in Truro, Massachusetts, he first went to sea as a cabin boy at the age of 13 and quickly rose to command his own ship. By all contemporary accounts a pious yet humble man who was said to have been “born to command,” Rich’s active career saw him successfully defend his vessel from attack by two French privateers off the coast of Algiers, as well as aid in the rescue of the crew members of a steam packet that had exploded in Boston harbor earlier in the century. Between 1815 and 1818 he had served as president of the Boston Marine Society, and in 1843 he was appointed chairman of a committee of his fellow New England shipowners to, in the words of the committee’s charter, “advance American shipping interests.”

Aboard the Britannia, now loaded with some 33,000 pieces of mail, much of the ship’s business was concerned with preparing it for its eventual slow passage down the completed channel. The crew continued to keep ice from entombing the hull and paddle wheels, and the thick strip of protective covering had already been fixed to the ship’s stem. Lines were prepared that, once the ship had left the pier, would be passed down to men on the ice and would be used, if needed, to assist the ship in staying in mid-channel. Captain Hewitt may have been concerned that moving at just a few knots would impair the vessel’s steerageway or that high winds or inclement weather would reduce his ability to control the ship’s movements.

Rich and the other members of the committee may not have been able to quantify it at the time, but they were aware of how significant Cunard’s presence had been in Boston. Between 1840 and 1845, the years roughly encompassing the start of Cunard’s mail and passenger service, the city’s population had grown by some 40,000 people and commercial trade numbers had doubled. In 1841 Cunard’s steamers landed 1,436 people at Boston and earned $172,320 in fares. By 1844 that number had jumped to 1,590 passengers, with total revenue of $238,000; the following year, 1,823 people landed in Boston. In addition, in 1843, for example, Cunard carried cargo worth $9,300,632.

Conveyed on Cunard’s steamers or the stately packets operated by Train & Co. (a noted Boston-based shipping firm), the first waves of Western European immigration began to surge against New England’s shores. In time, these newcomers infused Boston and New York and the nation’s other maritime hubs with a vibrant economic energy bred, in part, by the unequal benefits of low labor costs coupled with a large pool of workers. They also brought with them new cultural expectations, many of which enriched the artistic, scientific and social fabric of Boston, enabling it to remain competitive against much larger and wealthier cities like New York and Philadelphia.

By the late evening hours of February 2, as dinner was being served to the work shift, the ice canal was firmly taking

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Photo: Andy Newman
shape. Aboard the Britannia Captain Hewitt gauged the work crew’s progress and most probably reckoned that if the present pace was maintained, his ship could depart during the late afternoon hours of the following day. A cautious master, he didn’t want to endanger his vessel simply to meet a schedule. At the same time he didn’t want a repeat of what had transpired the year before, when the Britannia’s sister ship, the RMS Columbia, departed Boston on July 1 and a day later ran aground off Nova Scotia in heavy fog. Although the 90 passengers, crew, mail and cargo were salvaged by Cunard’s reserve steamer, the Margaret, the Columbia later sank.

Preparations to Leave

By nightfall on February 2, with less than 24 hours remaining before the February 3 morning deadline, all of the canal had been cut, with some three-quarters of it now cleared of ice floes. During the day horse-drawn plows had been employed to speed the initial furrows into the ice, and two large barges had been floated in from the now-open Atlantic side to provide support platforms. Aboard the Britannia, final arrangements were being made to raise steam. The ship, which on average burned 38 tons of coal per day, toppled off her bunkers, while the most recent of the 20,000 newspapers she would carry were added to her holds. Several passengers, each of whom had paid 38 guineas for the trip from Liverpool (plus an additional guinea for a steward) arrived at several of the city’s hotels and waited for a final decision that the ship would indeed depart the following morning.

As dawn broke on February 3 and the contractual deadline arrived, the ice channel was complete. But a new surprise awaited the Britannia and her erstwhile rescuers. Despite continuing activity on parts of the channel, the unrelenting bitter temperatures caused a new, two-inch thick layer of ice to form overnight. Standing on the bridge spanning the steamer’s paddle boxes, Captain Hewitt consulted with his officers and weighed his options. While there was no way for the ship to break through seven-foot-thick ice, two inches, while posing some risk to the paddle wheels, wasn’t an insurmountable hazard.

With the clock ticking and the thermometer showing no signs of rising, Hewitt made the decision to sail. Casting off her lines, the Britannia sounded her steam whistle before her paddle wheels took a few tentative turns forward, then built to a steady rhythm as she slipped away from the pier. Churning along the channel she soon achieved seven knots, giving her enough steerageway to navigate the eastward bend near India Wharf, as well as crunch her way through the newly-formed ice layer. When she reached the open waters of the Atlantic it was discovered that the protective iron sheathing placed over her stem had been torn away after the ship struck several small ice floes remaining in the channel.

Considering all that it had taken to free her from her ice tomb, it wasn’t surprising that the Britannia’s send-off was one of the most jubilant in the city’s history. As a cannon reportedly sounded salutes, cheers erupted from the multitudes of workers and spectators who thronged the surface of the harbor. For those who had been involved in breaking the ice blockade, there were many reasons for enthusiastic good cheer, including the transfer of the $1,500 to the contractors for completing the ice canal according to schedule. Some sources state that the actual amount paid to them was $10,000, and that Gage & Hittinger had in truth spent $20,000 to carve the channel. Benjamin Rich was lauded for his civic spirit, and years later, when he died at the age of 76, he was remembered in his funeral oration for a lifetime of philanthropic goodwill to his fellow Bostonians, including the role he played in freeing the icebound Britannia.

For Captain Hewitt and Cunard’s representatives in Boston, there was no doubt restrained but palpable relief that the ship’s departure hadn’t been further delayed and that she was undamaged after her extraordinary experience in ice-locked Boston Harbor. Boston’s enthusiasm in undertaking the creation of the ice channel, along with its refusal to bill the Cunard Line for the costs, was sincerely appreciated by the company. When the Royal Mail service later offered to reimburse the contractors for the entire sum, the offer was politely declined.

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**But at last,** and after the concerted efforts of a proud yet anxious city, the *Britannia* was free. Ahead lay Halifax, which the steamer and her 63 passengers would have to battle “strong gales and … a heavy cross sea” to reach by February 6. After a quick turnaround in Samuel Cunard’s hometown, the *Britannia* departed at 7 o’clock on the morning of February 7 on the final leg of her voyage to Liverpool. Despite being icebound in Boston harbor, and the “thick and tempestuous weather” she encountered in approaching Halifax, the *Britannia* still managed to cross the Atlantic in 11 days.

**An Enduring Image**

*Perhaps from a vantage point in* Nahant, artist John Crookshanks King composed an illustration of the *Britannia*s liberation that would over the centuries be reproduced many times and for many reasons, and it would become one of the most enduring images of those three days in February and what they meant to the spirit of Boston. Soon after it was produced, the illustration was widely distributed as a lithograph by Alexandre de Vaudricourt and published by a Boston firm, Bouvé and Sharp.

**Despite the Britannia’s** prominent location in the center of the ice canal, the lithograph is most likely not an actual snapshot of a particular moment in the narrative, but rather a composite telling of several epic moments from it. While flags and banners were displayed on the ice and at places within the tented camps, it’s unlikely the British Red Duster, the red ensign that denotes the British Merchant Marine, and the American national standard were displayed as they are in the lithograph, arrayed in a symbolic fashion, with the British on the eastern side of the ice channel and the Americans on the western shore. Between them spans a mini-Atlantic Ocean, rendered in the lithograph as the ice channel, but within this context actually symbolizing both Cunard’s mission in Boston and the work of the committee and laborers in creating the ice canal to ensure that the mission could continue.

**In the distance,** occupying the work’s center, is the *Britannia* herself. She has rounded the bend in the ice channel and begun the eastward leg out of the harbor, and she’s shown in profile. Her balanced lines, from her long black hull to the square ports along her stern quarters to her paddle wheels, set ahead of her imposing funnel, are clearly shown. Spread across three masts, two of which are square- as well as fore-and-aft rigged, her sails remain furled, but the thick smudge of black smoke trailing from her funnel, and the splash of water beneath her paddle wheels, show that she’s proceeding under her own steam.

**The Britannia is displaying** a number of flags, from the British Red Duster on her spanker-gaff to an array of five flags flown from her mainmast truck. The flag flying from her foremast is indistinguishable in most prints, but is shown on others as the American flag. Although lacking in detail, the five flags flying from the mainmast can be identified from what in 1844 was called the *Boston Harbor Signal Book*, published by Hudson and Smith. As outlined by the Signal Book, “All ship masters who have adopted the Marine Telegraph Flags are requested to show their vessel’s Designating Number when entering and leaving Port.” Additionally, according to the system, ships (large, full-rigged vessels) were identified by displaying a “blue and white Conversation Flag, with a pendant above.” Moreover, a copy of the Signal Book from April of 1848 states that *Britannia*s pre-assigned identification number was 33 66, which matches with the number and design of the flags flown from the *Britannia*s main truck as displayed in the lithograph.

**Closer inspection** of the lithograph highlights some of the occurrences that characterized the spirit of the occasion, from the figure of Captain Hewitt waving to the cheering crowds from atop the port paddlebox, to the clusters of passengers and crew members who crowd her foc’sle and the top of her aft deck house.

**For those who would see** the illustration and lithograph outside of Boston, a caption was helpfully added. “Dedicated by the Publishers to the Merchants of Boston who projected and paid for a canal cut in the Ice 7 miles long 100 feet wide; much credit was due to the Committee and the Contractors Messers Gage, Hittinger & Co. and John Hill for..."
their perseverance in accomplishing so arduous an undertaking.

In February of 1875, James Alexander, Cunard’s agent in Boston, reissued the original King-Vaudicourt lithograph through another Boston publisher, Ferdinand Meyer. This time a slightly different caption was added, which read: “The Cunard Royal Mail Steamer Britannia (John Hewitt, Commander). As she appeared leaving her Dock at East Boston February 3rd 1844 bound from Boston to Liverpool. The original print bore this inscription: ‘Dedicated by the Publishers to the Merchants of Boston...’” At the print’s bottom, prominently featured in elegant cursive script, appears an additional caption, “Presented by the Cunard Steamship Company 99 State Street, Boston.”

A City Changed

The lithograph served as an inspiration for a similar operation, this time in February of 1837, when two Cunard steamers, the beautiful, 1,850-grt America and two-funneled 2,333-grt Arabia, became trapped in Boston harbor ice. An enormous repeat of the 1844 triumph was mounted, this time involving the cutting of two channels and drawing upon the labor of hundreds of men and steam-powered ice cutting machinery to accomplish it.

And once again, but against the backdrop of a radically different city and maritime infrastructure, a merchant like Alexander, who embodied the capitalist spirit of the time, would take the role defined by the now-deceased Benjamin Rich and rally Bostonians to salvage their maritime heritage.

By 1875 there was much to be salvaged. Although nearly a decade had passed since the end of the Civil War, the disruptions caused to the country’s maritime trade by the conflict still continued to hamper the industry. Moreover, during the early 1870s Boston had suffered a number of large fires, two of which became conflagrations that destroyed large sections of the harbor front. Among the casualties of a great fire in 1872 was the Merchant’s Exchange Building, in which the city’s response to the icebound Britannia had been planned and implemented. At the time that Alexander and Cunard were touting the 1844 lithograph, swathes of Boston’s waterside infrastructure, particularly in South Boston, were nothing more than ashy patches of empty wasteland.

There had been other changes, of course, beginning with Boston’s loss of her monopoly on Cunard’s North American service. When new Royal Mail contracts were implemented in the spring of 1846 they did provide for additional ships to call at Boston, but they also added Cunard’s first steamer from Liverpool to New York. Each ship would receive a £145,000 operating subsidy, and the contract would remain in place until 1858. In 1868, after 30 years of delivering the mails to Boston, Cunard terminated its mail services to the city.

By that time the Britannia, along with the Acadia, had long since departed the Cunard fleet to become part of the fledgling Reichsflotte of the new German Confederation. Fitted with nine guns and renamed the SMS Barbarossa, the former Britannia was in 1852 assigned to the Prussian Navy and converted into a barracks ship at Danzig. While still afloat in 1875, she would in 1880 be declared surplus and her rotting wooden hull sunk as a target ship.

While all the principal players are long gone, and the world they inhabited and shaped changed beyond their recognition, Boston’s heroic efforts to preserve her commercial reputation by freeing the Britannia from her icebound harbor remain an important and colorful part of the city’s history. By 1844 the Industrial Revolution had brought with it a sort of cultural renaissance in Boston, one that fused the traditional Yankee New England values of thrift, hard work, enthusiasm and unity of purpose with the high-Italian Renaissance values of campanilismo (civic pride), societal organization and ritual, and the public role of private commercial interests. During one remarkable period in February 1844, all this and more came together for the protection of the city, and as an inspiration for all time. ❘

About the Author

David Matthew Nielsen Longshore, a longtime resident of Hampstead, New Hampshire, and New York City, and a survivor/rescuer of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center, died July 2, 2016, in Hampstead. Born in Ipswich, Massachusetts, on March 7, 1964, he was a 1982 graduate of Pinkerton Academy, and held degrees from Amherst College and the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Mr. Longshore worked for The New York Times, CBS News, and the New York City Department of Transportation.
The Mar-Sue has had many owners and names throughout her life: a) See W. See b) USS See W. See (SP-740) c) Pequest d) Rosalie IV e) Jonbob II f) Mar-Sue II g) Misty Isle h) Mar-Sue. I became acquainted with the boat, then called Jonbob II, as a child. The owner, J. T. Herbst, was a yacht broker at Atlantic Yacht Basin in the Great Bridge section of Chesapeake, Virginia, and ran his business from the Jonbob II for several years before he built an office. As a young child I had been aboard with my dad when he purchased a boat from Herbst. Herbst started the Great Bridge Cruising Club, and my family went on many cruises from 1950 to 1955; Jonbob II was always the lead boat. Herbst sold the Jonbob II in 1959, and the new owner moved her to the Lafayette Yacht Club in Norfolk. As a kid, teen and young adult I boated on the Lafayette River and bought snacks and supplies at the gas pier at the Lafayette Club. The Jonbob II, then known as the Mar-Sue II, was docked on the opposite side of the gas dock from 1959 to 1971. At the time I didn’t like Mar-Sue II too much. She disappeared from the Lafayette Club in 1971, and I saw her partially exposed under a shed in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, looking pretty decrepit, in 1972. In 1973 I saw her again at the Southern Branch Marina in Chesapeake, where I did a lot of water sports in the summer months. In 1975 she was for sale. I went aboard, entered the wheelhouse, and I knew she had to be mine. I bought her in June of 1975.

Nothing on the boat worked except one bilge pump. She had been stripped of the helm, anything relating to navigation A wooden boat that has experienced World War I service, the Great Depression and Hurricane Donna in 1960 could have been lost many times over, but Mar-Sue survived and made it to the century mark in 2015. By William L. (Butch) Baxter
on the bridge was gone, port and starboard navigation lights were missing and engine and generator parts were spread out all over the shore. Luckily her horns and search light were still there, along with two steam whistles, including a single-pipe one and a 1912 four-pipe. (I got the four-pipe whistle working in 2013.) The Mar-Sue II was towed to Knitting Mill Creek in Norfolk, where she was berthed from 1975 to 1986.

**Mar-Sue’s Story**

**With an LOA of 65 feet, 5 inches,** the Mar-Sue was built as the See W. See (official number 213242) in the yards of Willard F. Downs, Bay Shore, New York (now the Great Cove Marina) in 1915 for Charles W. Cushman of Vernon, New York. She was a bridge deck cruiser typical of the early 1900s. Not much is known about Cushman, but it’s believed the name See W. See was derived from his initials. Cushman homeported the See W. See in Patchogue, New York.¹,²,³,⁴

**World War I**

![Shown at the U.S. Naval Reserve Force Section No. 5, West Sayville, New York, 1917-18, left to right, are USS See W. See (SP-740), USS Sunbeam III (SP-251) and USS Nemesis (SP-343). – Photo courtesy of the Long Island Maritime Museum.]

The U.S. government requisitioned many yachts, both sail and power, for war service during World War I. They were called Section Patrol and had an SP designation. The See W. See became the USS See W. See (SP-740) and was stationed at U.S. Naval Reserve Force Section Base Five located in West Sayville, New York, today the West Sayville Boat Basin. The base consisted of three vessels: the USS Sunbeam III (SP-251), the USS Nemesis (SP-343) and the USS See W. See (SP-740), commanded by Chief Boatswain’s Mate John H. Wilson, USNRF. These vessels patrolled the waters around Fire Island out into the shipping lanes to New York. Some of the See’s missions during the war included towing live German mines from the shipping lanes and being part of the search and rescue effort for the Armed Cruiser USS San Diego (CA-6) a) USS California 6, sunk off Fire Island July 19, 1918, by a German mine or torpedo. The USS See W. See was returned to Cushman on December 14, 1918.⁵,⁶,⁷

**Restoration as the Pequest, 1919 to 1927**

The See W. See was sold to S. Kent Morris January 31, 1919, who took her to Ruddock Yacht Works in Brooklyn for restoration back to a motor yacht. Morris renamed her the Pequest after his farm or the Pequest River in Belvidere, New Jersey. The Pequest then became part of the New York Yacht Club with New York as her hailing port. She may have been a charter yacht from that location. I believe she was restored to her original build by Kent Morris. She remained in Morris’s hands until May 16, 1924. The third owner, from New York, Louis Smyth, passed away during his ownership, and Pequest was sold by his estate on October 16, 1927. Sometime between 1921 and 1927 the Pequest underwent her third modification. Twelve feet of her forward deck was raised by two feet, eliminating her low forward freeboard.¹,³,⁵,⁹

![Varnish advertisement from Motor Boat Magazine August 10, 1919, showing the restoration of the USS See W. See back to almost her original build. – Author’s collection.]

![The famous maritime photographer Morris Rosenfeld captured the newly refurbished Pequest at an unidentified location in 1919. – Photo courtesy of the Mystic Seaport Museum (Rosenfeld Collection).]
Life as the Rosalie IV, 1927 to 1929

The Pequest was sold to her fourth owner, Harvey W. Dobbins of Red Bank, New Jersey, on October 16, 1927, and renamed Rosalie IV. During this time the boat underwent a fourth and major modification, in which she was transformed from a bridge deck cruiser to a cruising houseboat, possibly in Red Bank. Dobbins sold the Rosalie IV to his wife on December 3, 1928, who would be the fifth owner, and the boat’s hailing port became Perth Amboy, New Jersey. On June 6, 1929, the boat was sold to her sixth owner, Henry E. Butler of Seabright, New Jersey, who renamed her the Jonbob II, and her hailing port remained Perth Amboy. Butler was an avid boater, and it’s likely that his ownership saved the Jonbob II during those dark years.\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^3\)\(^9\)\(^10\)

A New Life in Savannah, 1935 to 1944

The Jonbob II was sold to her seventh owner, Robert Glendenning, Jr., Wilmington Island, Georgia, August 21, 1935. He moved the Jonbob II to Savannah, which became her new hailing port. World War II came around and private motor yachts were once again requisitioned for war service. This time the yachts and their owners were kept secret. It was said by J. T. Herbst that she served as a receiving ship in the Port of Savannah, but this hasn’t been verified.\(^1\)\(^9\)

Jonbob II Moves to Virginia, 1944 to 1959

On November 8, 1944, Jonbob II was sold to her eighth owner, J. T. Herbst, the yacht broker, who didn’t change her name but did change her hailing port to Great Bridge, Virginia. Herbst repowered Jonbob II in 1953 with a four-cylinder 6”x7” gas Lathrop engine. This engine had no reduction gear, no forward and reverse gear. In the wheelhouse was a speed control that had two positions, up and down. You had to stop the engine, change the position of the speed control, and re-start the engine in the opposite direction. A big brass valve wheel next to the helm was connected to a long-toothed gear in the engine room that tightened and loosened a band inside the crank case. This was called a Joe’s Clutch (as I’ve been told), and it transferred the power to the propeller shaft to engage, loosen and disengage the shaft. The engine would turn 450–900 RPMs. She turned a 29”x14” four-blade propeller on a 2-inch shaft and her maximum speed was 8.75 knots, burning four gallons an hour, information I got from an old log book. The dashboard consisted of four gauges located on the after bulkhead in the wheelhouse. Herbst added on to the deckhouse on the main deck, then moved the galley from below deck to the new location. On February 17, 1959, Herbst sold the Jonbob II to J. B. Baydush.\(^1\)\(^2\)

Life as the Mar-Sue II, 1959 to 1975

The ninth owner, J. B. Baydush, renamed the boat Mar-Sue II and moved her to the Lafayette Yacht Club in Norfolk, where she was almost destroyed by Hurricane Donna in September 1960 when the hurricane made a direct hit on Norfolk, sending six-foot seas over the concrete docks. It damaged
four large boats, sinking a 77-footer. The Mar-Sue II was lucky—she was repaired and made seaworthy again in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

**The owner was** in the restaurant business and frequently took his employees out on fishing trips. In the summer of 1965 she made a trip back up to New York waters for the 1964 World’s Fair held in New York City. In the years to follow all her bright work was painted over. It was the beginning of bad times to come. On December 16, 1971, she was sold to a shipyard in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, in payment for work performed. Her tenth owner was Captain Dorr F. Willey. Mar-Sue II was laid up in Elizabeth City, stripped, with her engine left to freeze, damaging it beyond repair. She was sold on September 10, 1973, to a preacher, William Sanderlin, Jr. The eleventh owner had her towed up to Chesapeake to the Southern Branch Marina, located at mile 9.5 on the Intracoastal Waterway. He was not a boat builder, but he did save her from further decay.\(^1\)^\(^2\)

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*This could have been the end for the Mar-Sue II at the Lafayette Club in Norfolk, 1960. – Photo by William D. Maroulis.*

**Author’s Acquisition & Rebuilding, 1975 to 1980**

On June 27, 1975, I came along and bought the **Mar-Sue II**, making me her twelfth owner. After reviewing all her names my wife renamed her the **Misty Isle**. It was never painted on the boat. Finding the Mar-Sue II in really bad shape, I should have walked away. Her flooring timbers and ribbing on the bottom were rotten, as well as the stern. The planking, decks and cabin (except the roof) were still in pretty good shape. So for the next five years I rebuilt her—all new interior, addition to the deckhouse, new roof, new stack, wheelhouse extension, new used power plant and a rebuilt stern. In 1979 we changed her name back to just the **Mar-Sue**, as she’s known today.

In the summer of 1980 she was a seaworthy vessel again. We lived onboard for 15 years until we built our house along the ICW, just across the river from where we had purchased the Mar-Sue 41 years ago.
Despite all of her structure isn’t 100 years old, most of her lower hull and keel are. I strongly believe that the craftsmanship of builder Willard Downs and his crew, along with that of the previous owners throughout the years, helped keep Mar-Sue alive to make it to her 101st birthday. She’s still a work in progress.

In 2013 the Mar-Sue participated in the United States Power Squadron Crossing Paths Reunion Centennial Boat Parade in Cape Charles, Virginia. She won a prize for Most Creative Design.

In 2014 my friend Jim Curtin told me about the 20-foot side board “Pennsylvania” that had hung in his garage for thirty years. Jim decided to donate it to the Cape Charles Historical Society. We thought it would be fitting to give it a last voyage across the bay on the Mar-Sue. We tied it to the stanchions and ferried it over to Cape Charles. This side board was special to me because it came off the Pennsylvania Carfloat #605, used as one of the two startup vessels for the Virginia Ferry Corporation, of which I’ve written two articles for SSHSA. Side boards were used to identify a company’s floating equipment. I had heard there might be ghosts onboard Mar-Sue. Years ago the Norfolk Naval Air Station put on an airshow, and boats would anchor in Willoughby Bay to watch. I was giving a tour below deck and smelled smoke, so I ran to the engine room but didn’t see anything. Just then some force made me bend over. It was a completely involuntary action on my part, and I’ll always wonder about it. I looked at the alternator; the wires and shifting cable were burning! I quickly extinguished the flames, but the fire made the shifting cable unusable. I sure could have used a telegraph that day to get home. I had one person in the engine room and two to relay the engine commands from the bridge.

I joined the SSHSA in 1995. When I read about all the old vessels in Steamboat Bill, I realized that the Mar-Sue was much older than most of them. This encouraged me to keep the Mar-Sue going for her one hundredth birthday. I achieved this in April of 2015.
**The Mar-Sue is old** and not very fast, but then so am I. Whenever I'm at her helm she reminds me of happy moments on the water, past and present, and she teaches me that a longer life needs to be lived at a slower pace.

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**SPECIAL THANKS GO TO:**

- **Mystic Seaport Museum**, Mystic, Connecticut, library and photo archives (Rosenfeld)
- **Mariners Museum**, Newport News, Virginia, library and photo archives
- **Long Island Maritime Museum**, West Sayville, New York, photo archives
- **Suffolk County Historical Society**, Riverhead, New York, old map archive of Bay Shore, New York
- **SSHSA Library**
- **My wife, Debbie**, for editing (and living aboard for 15 years while rearing our boys, Mike and Tim).
- **My son Mike**, my tech support guy and creator and maintainer of the Mar-Sue Facebook page.
- **My dad, Emmett**, who helped get the Mar-Sue running, and my friends, who keep her running.

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**About the Author**

**William L. (Butch) Baxter** is a native of Norfolk, Virginia, and resides in Chesapeake, Virginia, along the Intracoastal Waterway. After purchasing a Steamboat Bill magazine from the Mariners Museum book store he became an SSHSA member. He has written two articles for PowerShips. He retired from the Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic in 2008 and now enjoys watching the various vessels that ply the waterway, especially old wooden yachts. As a member of the Nansemond River Power Squadron he actively promotes boating safety to the public. And of course the Mar-Sue requires a lot of his attention.
From Peonies To Pirates
The Amazing Story of Jane Shelley
by Steven Duff

Being a woman in a man’s world hasn’t deterred Jane Shelley in the least. The majority of us have day jobs, but Jane’s job goes around the clock, interspersed with brief times of rest. She’s a chief officer with the Maersk Line, a Danish company that has over 600 ships (the largest fleet in the world), and with the Waterman Line. Her ship is the Maersk Alabama, and if that name rings a bell, yes, the Alabama is famous. She was hijacked in 2009 by Somali pirates, and the tale was told in the movie Captain Phillips. Luckily for Jane she was on leave at the time, but she was immediately recalled to stand in as the relief chief officer. And she has herself experienced a pirate attack (one of six following the Captain Phillips episode) aboard the Maersk Alabama, and more on that shortly.
Beginnings

**Jane Shelley’s Saga Started on a Farm** in southern Ontario, Canada, with one sister and five brothers. Keeping the Shelley brothers in line was probably good preparation for supervising ships’ crews.

**The Start** of Jane’s career was an unlikely one for a future ship’s officer. With no particular career in mind she went to Toronto looking for work and ended up in the flower business, with contracts to deliver and tend flowers in various hotels. Her fondest memory was working as a “flower girl” at Toronto’s renowned Royal York Hotel; it was like what you see in old movies, a woman patrolling a lounge with a tray of flowers slung from her neck, selling them to romantic couples and often receiving extravagant tips. In the process Jane got to hear, for free, the finest entertainers of the time: Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennet, Dean Martin. And at evening’s end she was given, again for free, a steak dinner.

**In Time** the flower business paled, and it was time for a change. In 1985 Jane bought a cottage on Georgian Bay near the small community of Parry Sound. At this point she was a partner in the coin machine business and, since her residence was on an island, she commuted to work by boat as if she were living in Copenhagen or Venice. This period in her life was quite a game-changer for Jane, since she fell in love with boating in general and Georgian Bay in particular.

**Taking a Big Step**

**Restlessness Set in Once Again,** however, and Jane moved to California to live with her sister Linda. Once again Jane felt adrift; the one certain factor in her life was the love of being on the water, and so she took a step that the rest of us only dream of. She attended a community college (starting at the age of 41) to tie up some loose ends in her education (primarily mathematics) and then enrolled in the California Maritime Academy, from which she graduated with her third mate’s certificate.

**Her first job** was with American President Lines, and one of the ships on which she served was the President Adams, a gigantic, 1000-foot container ship, only slightly shorter than the original Queen Mary. While aboard the President Adams, Jane experienced a Pacific typhoon that lasted five days and nights. Oddly, it wasn’t fear that she felt so much as astonishment – the waves grew to 60 feet in height, streaked with sea-foam and shot through with weird colors. The biggest concern in a typhoon, aside from actually losing the ship, is having containers fall overboard, and the President Adams had 22 of them go in the drink. As bad as it is to lose cargo, these drifting containers are also a menace to navigation. In the same typhoon a fleet companion that Jane recalls being the APL China lost 400 containers off the coast of Alaska.

**Except for the Captain,** chief officer, chief engineer and chief steward, who are permanent members of the crew, all other officers are hired through the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots and therefore may work for various companies. Promotion is based on time served at sea, which may take up to ten years, but after four years...

![The Maersk Alabama – time for some new blue paint! She has a large load of containers, but many are likely empty, as she is riding high in the water and a good expanse of red bottom paint is showing.](image1.jpg)

![As part of her chief officer’s duties, Jane inspects the starboard aft tank on the Maersk Alabama.](image2.jpg)
Jane Shelley won her seniority rating with the union. She was then qualified as a ship’s officer, which led eventually to her appointment as a chief officer with the Maersk Line, which operates a number of American-flagged vessels. This is where the *Maersk Alabama* comes into the picture.

**Before we get** to the really dramatic stuff, here’s a snapshot of the chief officer’s duties aboard ship. The chief officer, known in some quarters (particularly the military) as the executive officer, occupies a similar professional space as a school vice-principal. While the captain has overall responsibility for the ship, the chief officer is his or her right-hand person, supervising such matters as safety, crew management, maintenance (fighting rust and keeping up the paintwork) and the complexities of stability and stowage. Information is received from each port as to what is to be delivered and what is to be taken aboard, a task made even more onerous when the ship is calling at several different ports, as does the *Maersk Alabama*. After analysis of the incoming data, Jane must decide what containers go where; if you have containers bound for Mombasa, for example, and they’re buried under other cargo, you end up with a costly and irritating delay, especially in this age of “just in time.”

**On Pirates**

Now we come to the matter of pirates. There are two major pirate hot-spots: one is the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean near the coast of Somalia, and the other is in the Straits of Malacca.

Down in the innards of the ship is a secure space known as the Citadel, where the crew can take shelter. No firearms are permitted on the ship, since returning fire could conceivably lead to a blood-bath. So for repelling pirates, ships in hazardous waters are prepared with coils of razor wire for their entire perimeter and high-pressure fire hoses. Sounds like enough, right? Well, not always. Ships with high freeboards are relatively immune, but the majority, like the *Maersk Alabama*, lie relatively close to the water. With small, fast pirate boats attacking, these ships are like zebras being attacked by packs of hyenas. Once the pirates are aboard resistance is useless, and so the captain stays on the bridge while all other hands retreat to the Citadel.

During the Captain Phillips episode, the *Maersk Alabama* was on passage from the Gulf of Aden to Mombasa, Kenya. The ship was hijacked and Captain Phillips was taken hostage in the ship’s primary lifeboat and held until his incredible rescue by a trio of U.S. Navy SEALs. The SEALs managed to shoot the three pirates holding him, despite the lifeboat being fully enclosed. The episode is celebrated in the movie starring Tom Hanks as Captain Phillips (which Jane pronounces first-rate), and in Captain Phillips’ memoir *A Captain’s Duty*. Thereafter U.S.-flagged ships operating in the area of Somalia have been protected by SEALs on board.

The pirate attack that Jane experienced was successfully beaten off in a matter of about three minutes. One can bet, though, that it was a pretty intense three minutes.

**Leadership**

And this brings us to the subject of leadership, especially when a woman is the boss of an aggregation of men. Shipping is still pretty much a man’s world, with an approximate ratio of nine men to one woman. A woman’s advancement is still somewhat limited because of the so-called glass ceiling, but women such as Jane Shelley are bringing a whole new dynamic to the job. Anyone who gives her a hard
time is dismissed. And while formal uniforms with stripes of rank aren’t worn on the ship (a coverall generally suffices), everyone knows who Jane is and is aware of her authority. Women in navies are no longer uncommon, and the skipper of Cunard Line’s Queen Victoria is a woman.

**Jane’s Daily Routine** is one that would challenge any man. From 0400, when most of us are asleep, she’s looking after navigation, a formidable task even with all the modern devices such as GPS and Collision Detection, especially in congested areas. Then from 0800 to 1400 (8 a.m. to 2 p.m.) she works with the deck crew, delegating whatever tasks need doing; chipping rust, painting, lubricating deck machinery, general cleaning-up and so forth. Then two blessed hours off and from 1600 to 2000 she stands watch on the bridge and in that time is responsible for everything. Then eight hours off and the cycle starts all over again.

**When Ashore** Jane lives near Parry Sound, Ontario, with her husband Mac. When asked if her lengthy absences impacted her private life, Jane laughed and said it just made it better.

**This Story was Written** at the end of May 2015, and Jane was to ship out again on June 14. She’ll be experiencing a new route for the Maersk Alabama, based in Port Klang, Malaysia, and taking in Singapore, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands (like Somalia a failed state) and Indonesia. This means transit of the Straits of Malacca and more pirates, this time without protection of SEALs. Apparently it’s thought that the new route is not as dangerous as the one passing Somalia, so we can only wait and see. There may be more stories ahead, and although we love stories, we hope no more attacks befall the Maersk Alabama.

**And Captain Phillips?** He’s now retired and living in his country home in Vermont.

**When Jane is on Leave** and big-ship considerations are left behind, there’s still the call of the water, especially Georgian Bay, whose spell has captured millions over the centuries. Fishing and boating are big attractions, along with camping and touring.

**And on the Subject** of becoming a captain one day? We don’t know, since the nature of a captain’s job is such that there is a very slow turnover. But someday Jane might be in command of one of Maersk’s vessels, readily identifiable by their electric-blue hulls. Customarily captains are referred to by the crew as the “Old Man,” even though many crew members may be older. Should Jane Shelley attain the ultimate rank, would she be known as the “Old Lady”? •

**Note:** A version of this story was published in *Georgian Bay Today* and is printed with permission. Jane Shelley, though sort of retired, still maintains her officer’s certificate and is currently at work co-writing, with Steven Duff, a memoir of a woman’s career in the merchant service.

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**About the Author**

SSHSA member **Steven Duff** is a retired music teacher who now writes, paints and spends as much time as possible “messing about in boats.” He has covered territory under sail at various times between Lake Superior and New York City and currently sails a Bluenose 23 in keeping with his taste for classic naval architecture. He lives in Parry Sound, Ontario, with his wife Debra.
By the middle of the 1830s, plans were advancing on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean to establish transatlantic steam packet service. While efforts in Britain were probably more advanced and realistic, American interests were just as passionate.

Historian Robert G. Albion, in *The Rise of New York Port and Square Riggers on Schedule*¹, describes the first American effort to build a steamship for the North Atlantic route. He ascribes the failure of this effort to the effects of the Panic of 1837 and the economic recession it caused. While the Panic of 1837 may have had some impact on this effort, a questionable new technology, cost overruns and squabbles among the interested parties were the real causes of its ultimate failure, and the story is yet another forgotten tale from the early years of American steamship building.

The Packet Lines

The success of the sailing packet lines, beginning with the establishment of the Black Ball Line in 1818, offered the operating model for those who dreamed of doing the same thing with steamships. By 1833 there were four packet lines sailing on a regular schedule between New York and Liverpool. In addition, there were other transatlantic lines operating from New York to Le Havre and coastal packets operating between New York and Charleston, Savannah and New Orleans.

The first packet line, the Black Ball Line, was flourishing despite the competition it had attracted. But the line had recently undergone a change in ownership precipitated by the death in 1832 of founders Isaac Wright and Francis Thompson. Another founder, Benjamin Marshall, died the following year in 1833.²

In January 1834 the Black Ball Line was sold to new owners that included Goodhue & Company, owned by managing partner
Jonathan Goodhue and two silent partners, Pelatiah Perit and Calvin Durand. Also in the ownership group were two packet captains, Charles H. Marshall and Nathan Cobb. This group of men, without Charles Marshall, would figure in the events surrounding the attempt to establish a transatlantic steamship packet line.

**Nathan Cobb’s Background**

The catalyst behind the plan was Captain Nathan Cobb. In 1835 Cobb was an experienced North Atlantic packet captain aged 51. He was born September 20, 1783, in Stonington, Connecticut, went to sea at an early age and by 1820 was captain of the trader Hercules. He was associated with the Red Star or “Second Line” of packets, taking Meteor on the line’s inaugural voyage to Liverpool in January 1822. He commanded the packets Hercules, John Jay and Birmingham for the Second Line and was master and sole owner of packet Helen sailing for the Griswold & Coates Line to London.

In 1832 Nathan Cobb was master and owner of Orpheus, sailing for the Black Ball Line. When he became a part owner in 1834, Orpheus was sold to the line and Cobb became master and owner of the new packet Columbus. He was an experienced mariner who now became a businessman, and in 1835 he had become a passionate proponent of a steam packet line to begin transatlantic service. He was an ambitious, strong-willed and determined man as he set out to organize an effort to begin his enterprise.

**Raising Funds**

He started with the co-owners of the Black Ball Line but received only lukewarm interest from his partners. He made his pitch to other New York merchants and bankers and even made approaches to Canadian interests. He must have found some initial financial support to encourage his efforts because in the fall of 1835 he filed a notice of application to the New York State Legislature to incorporate The Atlantic Steam Packet Company.

Cobb’s proposal called for authorized capital of $500,000, and he stated his plans to build vessels of 1,200 tons with two steam engines each. Several New York newspapers reported that Cobb expected the ships to make the eastbound passage in 12 days and the westbound passage in 14 days.

Among the problems associated with transatlantic steam packet service was the space needed to carry enough fuel to make the 3,000-mile voyage. In 1835 boiler technology had advanced enough that coal could now be burned in place of wood, thus making the generation of steam more efficient. In commenting on Cobb’s plan, the Journal of Commerce said “by the use of coal this difficulty (space) may be in good measure obviated.”

But the problem of fuel efficiency was still an issue. At this point in Cobb’s story enters one Phineas Benne, a sawmill engineer, inventor and self-promoter from Ithaca, New York.

Benne is somewhat of a mystery. He was born August 8, 1792, in Pownal, Vermont, where his father, also Phineas Benne, was involved in building and operating mills. The family moved west to the Ithaca, New York, area before 1813, and the younger Phineas Bennet also became a builder of mills, using steam instead of water to power them. The younger Benne was self-taught as an inventor and later as a “civil engineer,” as he called himself. By 1835 Bennet had at least one patent for “saw dogs” used in milling lumber, but he must have been in need of money because he sold the rights to this innovation before it was patented.

Benne had an idea for a more efficient method of burning fuel and designed machinery that, in theory, would allow the full use of all the energy created by heating the boiler. In searching
for financial backing to help develop his idea, Bennet and his Ithaca associates were introduced to Nathan Cobb, probably in the later part of 1835.

**As 1836 began**, it became apparent to Nathan Cobb that the New York Legislature would not act to approve his proposed incorporation, so he began to seek funding for his transatlantic steam packet line. Despite the setback delivered by the legislature, Cobb was very excited by Phineas Bennet and the new steam technology he claimed to have invented. He pressed ahead more aggressively than ever to prove Bennet’s invention.

**Realizing the potential** of Bennet’s invention and believing Bennet’s promises, Cobb began again in earnest with his plans. On February 11, 1836, Nathan Cobb signed an agreement with Bennet and two other men, Lemuel Brewster and Henry P. Hardy, to form “a voluntary association called the Bennet Steam Power Company” to benefit by Bennet’s invention if it was patented on voyages across the ocean. Cobb agreed to pay Bennet $10,000 to secure the rights to the invention if it was successful. He also agreed to pay Bennet the astronomical sum of $1,000,000 in annual payments of $100,000 for the manufacturing rights to the invention. Clearly Cobb thought Bennet’s invention was real, and he could imagine all steam vessels using the marvelous invention and paying royalties to do so.

**Cobb’s next step** was to attempt to secure more financing to get the venture off the ground and raise the money to pay Bennet to secure the rights to the invention. First he tried to solicit more investors for the money he was to advance Bennet. Two of the potential investors were David Brown and Jacob Bell of the shipbuilding firm of Brown & Bell. Both partners were somewhat skeptical and reluctant to invest in the venture but finally agreed to advance Cobb $2,500 on the condition that Cobb did likewise. A payment of half of that money was made by Brown & Bell, but they soon discovered that Cobb had not made his contribution and they insisted Cobb refund half of the amount paid. Cobb agreed to this.

**Nathan Cobb also contacted** other merchants and financiers in a new effort to build a vessel to test Bennet’s invention. In his eagerness and ardor to bring this about, Cobb seems to have solicited most of his acquaintances including his partners in the Black Ball Line. He was so insistent that Goodhue & Co. as a partnership pledged $2,500, basically making the pledge to get Cobb to go away, and they told Cobb they would put no more money into the venture. Cobb continued to press his case, and Calvin Durand on his own pledged $1,000 for his own account in the hope this would satisfy Cobb.

**Cobb went back** to Brown & Bell in the late spring of 1836 asking the two men to give him an estimate of the cost to build a steamboat of suitable size to test Bennet’s invention. Brown & Bell did this, and on June 27, 1836, they gave Cobb an estimate of $16,500 to build the hull and deck without machinery, which Cobb, along with Bennet and his associates, was to furnish.

**Cobb finally succeeded** in raising the money to build the

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**Phineas Bennet’s New Steam Engine**

“Pipes, with the necessary valves attached to the blowing cylinders, convey the air to the steam generator, whose outer case, a a, is four feet diameter, and twelve feet high, and the inner case, or furnace, B, is three and a half feet diameter, and nine feet high. Smoke and food-pipe, D, is constructed with two slides, e e, which closes the pipe perfectly tight when thrust into it — their uses will hereafter be explained; f is a cap-valve in the steam chamber, placed over a short pipe or nozzle on the upper head of the furnace, and fitted to the seat perfectly tight, with a rod extending through the upper head of the out case; g is the ash-pit below the grate; h, an opening into the ash-pit, with a slide to close it tight, when necessary.”

steamboat. The partners of Goodhue & Co. pledged $2,500, Calvin Durand pledged from his own account $1,000, Brown & Bell agreed to pay $3,000, Cobb’s friend Lemuel Brewster would contribute $3,000 and Nathan Cobb himself would finance the balance of $7,000. Cobb signed a contract with Brown & Bell and on July 1, 1836, the Commercial Advertiser happily reported that Captain Cobb, with the assistance of the Atlantic Steam Company, had completed arrangements to establish a line of steam packets from New York to Liverpool.

**Building the Despatch**

**Construction of the vessel began soon after at the Brown & Bell shipyard,** and by the end of August 1836 the steamboat, to be called Despatch, was in frame and expected to be ready to launch about the first of November. Cobb contracted with Paul Sabbaton, an engineer who had worked for Robert Fulton, to build the steam engines and other machinery for the craft.

**Cobb was intent** on portraying Despatch as a vessel that would actually cross the Atlantic and not as a test bed for Bennett’s invention. Newspaper articles reflect Cobb’s desire to present the most positive outlook for his venture. He was no doubt still intent on raising the full $500,000 he had sought the previous year by swaying public opinion in the hopes that that would help attract interest and financing. He also planned to re-submit his application for incorporation to the New York State Legislature.

**Progress payments** were made by Cobb to Brown & Bell as construction continued at a steady pace, and on January 30, 1837, Despatch went down the ways into the East River at the Brown & Bell yard. The New York newspapers noted the event and described the steamboat as being intended for the Liverpool trade.

**In fact, though,** Despatch was a small vessel, especially for a ship intended to cross the rough North Atlantic. She was certainly smaller than Cobb had previously suggested in the papers. Despatch was 166 feet on deck, had a width of 21 feet and a depth of hold of 11 feet. She would measure out at a diminutive 305 burthen tons when she was finally registered at the New York Custom House, a far cry from the 1,200 tons Cobb had spoken about a year earlier.

**With Despatch in the water** and moored at the Brown & Bell yard ready to have her machinery installed, theonus was now on Phineas Bennet. But delays set in and it would be over a year before her boilers and engines were completed.

**More Financial Doings**

**In the interim Nathan Cobb became even more convinced** that Bennett’s invention would be a stunning success, and his enthusiasm overcame whatever common sense he had managed to retain. He set about trying to buy back the interests he had sold in the rights to the invention itself. He approached Brown & Bell in April 1837 with an offer to repurchase their interests. Jacob Bell agreed to sell his interest back to Cobb for $1,500, taking a $1,650 note from Cobb in payment. David Brown declined to sell his half-share of the firm’s interest.

**Cobb let his enthusiasm** exceed his resources and became strapped for cash to pay for completing Despatch. The bills for joinery work, spars, furniture, ground tackle and other items needed to finish the vessel grew. By the time the machinery was ready to be installed a cost overrun of over $18,000 had accumulated, and many were paid by Cobb out of his own pocket.
To remain afloat Cobb went back to his investors, who declined to give him more money, now considering the venture a waste of time and money. The timing of this was aggravated by The Panic of 1837, which began in May, and credit became very tight and liquidity dried up.

NATHAN COBB was in a serious financial bind, and to help remedy this he planned to sell his interest in the Black Ball packet Columbus back to his partners. Although negotiations were difficult, Cobb was able to do this and keep his project on track. However, he now began to turn against his partners.31

Testing the Invention

The machinery for Despatch was finally installed in the hull during early 1838, and testing of Bennet’s invention continued into the late spring.34 By the second week in June Despatch was ready for testing.35 Phineas Bennet may have been a self-taught engineer, but he seems to have been a natural self-promoter. He and his Ithaca friends gave glowing accounts to the press, and reports in the technical journals of the day gave enthusiastic and positive reports of how the invention would be a boon to navigation.36

The publication Atlantic Steamships, in early 1838, predicted that with Bennet’s invention the voyage to Liverpool would be made in only ten days using only one-tenth the fuel “hereetofore required.”37 The article went on to describe how Bennet’s invention would work. Fire and water were to be combined by a complicated system of valves and pipes with the addition of blowers to increase the pressure to the boiler. The plan was to create a closed system that would reuse and burn the smoke and ash created by the primary fire, thus making generation of steam more efficient and using less fuel. Bennet had a lengthy explanation of how this would multiply the power generated by the propulsion engines.38

The moment of truth finally came on June 12, 1838, when Despatch sailed on a trial run. Nathan Cobb made an excuse of the test, inviting a crowd of about 50 people aboard for the voyage and taking the vessel down the bay to Sandy Hook and returning. The total distance of the round trip was about 46 miles and the distance was traveled in about 3 3/4 hours for an average speed of about 12 1/2 miles per hour. According to the newspaper reports the fuel consumption was only 2 1/2 cords of wood.39

The crowd of passengers who were plied with food and refreshments then organized to write a glowing recommendation of all involved (see sidebar, page 49), congratulating Cobb and comparing Bennet to Robert Fulton.40 The New York papers and the mechanical journals were effusive in praising the success of the experiment, and to all appearances it was a dramatic breakthrough.

However, Bennet’s invention proved to be a dramatic bust and in actuality the machinery was a dismal failure. The problems associated with pumping smoke, ashes and steam together combined with high pressure doomed the project from the beginning. As a result of the test, Bennet’s invention died a quiet death, and Nathan Cobb found himself financially extended with a useless invention and owing a great deal of money. Cobb and his original investors were left with only one asset worth anything, the steamboat Despatch that now would need new machinery to make her seaworthy. Cobb set about trying to salvage whatever he could from the mess.

Liverpool Steam Packets

“THe first of the Steam Packets intended for the Liverpool trade was launched yesterday at Messrs. Brown & Bell’s ship yard. She is built expressly to test the utility of the newly invented steam engine and boilers of P. Bennet, Esq., of Ithica, which combine the advantages of great power with but little weight, and necessity, compared with the engines at present in use, for but a trifling quantity of room. Indeed, if these engines answer all that is expected of them, the invention of Mr. Bennet will not be surpassed even by the discovery of the steam engine itself; and a new and now almost incredible impulse will be given to the steam navigation. Captain Cobb expects to have his vessel ready by the middle of March, when the great and important undertaking is to be commenced. Every heart will exclaim, God speed him successfully and expeditiously on his way.” – New York Times.

Auctioning the Despatch

The packet captain now began a series of actions he hoped would allow him to recoup some of the large amount of losses he had accumulated. An accounting of his financial dealings with Bennet and his friends has not survived, but presumably Cobb lost a great deal of money on that part of the venture. But he still planned to get the most out of his one remaining asset, the steamboat Despatch.

With plans clear in his mind, Nathan Cobb gave notice to his other associates that he intended to sell Despatch at auction to realize whatever she would bring in the open market. He sent Goodhue & Company a letter on July 16, 1838, informing them that he intended to sell the vessel.41 The partners gave their assent, expecting to get a good part of their money returned.

To sell the vessel Cobb needed to register Despatch at the New York Custom House. However, to do this he needed the builder’s carpenter’s certificate, which had not yet been issued by Brown & Bell. So Cobb went to the two shipbuilders to discuss the sale with them. But there were complications since Cobb still owed Brown & Bell $2,944 for work done on the steamboat, giving the two
Recommendations of Those Aboard the Despatch

“A N EXPERIMENTAL EXCURSION was yesterday made by the new steamer Despatch, down to Sandy Hook and back to the city. It was not convenient for us to accept the invitation to make one of the party, but those whose avocations allowed them the pleasure seem to have been gratified. This boat has been built, as we understand, by Captain Cobb and his associates, upon a new principle discovered by Mr. Bennett. The improvement, we believe, proposes a vast saving of fuel, without any essential diminution of speed, and the experiment promises success. The distance performed yesterday was 46 miles in 3¾ hours, and with a consumption of no more than 2½ cords of wood. The following proceedings took place on board the boat:

NEW YORK, JUNE 12, 1838

AT AN ORGANIZED MEETING of the invited guests to take an excursion on board the new steamer Despatch, to test the usefulness and excellence of the recent invention of Mr. Phineas Bennett in the application of steam, R. Lockwood, Esq., called the meeting to order, and nominated D. Leavitt, Esq., president, and Capt. M. C. Perry and Rubens Peale, Esq., vice presidents, Messrs. Joseph Cowdin and Henry A. Wells secretaries.

A. WILLIAMS, ESQ., moved that a committee of five be appointed to report resolutions expressive of the sense of the meeting, whereupon R. Lockwood, A. Williams, R. R. Lansing, T. B. Wakeman, and John Gilson, Esqs., were appointed said committee, and reported the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

RESOLVED, That we have witnessed with pride and gratification the present experiment with Bennett’s new steam boiler, and from our present personal observation, we deem the invention entitled to high public favor and consideration.

RESOLVED, That the enterprising inventor, Mr. Bennett, and the indefatigable proprietors, Captain Cobb, and others, of the Despatch, deserve the thanks of the public for their zeal, perseverance and success, as evinced by the present experiment.

RESOLVED, That as Robert Fulton effected one revolution in navigation by the application of steam power, we deem that Phineas Bennett has this day commenced another of equal promise, by the economy of his mode of generating steam.

RESOLVED, That the polite invitation and hospitable entertainment of the proprietors on board their steamer to Sandy Hook and return, deserve and receive our warmest acknowledgements.

RESOLVED, That the proceedings of this meeting by published.

The meeting was eloquently addressed by A. Williams, Esq., and by Dr. Cox, in which the vast importance of improvements in steam and navigation, and the advancement of the mechanical and useful arts of peace, were illustrated with happy effect.”

D. Leavitt, Chairman
M. C. Perry, Assistant Chairman
Rubens Peale, Assistant Chairman
Joseph Cowdin, Secretary
Henry A. Wells, Secretary

After further discussions and negotiation with David Brown, Cobb agreed to pay Brown & Bell $2,700 to settle the bill. Cobb also requested that David Brown or his partner not attend the auction, and the shipbuilders seem to have agreed to this request.52

Perhaps this request should have alerted Brown & Bell and the other interested parties to Cobb’s intentions, but apparently it didn’t. Despatch went to auction September 1, 1838, and not surprisingly was sold to Nathan Cobb with a winning bid of $4,000. Essentially he was buying a steamboat with a total investment of over $30,000 for a fraction of that amount.53 But there was more to come.

What Cobb had not divulged to any of his erstwhile partners was the fact that he knew of another buyer who was willing to pay substantially more for the steamboat. Soon after he won the auction Cobb turned around and sold Despatch to a group from Savannah, Georgia, organized as The Georgia Steam Packet Company, for $9,000 plus fifty! shares of $100 par value stock in the company.

Despatch was renamed Savannah and registered at the New York Custom House on October 31, 1838.44 At some point after this she was also given new conventional machinery built by T. F. Secor.45

Allegations Fly

Once the resale came to light it didn’t sit well with Cobb’s partners and associates. The partners of Goodhue & Company weren’t amused and, in light of the auction proceeds, told Cobb they were unhappy with the small share they received. This proved to be an awkward relationship because Cobb was still a partner with them in the Black Ball Line.

Cobb was also unhappy because he thought he had been shortchanged and left to fend for himself in building Despatch since his partners refused to contribute any additional funds to cover the large amount of the overrun construction costs. This animus continued to fester with Cobb as time went by.

Cobb again pestered Goodhue & Company, Brown & Bell and...
the others for money. On December 5, 1838, Goodhue & Company wrote to Cobb denying that they had any liability beyond the original contribution to the building cost of the vessel. The position of Goodhue & Company and the others caused Cobb to make allegations of collusion between Goodhue & Company and Brown & Bell.46 Allegations were exchanged between the parties and finally in early 1839 Nathan Cobb filed suit in New York Chancery Court against Jonathan Goodhue, Pelatiah Perit and Calvin Durand as Goodhue & Company. Also included in the suit were Brown & Bell, Calvin Durand as an individual and Lemuel Brewster for payments Cobb believed he was owed.47 Of course the defendants were unhappy with this turn of events and the legal battle was joined. Over the next two years subpoenas and testimony flew back and forth as the court sought to discover the facts of the case. Charges and counter-charges were made and the case dragged on into 1841. Finally the Chancellor handed down a decision on January 30, 1841.48 The court held the three partners of Goodhue & Company not liable for any part of the costs and expenses incurred in building Despatch. The court directed Nathan Cobb to pay Goodhue & Company a percentage of the $4,000 proceeds of the sale of the steamboat and further directed Cobb to pay interest from the date of sale. The court also decreed that Goodhue & Company was not entitled to any of the additional payments “alleged” to have been received by Cobb.49 David Brown and Jacob Bell also were not liable for any additional payments over and above what they had already contributed and were not due any further payments from Cobb. They also weren’t entitled to any additional monies from the sale of the vessel. The other parties as individuals were also held not liable for additional payments. Finally, Cobb was to pay the defendants the costs of his suit.50 Naturally Cobb appealed the decision, five days later, and the case again worked its way through the appeals court system. Depositions were again taken and testimony repeated. It took the court over three years to consider the appeal but finally a decision was rendered in the late fall of 1844. The case was finally settled and concluded in October 1845,51 almost nine years after Cobb’s attempts to establish his steam packet line in 1836.

Britain Begins Transatlantic Service

While Cobb’s lawsuit was active the British began transatlantic steamship service from Liverpool to New York, beating any American effort. Voyages by steamships Sirius and Great Western in 1838 began the service, and the founding of the Cunard Line two years later became the real beginning of regular transatlantic service.52 It would be June 1847 before the American steamship Washington sailed for the Ocean Steam Navigation Company from New York for Bremerhaven with a stop in Cowes. And it would be another three years before Edward K. Collins began transatlantic service with his Collins Line. By this time the British had been crossing the Atlantic for nearly ten years.53 The efforts of Nathan Cobb to establish a competitive transatlantic steam packet line were never a serious venture to compete with the British. Cobb’s obsession with Bennet’s invention doomed the effort by making that the focus of the venture instead of vessels capable of taking on the North Atlantic. Although Cobb sought to portray his efforts as an American competition to British enterprise, the one 160-foot steamer of 305 burthen tons

Sirius, the first British steamer to cross the Atlantic. A newly-formed company named the British and American Steam Navigation Company chartered her from the St. George’s Steam-packet Company, and despatched her from Queenstown for New York on April 5th, 1838. – From Arthur J. Maginnis, The Atlantic Ferry, 1892.
was nowhere near the two 1,200-ton steamships Cobb himself said were needed in early newspaper articles. **The true purpose** of the steamboat Despatch, to test Phineas Bennet’s odd ideas for a more efficient steam propulsion system, was destined to make whatever vessel was built a failure. So Cobb’s effort cannot be considered to be a true attempt to establish an American entry in the transatlantic packet service. Instead it was a true Yankee attempt to take an entrepreneurial risk on a shoestring to develop what might have been an innovative technology. Even if Bennet’s invention had proved a success, the need to build larger vessels to use it would have called for a more expansive financial commitment.

**After the Fiasco**

After the court of appeals found against him, Nathan Cobb continued to invest in ships and shipping, and he retired to his home in Tarrytown, New York, in Westchester County. Over time he was generous with his wealth and in 1851 donated $4,000 to build the first brick school building in the town.\(^5^4\) He moved to Florida in 1857 because of ill health and died in St. Augustine on September 24, 1859. He’s buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Tarrytown.\(^5^5\) Phineas Bennet lived and worked in New York City as a civil engineer until at least 1847.\(^5^6\) His business ventures included recovering “indestructible” cargoes from shipwrecks, a business his son, Captain Orlando Bennet, continued until he died in 1880.\(^5^7\) Phineas Bennet died March 25, 1859, in Burdette, New York, and is buried in Burdett Presbyterian Cemetery in Hector, New York.\(^5^8\)

The steamboat Savannah sailed as a coastal packet from New York to Savannah for a short time, then was sold to Charles Morgan in 1840 for use in his Gulf Coast steam packet line. She was sent to New Orleans in October 1840 and ran in the Texas trade beginning in November of that year. She returned to New York in August 1841 for refitting and again sailed for the Gulf of Mexico on November 24, 1841. She encountered severe weather off of Hatteras and sank on November 28, 1841, with the loss of eight passengers.\(^5^9\)

Captain Cobb's steamer is a minor event in the history of steamship development. It's a story of early American steamship building and attempts to adopt new technology, but it's not the epic attempt hinted at by Robert Albion in his books. \(\uparrow\)
About the Author

SSHSA member James G. Brown retired in 2014 as a Senior Vice President at U. S. Trust Company after a 47-year career in the investment business. He is an amateur marine historian and genealogist and recently completed the first-draft manuscript of a biography of his 5th great uncles, New York City shipbuilders Adam and Noah Brown and their nephews, David Brown, William Henry Brown and Charles Brown, the product of over 20 years of research.

He is honored to be a Trustee of the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum-USS Slater in Albany, NY. He resides in The Villages, Florida.
Disturbing News Concerning Classics

Crystal Cruises is currently undergoing a transformation into a multi-product luxury travel purveyor. As a result, Crystal Cruises’ CEO Edie Rodriguez stated that one of its planned ventures might be unlikely to “pay off.” Rodriguez noted that Crystal was paying maintenance costs for nine months while it took a deeper look at the idle United States. She stated that restoring the ship involved myriad issues, would gobble up management time and cost an estimated $700 million to $800 million.

As feared, Rodriguez’s gloomy assessment transformed into a final decision after Crystal Cruises completed its technical feasibility study of the United States on Aug. 5. Although they found the former superliner structurally sound, the various technical challenges were enough to prevent her return to commercial service. Crystal stated that they were supporting the vessel by making a $350,000 donation to aid the SS United States Conservancy’s efforts to pursue redevelopment opportunities for the ship.

Following Crystal’s decision, Susan Gibbs, the executive director of the Conservancy, stated that all future efforts will be directed toward finding the ship employment in a static role. The Conservancy considers New York City as the ideal place for the ship, but this requires a berth where United States could be permanently moored. Roles for the ship’s 500,000 square feet of space include use by tech companies, a museum and retail and/or hospitality companies. Saving the ship will require two major things according to Gibbs – finding investment capital and finding a permanent location. The saga continues.

Cruise and Maritime Voyages will end its charter of Astoria a) Stockholm b) Volkerfreundschaft c) Fridjof Nansen d) Surriento e) Italia f) Italia Prima g) Valtur Prima h) Carib i) Athena j) Azores in April 2017 following a ten-day cruise from Amsterdam to London. The veteran will be replaced by Columbus a) Fairmajesty b) Star Princess c) Arcadia d) Ocean Village e) Pacific Pearl on June 9, 2017. Astoria will continue to operate under charter to France’s Rivages Du Monde from May until September 2017. Since the vessel was built in 1949 with a capacity of 550 passengers, finding a new charterer will be difficult.
New Cruise Lines

Southern Sea Cruises started service from Sanya, China, in July. The new company is a joint venture between COSCO Shipping Corporation, China National Travel Services (HK) Group and the China Communications Construction Group. Once a ferry, the 896-passenger, 24,573-grt cruise ship Dream of the Southern Sea a) Qing Shan Dao b) Nan Hai Zhi Ming, built in 2011, will sail four to six times per month to Yongle Island, part of the Xisha Islands chain in Hainan Province. According to Asian media, this operation is politically motivated and designed to establish Chinese claims to disputed islands in this region. Passengers will be limited to politically approved individuals.

Bruce Nierenberg became president and CEO of recently formed Victory Cruises following the recent collapse of Haimark Cruises. Nierenberg took over the charter of Saint Laurent a) Cape May Light b) Coastal Queen 2 c) Clipper Voyager d) Sea Voyager and announced that the ship would return to service from Montreal, Canada, on July 8 as Victory 1. The vessel cruised the Great Lakes until the early fall before repositioning to Florida, where she offered a six-day inaugural cruise from Port Canaveral to Cuba. Shifting to the Port of Miami, Victory 1 will sail on 3- and 14-night itineraries through April 2017.

Recent Ship Orders

Hurtigruten expanded its order for expedition ships from two to four. The vessels will be built by Kleven Shipyard with deliveries between summer 2018 and summer 2019. Featuring the same blunt bows found on AIDAprima, the 600-passenger ships will be 459 feet by 75 feet.

Hapag-Lloyd Cruises finalized its order for two expedition vessels especially designed for cruises in polar regions in the Arctic and Antarctic with Vard Holdings Limited (VARD). The 432-foot by 72-foot hulls will be built by VARD’s shipyard in Tulcea, Romania. Outfitting the 16,100-grt vessels with a water sports marina, a modern spa, fitness areas and 120 cabins – accommodating 240 passengers – will take place at Vard Langsten, Norway. Delivery is scheduled for the first quarter of 2019 and the fourth quarter of 2019.

In January, Chilean operator Cruceros Australis ordered a 210-passenger vessel from Asenav with an October 2017 delivery. The 4,510-grt, 226-foot by 48-foot vessel will be powered by two 1,400-bhp engines.

Queen Mary 2
Revitalized

On June 23 a remastered Queen Mary 2 left Hamburg’s Blohm + Voss Shipyard following a 25-day, $132-million interior transformation and exterior repainting. Updates included adding single cabins, construction of 30 Britannia Club balcony cabins, transforming the Grill restaurants, redesigning the Kings Court Buffet and replacing the Todd English restaurant with “The Verandah” and the Winter Garden with the “Carintha Lounge.” It was reported that the original design of the Kings Court Buffet and the Grand Lobby never quite worked and in part inspired the makeover.

Cruise ship Saint Laurent moored at Toronto’s International Marine Passenger Terminal. (See “New Cruise Lines”) – Photo courtesy of Geo Swan.
Ships for Sale

**The charter of Ocean Gala**

a) Scandinavia b) StarDancer c) Viking Serenade d) Island Escape for use as housing for refugees at the Swedish port of Utansojo in the Gulf of Bothnia collapsed. The ship’s owners have placed her on the sale list with an asking price of $20 million.

China’s HNA Cruises has backed out of a scrap deal for Henna a) Jubilee b) Pacific Sun and has instead placed the ship in drydock. The company is currently trying to find a trading buyer for the vessel and is asking $12 million for her.

Mano Shipping’s Royal Iris a) Eagle b) The Azur c) Eloise is also for sale. Her asking price is $3.9 million.

Portuscale’s idle Porto a) Istra b) Astra c) La Sirene d) Arion was reported as sold during July. The sale evidently fell through and she’s back on the list of available ships.

Classic Ships Sold?

Ahou Mehri Cruises sold its 7,478-grt Orient Queen II a) Vistamar to Liberian-owned Med Cruises Inc. Registered in the Bahamas since July, the 330-passenger ship has been renamed Med Queen and continues to sail between Lebanon and Turkey.

There were unconfirmed reports that the idle Brahe a) PCE 830 b) BEC 43 c) HMS Kilchenan d) Sunnhordland e) Kristina Brahe had been sold to Norwegian interests, and the new buyers plan to use the ship for further trading.

Portuscale’s Funchal was reported sold to Hong Kong buyers and en route to Macau in early August. No word on who the new owners might be and whether they’re trading buyers or breakers.

Olympic Charters

Norwegian Epic was docked at Rio de Janeiro’s Pier Maua from August 4 until 22, where she provided supplemental housing for corporate sponsors, members of the International Olympic Federation, the national organizing committees, the Rio Host Committee and guests. Hospitality functions and meetings were organized by Landry and King in conjunction with Norwegian Cruise Line.

Silver Cloud joined the Epic at Pier Maua and provided luxury housing for the United States’ male and female basketball teams. The ship was fitted with extra-long beds for the seven-foot ballplayers.

Historic Voyage

Crystal Serenity sailed from Seward, Alaska, to New York on August 16. The 32-day cruise traveled over 950 miles through the Northwest Passage via Canada and Greenland. The Serenity was accompanied by the United Kingdom’s ice-strengthened polar logistics and science vessel RRS Ernest Shackleton.
Reprieve

Plans for St. Helena’s July 15 withdrawal from service were shelved after problems with wind shear at the newly constructed Ascension Island airport forced the banning of flights except in the case of emergencies. St. Helena’s sailings were initially extended through this September, but now will continue until July 1, 2017. Her schedule rotation will be Cape Town-St. Helena-Alexandria-St. Helena-Cape Town. The ship spent August 5 to August 20 at Cape Town refitting.

Names

Mein Schiff 7 and Mein Schiff 8 will be renamed Mein Schiff 1 and Mein Schiff 2 once the ships currently using those names are transferred to TUI’s Thomson brand in 2018 and 2019. The older vessels will become TUI Discovery 3 and TUI Discovery 4.

Fincantieri’s Palermo yard began cutting the steel for Koningsdam’s sister on July 12. This Holland America Line ship will be named Nieuw Statendam prior to delivery in November 2018.

Carnival Cruise Line’s 2018 newbuild will be named Carnival Horizon. The ship will be delivered in March 2018 with amenities similar to those on sister Carnival Vista. These will include SkyRide, an IMAX Theater, the WaterWorks aqua park, Seuss at Sea, Alchemy Bar, Havana staterooms and extra-roomy Family Harbor cabins.

Celebrity Cruises has named its two recently acquired vessels Celebrity Xperience a) Eclipse and Celebrity Xploration a) Athala II. The refurbished vessels are expected to enter service in March 2017.

MSC’s second Seaside-class vessel will be named MSC Seaview. The ship will debut in the Mediterranean in June 2018.

Casualties

Weather was blamed for Celebrity Infinity’s crash into Number 3 berth at Ketchikan, Alaska, on June 3. The impact of the collision caused an estimated $2 million to $3 million in damage to the pier.

The 800-passenger Qing a) Atlantic b) Starship Atlantic c) Melody d) MSC Melody flooded with rain water from a monsoon while undergoing repairs in Mormugao Harbor, Vasco, Goa, India, on June 29. No one was aboard as the ship developed a 45-degree list to starboard and settled on the bottom. Owned by the Sahara Group, Qing has been laid up since 2014 undergoing conversion into a floating hotel. A press release stated that the ship was under charter to Trinity Leisure and at Western India Shipyard at the time of her sinking.

An early morning engine room fire on July 1 that was extinguished by the crew damaged three out of seven auxiliary engines aboard Black Watch a) Royal Viking Star b) Westward c) Star Odyssey. Cable damage initially prevented the two main engines from running. Once propulsion was restored Black Watch made its way to Funchal, Madeira, where F. Olsen cancelled the remainder of the 13-day Portuguese Islands and Cities cruise that began at Tilbury on June 25. None of the 696 passengers or 365 crew was injured. Repairs took longer than anticipated, resulting in the cancellation of a July 8 cruise from Tilbury.

The recent engine room fire aboard Le Boreal was the result of human error. One of the engineers suspected that a fuel filter was clogged and attempted to change filters without shutting things down first. As a result, the oil pump was still under pressure and loosened hot oil began spraying on heated pipes where it burst into flames.

The 3,306 passengers and 1,158 crew aboard Caribbean Princess spent nine hours adrift 25 miles southeast of Dublin on August 3. The ship was on route from Cobh to Dublin during a 12-day cruise that sailed from Southampton when it lost propulsion due to a “glitch” in the engine room’s electrical system. The engines were eventually restarted, permitting Caribbean Princess to berth at Belfast after skipping the scheduled call at Dublin.

An oil line ruptured in the engine room of America Cruise Ferries’ Caribbean Fantasy a) Victory b) Chihuahua Star, resulting in a fast-moving fire while the vessel was a mile off the Puerto Rican coast on August 17. The 512 passengers on board the 6,732-grt vessel slid down emergency shoots where rafts and Coast Guard rescue boats were waiting. The burning vessel ran aground a half mile off Punta Salina a few hours after being evacuated. Puerto Rico’s fire department used 3,000 gallons of seawater to finally extinguish the fire on August 20. The ferry was built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries’ Kobe yard in 1989 and has operated as an inter-island ferry between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic since 2011.

Write Peter T. Eiselle at 74 Chatham Street, Chatham, NJ 07928 or highseard@aol.com
Port of Baltimore News

Carnival Pride docked in Nassau, the Bahamas. – Photo courtesy of Arnold Reinhold.

Officials in Baltimore announced in August that Carnival Cruise Lines will continue to serve the city through December 2018. There are also provisions for three one-year options with the Carnival Pride. As a result vacationers will be able to enjoy 5- to 13-day cruises year-round to the Bahamas and the Caribbean. The arrangement with Carnival builds on the excellent market response to the Carnival Pride since it first started sailing from Charm City in 2009. Port officials also noted that in 2015 almost 200,000 passengers departed on 90 cruises from the city. The Port of Baltimore ranks sixth among U.S. East Coast ports, 11th nationally and 20th worldwide in the number of passengers.

Delaware Bay Ferry News

Just in time to start the busy summer season, the motor vessel Delaware, one of three active in the Cape May-to-Lewes ferry fleet, arrived back in Cape May after a five-month dry-docking and repowering. This was completed at Caddell’s Drydock and Repair Company, located in Staten Island. With the installation of new Electro Motive Division engines the vessel’s fuel consumption and emissions are expected to be reduced by 40 percent.

A month prior to this, the Federal Transit Administration awarded the Delaware Bay ferry service a $6 million grant to repower and retrofit fleet mates New Jersey and Cape Henlopen. More than 43 million passengers have travelled aboard the Cape May-Lewes ferries since service began on July 1, 1964.

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum Cruises

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum’s 1920 buy boat, the Winnie Estelle, started cruising on the Miles River on May 22 and continued on weekends through October 2016. The 45-minute drop-in public cruises were available Fridays through Mondays, departing from the museum on the hour from noon to 3 p.m. Prior to coming to the museum, the Winnie Estelle functioned as a work boat on the lower Chesapeake Bay for more than 50 years, carrying seafood and produce to market. In the 1970s Belize was her operational base, from which she functioned as an island trader carrying lumber from Honduras. Further cruise details can be obtained from the museum by calling 410-745-2916.

Philly Shipyards News

Christening of the MT West Virginia. – Photo courtesy of Crowley Maritime.

On August 16, Crowley Maritime christened its fourth new LNG-ready tanker, naming it West Virginia. She’s the sister to three other Crowley tankers that were built at Philly Shipyard – the Louisiana, Ohio and Texas. The West Virginia is 50,000 dwt, 600 feet in length and has a capacity of 330,000 barrels. A versatile vessel, she can carry crude oil or refined petroleum products along with chemical cargo. The Marathon Petroleum Corporation charters the West Virginia.

Norfolk Harborfest 2016

America’s largest, longest-running maritime festival returned to Norfolk, Virginia, once again in June of this year. Norfolk Harborfest has been an annual celebration in Hampton Roads since the United States celebrated its bicentennial in 1976, when it was called Operation Sail ’76. The following year the event adopted the name Harborfest.
This year’s Harborfest, conducted from June 9 to 12 at Town Point Park, included many activities on both land and sea for all ages and areas of interest. The list of activities included the Parade of Sail, artisan foods and beverages, workboat races, performances, family games and activities, national and regional entertainment, and one of the largest fireworks shows on the East Coast.

The Parade of Sail is conducted under the direction of the Virginia Pilots Association. The event took place at noon on Friday, June 10, and featured a diverse fleet of ships (everything from tall ships to military craft to tugboats). Spectators were able to watch from various spots as the fleet made its way into Norfolk’s Downtown Harbor, sailing along the Elizabeth River before arriving at Town Point Park. On Saturday and Sunday public tours of the ships were open from noon until sunset. The other maritime events at the festival included demonstrations by the Coastal Riverine Force, U.S. Coast Guard Search and Rescue capabilities, the Tug Muster (the largest of its kind in the mid-Atlantic region), and the Chesapeake Bay Workboat Parade and Race. In celebration of the festival’s 40th anniversary, a three-hour documentary entitled “Harborfest Through the Ages,” about the evolution of Harborfest, was shown throughout the weekend.

Submarine Indiana Pressure Hull Milestone

In early August it was announced that Newport News Shipbuilding had reached “pressure hull complete” in the construction of Virginia-class submarine Indiana (SSN-789). This means that all of the vessel’s hull sections have been joined into a single, watertight unit, the last major milestone before the ship is christened.

On a visit to NNS to examine the progress of Indiana, ship sponsor Diane Donald, wife of Adm. Kirk Donald (U.S. Navy, Ret.), stated how excited she was to see Indiana beginning to take on the form of a submarine and praised the hard work done by the shipbuilders to achieve this milestone. Donald also met with the future ship’s crew and was accompanied by Ray Shearer, chairman of Indiana’s commissioning committee.

Construction of Indiana began in September 2012. With this recent milestone, the ship is over 80 percent complete and on track to be delivered to the Navy in the latter half of 2017. “Newport News Shipbuilding had completed the pressure hull on time for the Indiana, continuing the momentum of the Navy’s most successful build program and moving us another step closer to taking our submarine to sea,” said Commander Jesse J. Zimbauer, Indiana’s commanding officer.

Bush Completes 2015 PIA Period

USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) successfully completed her 2015 planned incremental availability period at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Virginia, in July. Her 13-month PIA in Portsmouth included repairs and modifications such as the installation of two new weapons systems, an improved plumbing system with refurbished anchor chains, and general maintenance. Bush’s post-PIA sea trials began on July 23 and included an assessment of the crew, equipment, flight deck readiness, deck seamanship, and damage control readiness.

Commissioned in January 2009, USS George H.W. Bush is the tenth and final vessel of the Nimitz-class supercarriers.

Patriots Point News

There are a few interesting new items to share about the happenings at Patriots Point that took place over the summer months, including the opening of a new exhibit on the USS Laffey in June and the 40th anniversary celebration of the opening of Patriots Point, which took place in August.

A new high-tech exhibit opened on the USS Laffey display ship on Saturday, June 25, which illustrates a close encounter with a Russian submarine during the 1970s, when the threat of a third world war seemed highly possible if not imminent. The exhibit is housed in Laffey’s Combat Information Center, where air and surface radar and sonar equipment were operated during the Cold War. The exhibit uses holograms.
and surround sound to provide visitors with a realistic sense of what it would have been like in Laffey’s CIC. Additionally, some of the old equipment has been reworked to look as if it’s still operational to add to the authenticity of the experience.

**On January 3, 1976,** Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum opened its doors to the public for the first time to a crowd of 2,601 people. In January 2016, Patriots Point began its 40th year by holding the Pay-What-You-Can event over the weekend of January 9–10 to commemorate the anniversary. On Saturday, August 27, Patriots Point celebrated by offering visitors a special entry fee of $2, which was the cost for admission in 1976. The exhibits and specials that visitors enjoyed included Life During the Cold War: USS Laffey’s CIC, USS Laffey Engine Room Exhibit, Cockpit Access Inside Historic Aircraft, Vietnam War Reenactors, Vietnam Experience Phase II (Quonset Hut), USS Yorktown Fo’c’sle Tours, World War II Veteran Meet and Greet, and discounts on gift shop purchases. Moreover, the festivities included a food court and beer garden aboard the USS Yorktown and live music by Pin-Ups for Heroes, who performed World War II-era songs.

**Spirit of Baltimore Crashes**

**Spirit Cruises’ Spirit of Baltimore** crashed into Henderson’s Wharf Marina at Fell’s Point while on a midnight cruise August 28. Two of the boat’s 400 passengers suffered minor injuries. The pier experienced damage, and the boat incurred scratches along its hull. The vessel’s captain was suspended during the Coast Guard’s investigation of the incident.
New Anchorages

The U.S. Coast Guard has proposed ten new sites on the Hudson River, from Yonkers to Kingston, to become full-time designated anchorages for commercial vessels. Currently there are only two anchorages. The action was requested by the Maritime Association of the Port of New York/New Jersey, the Hudson River Port Pilots Association, and the American Waterways Operators. The Coast Guard accepted comments from the public through December 6, 2016.

Visitors to New York

Clipper Round the World sailing vessels stopped by Liberty Landing Marina in Jersey City, New Jersey, in June before embarking on the last big leg of the race across the Atlantic. The race consists of a fleet of matching yachts, captained by qualified skippers and crewed by amateurs who pay for the privilege. Twelve boats were participating in the race.

California Maritime Academy’s TS Golden Bear stopped by New York Harbor on July 17, where tours of the ship were offered. The current Golden Bear, the third to bear the name, was transferred from the Navy to the U.S. Maritime Administration in 1994, converted for use by CMA and transferred there in 1996.

The Carnival Sunshine came to New York Harbor for the first time this June with many trips to Canada. The Carnival Vista made her maiden voyage to America, first stopping in New York on her way to Florida.

One of Two Surviving lifeboats of the Andrea Doria, sunk 60 years ago, was at the New York State Maritime College-Fort Schuyler at the end of July. Lifeboat # 1 was restored by Mark Koch from the New Orleans area at Scarano Boatbuilding in Albany in time to commemorate the anniversary. Several survivors of the sinking and family members of those who didn’t survive attended the event.

MOL Benefactor, the largest container ship to ever visit the New York Harbor, arrived at Global Marine Terminal in Bayonne, New Jersey, July 8. She’s the newest Panamax ship to pass through the recently opened Panama Canal. Benefactor holds 10,100 TEUs. As soon as the newly raised Bayonne Bridge is open, ships like these will be going to Port Newark-Elizabeth Marine Terminal.

United States Disappointment

The USS United States won’t be going back into service anytime soon. Crystal Cruises found that turning the historic ship into a modern cruise liner and adhering to current regulations was too much of a challenge. However, the cruise line provided much of its research and a $350,000 donation to the SS United States Conservancy, current owner of the vessel. The ship, which still holds the record for the fastest transatlantic crossing, is in good structural shape.
Casualties

**New York Waterway's Peter R**

Weiss had a hard landing in July at Paulus Hook, New Jersey, across from Manhattan, that injured 17 people. Most of the injuries were minor, but three people were removed on stretchers.

**New York Waterway's Jersey City**
collided with ten kayakers in nine kayaks as it was pulling out of the pier. The kayakers were part of a group led by Manhattan Kayak Company. Five victims were taken to two hospitals. The ferry pilot tested clean for drugs and alcohol, and police are investigating whether he was blinded by glare.

Ferry News

**The Staten Island Ferry is looking**
into bringing a ferry to East 34th Street in Manhattan and Pier 11 near Wall Street. The plan would require additional ferries and upgrades to infrastructure. The new service, if it happens, would be a boon for Staten Islanders.

**During the summer,** electrical outlets on the ferries were shut off because passengers were fighting over them. A ferry worker was punched while trying to break up one fight. The city is still deciding whether to turn the outlets back on.

**The New York City** Economic Development Council has reached a contract with Hornblower, Inc., for Citywide Ferry Service, scheduled to begin in summer 2017. By 2018 the service will be operating from 21 landings across the city.

Changes

**The Empress of New York, owned**
by World Yacht and docked at Pier 81, has been transformed into a restaurant boat featuring two restaurants. The 10,000-square-foot yacht runs short trips throughout the day.

**The South Street** Seaport Museum’s 1885 Wavertree returned to the museum in September after a $13 million, city-funded restoration, and now the 1911 barque Peking is headed for the same sort of top-to-toe work. Peking went to Caddell Drydock to spend the winter before she’s sent to Germany, where the maritime museum of Hamburg, Stiftung Hamburg Maritim, will spend €30 million on her restoration.

**The Annual Tug Boat Race** was moved from September 4 to October 9, 2016, because of the impending Hurricane Hermine.

Long Island News

**In mid-June a paddleboarder was**
swiped away near Atlantic Beach. The man’s body was found several days later by a tugboat crew.

**Whales have been** spotted in Long Island Sound this summer as close as New Rochelle and along the south shore of Long Island.

**The Propeller Club** of New York and New Jersey hosted a luncheon for the new Captain of the Port, Sector Long Island Sound, at the Long Island Maritime Museum on September 26 in West Sayville, New York.

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**Write G. Justin Zizes, Jr. at**
147 East 37th Street, New York, New York 10016 or gjustinzizes@earthlink.net
Scotland’s CalMac Wins Contract Renewal

Following a public tendering process, state-owned ferry company Caledonian MacBrayne has been awarded a £900 million, eight-year renewed contract for the continued operation of its network by the Scottish government. With roots dating back over 160 years, CalMac (as it is known locally) operates 32 ships on a network of 27 ferry routes linking the west coast of Scotland with its outlying islands.

Historic Hovercraft Preserved

Britain’s Hovercraft Museum Trust was successful in its public campaign to save the retired English Channel Hovercraft The Princess Anne from being scrapped. The trust was able to reach a provisional agreement with its landlord to create a permanent, publicly-accessible home for the historic craft, which was retired in 2000 after more than 30 years of service between Dover and Calais.

DFDS Launches World’s Largest (LEGO) Ferry

In honor of its 150th anniversary, Danish ferry operator DFDS Seaways teamed up with Danish toy manufacturer LEGO to create the largest-ever LEGO ship. Measuring 40 feet by 6 feet and consisting of over a million LEGO bricks, the Jubilee Seaways and its specially-constructed trailer are conducting a promotional tour across Europe. Even the champagne bottle used to christen the ship was made from LEGOs!

Fire on the Moby ZaZa

Irish Continental Group Acquires Military Catamaran

Irish Continental Group, the parent company of Irish Ferries, has purchased the 2001-built Austal USA catamaran WestPac Express, which currently operates under charter to the U.S. Military Sealift Command. She’ll remain under charter to the MSC for the immediate future, but there has been widespread speculation that she’ll eventually join Irish Ferries’ busy Irish Sea routes.

Royal Launch for Red Jet 6

Red Jet 6 at East Cowes, United Kingdom, June 30, 2016. – Photo courtesy of Geni.

Princess Anne, The Princess Royal, served as the godmother for the new Isle of Wight Ferry Red Jet 6, the first high-speed ferry built in Britain for nearly 20 years. Operated by Red Funnel Ferries, the catamaran was actually built on the Isle of Wight, adjacent to the route she will serve. Red Funnel operates a mixed fleet of passenger-only catamarans and conventional ferries on the busy shuttle route between Southampton and Cowes on the Isle of Wight.

Irish Ferries’ Wind Perfection was the victim of an engine room fire in August while docked in Nice, France, between crossings to the island of Corsica. One crew member was injured, and the ship was removed from service during the peak travel season pending repairs.

Moby Lines’ 1982-built ferry Moby ZaZa a) Olau Britannia b) Bayard c) Christian IV d) Julia e) Wind Perfection was the victim of an engine fire in August while docked in Nice, France, between crossings to the island of Corsica. One crew member was injured, and the ship was removed from service during the peak travel season pending repairs.

Moby ZaZa (see here as Christian IV) in Kristiansand, Norway. Photo courtesy of CheHu.

Write Ted Blank at 1576 Grotto Street North, St Paul, MN 55117 or tedblank@hotmail.com
Navy Adds New Oilers & Destroyers

In mid-September, the U.S. Navy announced that the USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208) will be the latest addition to its fleet of next-generation replenishment oilers.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said, in a ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston, “This class of ships would be incomplete absent the name Robert F. Kennedy. He was a Navy man, a U.S. attorney general, a senator, and a leader who committed, and ultimately sacrificed, his life to pursuing justice, equality and freedom.”

In 2014, she was named by Smithsonian magazine as one of the 100 Most Significant Americans of All Time.

The Robert F. Kennedy is the latest in the John Lewis-class of ships to honor Significant Americans of All Time.

In 2016, the Muskoka Steamship & Historical Society celebrated the 150th anniversary of the first Muskoka Lakes steamship in central Ontario. The flagship 100 Mile Cruise, which originally ran from the early 1920s until 1956, was relaunched for one day to commemorate the passenger/cargo side-wheeler SS Wenonah of 1866.

Led by the 1887-built RMS Segwun, the oldest operating steamship in North America and Canada’s only coal-powered vessel, and the 2002-commissioned Wenonah II, over 100 wooden launches from the Antique & Classic Boat Society also joined the 12-hour cruise.

In its heyday the company flagship SS Sagamo (1907–69), the largest Muskoka steamer ever built, conducted the 100 Mile Cruise (which was actually 86 miles), with the Segwun and other fleet mates feeding into it.

General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Corporation, located in San Diego, is expected to begin construction in 2021 on the Robert F. Kennedy and Lucy Stone, with the Sojourner Truth to follow the next year. These ships will supply fuel and stores to U.S. Navy ships at sea and also provide jet fuel to the Navy’s aircraft carriers.

The prior week, Mabus announced at the Boston Public Library the construction of two new Arleigh Burke-class destroyers named after two Medal of Honor recipients.

The Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125), being built by Huntington Ingalls Industries in Mississippi, is expected to join the Navy in 2023. She will be named after the youngest Marine and World War II service member ever to receive the Medal of Honor, America’s highest award for combat heroism. During a close firefight with Japanese forces at the Battle of Iwo Jima, Lucas placed himself over two grenades thrown into his trench and subsequently saved the lives of three fellow marines. Miraculously, Lucas also survived. He was just 17 years old.

General Dynamics’ Bath Iron Works division in Maine will construct the Gen. Louis H. Wilson Jr. (DDG 126), which
is named for the Marine Corps captain who, along with his company, repelled and destroyed a numerically superior enemy force during the World War II Battle of Guam. She will also enter service in 2023. These 509-foot-long warships, with beams of 59 feet, will be able to exceed 30 knots and conduct simultaneous air, surface and subsurface battles.

New Lighthouse Exhibit in Maine

Next summer, an immersive lighthouse exhibit will open at the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath, Maine.

Utilizing new gallery space currently under construction, the exhibit will feature the circa-1874 second-order Fresnel lens from the Cape Elizabeth Lighthouse tower once used to guide ships into Portland, Maine. This lens remained in use until 1991 in the east lantern portion of the lighthouse formerly known as Two Lights.

“Into the Lantern: A Lighthouse Experience” will be the first ever to include a 180-degree media projection system with time-lapse videography and audio of the Gulf of Maine and the changing Casco Bay views. Replicating the experience of being in the lantern room atop Two Lights (where filming took place), it will allow people who would be unable to climb the steps of a real lighthouse to have the experience virtually.

“Imagine Standing” at the top of the Cape Elizabeth Lighthouse and watching the view changing over 24 hours – from sunrise to sunset with boat traffic going by, the wind blowing, and the seagulls calling. We want to replicate that experience for all the people who know and love this famous lighthouse, but will never otherwise be able to appreciate it in that way,” said Executive Director Amy Lent. “We’ve been offering boat tours of area lighthouses for years and we know how much people love learning about them, so we are excited to create this new experience that will teach the history and science behind these important navigational aids in an entirely new way.”

So far over 80 percent of the $980,000 needed for the design, construction and installation of the permanent exhibit has been raised.

To find out more, visit www.mainemaritimemuseum.org/exhibits/lantern-coming-summer-2017/

Ferry Service Gets New Vessel

The New London, Connecticut, and Orient Point, Long Island, New York, ferry run saw another vessel enter service in late September with the debut of Jennifer C. Formerly the 1965-built M/V Pamlico, the 300-passenger, 50-car Jennifer C is the eighth ferry now in operation by Cross Sound Ferry on this 41-year-old, year-round service. Renamed after Jennifer C. Wronowski, the wife of CSF vice president and co-owner Adam Wronowski, the new addition will enable CSF to offer up to 62 arrivals and departures daily.

Originally built by New Bern Shipyard in New Bern, North Carolina, the 51-year-old ferry first operated on Pamlico Sound, North Carolina. Thames Shipyard & Repair Co. of New London carried out extensive renovations, including the addition of a new cabin.

Although CSF has worked with the U.S. Maritime Administration to establish a Capital Construction Fund to financially assist operators and owners of U.S. merchant marine vessels to modernize and expand their fleets, the Jennifer C acquisition and refurbishment was financed solely by CSF.

Despite her half century of service, Jennifer C is not the line’s oldest ferry. The 1964-built Susan Anne and the Cape Henlopen, the latter originally a World War II landing craft (USS LST 510) used for D-Day, have run longer.

Special thanks to Ed Reeper for contributing to this column.

Write Roddy Sergiades at 15 Brown St., Port Hope, Ontario, L1A 3C8 Canada, or aquitania@eagle.ca
VANCOUVER – Canada’s Western Gateway

With shipping news rather slow over the summer months we’ll take a look at the Port of Vancouver, British Columbia, and several of its peripheral ports this quarter.

Vancouver, located on Burrard Inlet, is ranked as the third-busiest port in the Americas in terms of total import and export tonnage, and it’s also Canada’s leading port. Although such dry bulks as coal and grain are its bread-and-butter cargoes, Vancouver has also become a leading cruise port by virtue of the seasonal Alaska trade and is well known for its forest products exports.

Ships involved in these trades now call at 28 major marine terminals that have grown up in the port, including 20 that move bulk commodities, four that handle containers, two that specialize in breakbulks and one each that serve ro-ro carriers and cruise ships. Two of the cargo terminals are located on man-made Roberts Bank, located to the south of Vancouver, while others are found on the Fraser River, formerly operated by the Fraser River Port Authority. In 2008 these terminals, as well others overseen by the North Fraser Port Authority, were joined under a single management body, known as the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, and until earlier this year they were operated under the marketing brand of Port Metro Vancouver. This term has since reverted to Port of Vancouver.

History

While the Spanish are generally credited with first exploring the British Columbia coastline and entering Burrard Inlet as early as 1791, the Hudson’s Bay Company is credited with bringing maritime commerce to the Vancouver area. After establishing a fort on the nearby Fraser River in 1824, the company began shipping out beaver pelts in 1832 and salted salmon a few years later, some of it going west to the Hawaiian Islands. By the late 1840s, the fort had become the largest fish exporter on the Pacific Coast. However, it was the lumber industry that was to become the area’s first major exporter, with a mill on the north shore of Burrard Inlet sending its first shipload of wood to Australia on the barque Ellen Lewis in 1864.

Seven years later, British Columbia entered into a confederation with other Canadian provinces, and in 1886 the City of Vancouver was incorporated out of the old settlement of Granville. In that
same year the Canadian Pacific Railway reached the Pacific Coast, just in time to load Vancouver’s first imported cargo, a consignment of tea and silk brought in from Asia by the chartered steamer Abyssinia and bound across Canada and the Atlantic for London.

**New Steamship Routes**

Over the next several years a number of important steamship services were established to and from Vancouver, although the port would have to wait for several more decades before it truly began to blossom. Canadian Pacific, the charterer of Abyssinia, had three Empress ships – Empress of China, Empress of India and Empress of Japan – completed for transpacific service by 1891. Two years later the Canadian Australian Steamship Company placed its 3,393-gt Minerva and 3,528-gt Warrimoo in operation between Vancouver and Australia. In 1894, the China Mutual Steam Navigation Company instituted a regular cargo service across the Pacific between Vancouver and the Orient. Prior to these long-distance international services, the Union Steamship Company of British Columbia, founded in 1889, was operating passenger/cargo services along the British Columbia coastline and onwards to Alaska by 1896.

In exports, lumber continued to be king but salmon remained a valuable commodity into the 1900s, with a record 16 million pounds shipped from Vancouver in 1901. Thirteen years later Vancouver became a much more significant shipping center when the Panama Canal opened, allowing commercially viable all-water services to Europe and the eastern seaboard of the Americas.

“Flattening the Rockies”

While imports of silk and tea and exports of lumber and salmon remained important to Vancouver, it was grain that would fuel its growth from 1920 until the advent of heavy coal exports in the 1970s. The key to moving grain, however, was the elimination of excessive railroad freight rates to transport it across the Rocky Mountains. This took place in the 1920s, largely through the political efforts of future Vancouver Mayor Gerry McGeer, who became known as the man who “flattened the Rockies.” Although Vancouver is recorded as having sent 50,000 bushels of prairie-grown grain to Australia as early as 1909, exports jumped to 500,000 bushels in 1921 and to 96.9 million bushels by 1932, at which time the commodity made up nearly 75 percent of Vancouver’s total export tonnage.

Private grain elevators were built along the banks of Burrard Inlet while a local harbor commission, eventually to become the Vancouver Port Authority, was created to build public facilities. Among these was Ballantyne Pier, completed in 1923 as the most technologically advanced port facility in the British Empire. West of this structure stood Canadian Pacific Piers A, B, C and D. Pier A was built in 1908, Piers B and C in 1927 and Pier D in 1914, although D was later lost to fire in 1938.
World War II

Just before the advent of World War II the Lions Gate Bridge was built over the entrance of Burrard Inlet at a cost of C$6 million, and it remains a Vancouver landmark today. At the same time, gun emplacements began to go up around the harbor area and construction began on several corvettes and minesweepers, while Burrard Dry Dock, the city’s largest shipbuilder, started construction of a series of Fort ships, finishing the first, Fort St. James, in just 281 days. Eventually Vancouver’s shipyards, working round the clock, built more than half the vessels that Canada supplied to the war effort, although shipbuilding faltered as a major regional industry after the war.

It was during the war years, however, that the world’s largest passenger ship of the time, Queen Elizabeth, paid a quick visit to Vancouver’s English Bay before moving into the large grading dock on Vancouver Island for conversion work. At the same time, Canadian Pacific’s fastest transpacific liner, the 1930s-built Empress of Japan, was taken over for war duties and had her name changed to Empress of Scotland. Most trade to the Far East was lost during this period but new supply routes for lumber were opened up to Great Britain, with British Columbia’s forest industry breaking production records in the early 1940s.

The Postwar Years

Vancouver’s diminished trade with the Orient was quickly regained after the war but Canadian Pacific decided not to resume its transpacific passenger services, instead sending its surviving liners to the Atlantic. Nevertheless, the firm continued to operate coastal services from Vancouver, as did Canadian National, which took delivery of a new ship, Prince George, from the Yarrows yard in 1948. In 1954 Orient Line, later to combine with P&O, began sending several of its passenger liners to Vancouver as part of a new round-the-world route, a service that eventually re-established a link between Vancouver and the Orient in 1958. In that same year a new company, Alaska Cruise Lines, was formed for cruising up the British Columbia coastline to Alaska using small vessels chartered from Vancouver’s Union Steamship. By the late 1960s larger cruise vessels, such as the chartered Italia, were moving into Alaska’s emerging cruise trade. Growth was also taking place in the cargo sector and by 1963 Vancouver ranked first among Canadian ports in tonnage based on its rapidly growing grain and timber exports to Asia. Vancouver also became involved in the early container trades in 1955 when the purpose-built coastal freighter Clifford J. Rodgers, operated by the White Pass & Yukon Route, started moving 8-foot by 8-foot metal containers that could be filled with up to five tons of cargo between Burrard Inlet and ports to the north. However, the biggest events in Vancouver’s maritime growth were to come in the 1970s.

Coal, Containers & Cruising

In 1970, after less than two years of construction, the Roberts Bank Coal Port, now known as Westshore Terminals, was opened on a 50-acre artificial island created off the British Columbia mainland some 22 miles south of Vancouver City. The island was connected to the mainland by a three-mile causeway supporting both road and rail links. The catalyst for its construction had been a long-term contract signed with Japan for Canadian coal in 1968. The single-berth export facility loaded a record 3.5 million tonnes of coal for Asia in 1971 and had to be expanded to a second berth and an additional storage area by 1984.

Between these years, Vancouver’s first purpose-built container ships and large cruise vessels began to arrive, the former coming from Europe and Japan and the latter from California bound for Alaska. Although these first big cruise ships utilized the city’s old Canadian Pacific Pier, a completely new facility, Canada Place, was built over the older complex by 1986. Container ships also received new facilities when the Vanterm Container Terminal was opened in 1975 and the Centerm terminal was expanded to handle containers as well as breakbulks. In 1997 a third container terminal, DeltaPort, was opened on Roberts Bank adjacent to the Bank’s existing coal facility.
Vancouver Today

As the City of Vancouver celebrates its 130th anniversary this year, its port is continuing to grow. The Deltaport Container Terminal on Roberts Bank is being reconfigured to allow a throughput of 2.4 million TEUs annually while container throughput capacity at the Centerm terminal within Burrard Inlet will be increased by about two-thirds. On the horizon are plans to develop a completely new three-berth container terminal as an extension to Roberts Bank that would add an additional 2.4 million TEUs of capacity by the mid-2020s.

In the Cruise Sector, Vancouver has been handling about 230 cruise ship calls and 800,000 passengers a year at its three-berth Canada Place complex, numbers that have declined somewhat since the Port of Seattle began expanding its own capacity to handle cruise ships several years ago. Cruise ships also call at the Port of Victoria, located at the southern end of Vancouver Island, and Seattle-based Clipper Navigation has announced that it plans to inaugurate a passenger-only fast ferry service between Vancouver and Victoria by next summer.

This follows the ferry company’s takeover by Germany’s Förde Reederei Sektouristik earlier this year.

Peripheral Ports

The Port of Victoria is one of four peripheral ports surrounding Vancouver that also offer facilities to deep draft shipping, the others being the Port of Nanaimo, also located on Vancouver Island; Fraser Surrey Docks, located to the south of Vancouver on the Fraser River; and Squamish Terminals, a privately-operated facility located to the north of the city on Howe Sound.

The Port of Victoria, operated by the Greater Victoria Harbor Authority, has four berths at Ogden Point and handled a record 227 cruise ship calls and 533,000 passengers in 2015. The Port of Nanaimo maintains two cargo-handling facilities and one cruise ship berth on the east coast of the island. It has been handling about six large cruise ships and around four million tons of cargo annually, including containers that are moved to and from Vancouver by barge. Fraser Surrey Docks, with six deep-water berths on the Fraser River, operates under the authority of the Port of Vancouver and is visited by about 250 vessels annually. Privately-owned Squamish Terminals, which suffered a massive fire in 2015 and is now close to having the destroyed berth returned to service, was established in the early 1970s when it became a loading port for Norway’s Star Shipping. Since then it has evolved into a two-berth, three-warehouse complex that handles approximately one million tonnes of forest products annually.

Historic Vessels

Although the British Columbia ports don’t have as extensive a collection of historic ships as Puget Sound or San Francisco Bay, there are several notable vessels. These include the 1922-built, wooden-hulled, steam-powered tug Master, maintained and operated by the SS Master Society; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police schooner RCMPV St. Roch, on display at the Vancouver Maritime Museum; and the 1937-built Lady Rose, currently laid up and awaiting restoration at Tofino, located just north of Ucluelet.

In Vancouver itself there are several very good vistas for ship photography, including Stanley Park’s Prospect Point, where there is also easy access to the walkway across Lions Gate Bridge, and Ambleside Park on the North Shore in West Vancouver. For a water-level view of the ships the SeaBus ferry can be caught for a 12-minute crossing through the mid-harbor anchorage area between downtown Vancouver and Lonsdale Quay, located on the city’s North Shore.
Alexander Henry on the Move

The future of the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes is beginning to take shape after the museum departed its longtime premises and the museum ship CCGS Alexander Henry was towed away. During a special meeting of the Kingston city council in late June, the board agreed to support the temporary relocation of the museum to the Kingston suburb of Portsmouth Olympic Harbor and assist with funding a permanent location in the future.

The Alexander Henry was towed away from its longtime location at the Kingston dry dock by Toronto Drydock's tug Radium Yellowknife to a salvage yard in Picton, Ontario, on July 11. Under the agreement reached by the museum and Doornekamp Construction, responsible for moving the vessel, if the vessel isn’t disposed of by the museum before next summer, the museum will pay Doornekamp to scrap the vessel.

Research Vessel Becomes Museum

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ 50-foot research vessel R/V Chinook departed its Alpena Fisheries Research Station for the last time August 27 and will become a museum exhibit at the Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan in Alpena, Michigan. The vessel originated as a law enforcement vessel monitoring commercial fishing, then spent nearly 50 years as a research vessel based at Alpena. The vessel was replaced by R/V Tanner, built by the Andersen Boat Works of Saugatuck, Michigan, earlier this year.

Casualties

An unfortunately timed power failure caused CSL's 2013-built self-unloader Whitefish Bay to ground along the St. Lawrence River near Summertown, Ontario, during the morning of July 12. Group Ocean's Ocean George Bain and Duga successfully freed the big vessel 48 hours after the incident with no damage or injuries reported. Soon after, the vessel resumed its trip to Bathurst, New Brunswick, with 28,000 tons of coal.

Reminding us of the dangers involved with the limited maneuverability that large vessels have while plying the narrow confines of many Great Lakes, Polsteam's 2011-built deep sea visitor Lubie collided with a sailboat on the St. Clair River south of Port Huron, Michigan, shortly before noon on July 8. Port Huron Fire Captain Corey Nicholson reported that the sailboat was towed to Sarnia after the confrontation, and thankfully there were no injuries.

While engaged in the summer sealift to northern Quebec and the northern Canadian Territory of Nunavut, Groupe Desgagnés' Anna Desgagnés grounded on the lower St. Lawrence River shortly after departing Montreal on July 3. The vessel was released a short time later with the aid of two tugs and, after receiving an inspection at Montreal, the vessel continued its journey on July 5. The cause of the accident was determined to be a faulty hydraulic steering pump. The vessel was scheduled to stop at eight locations from the St. Lawrence to the remote Nunavut villages of Kimmirut, Pangnirtung and Iqaluit.

Keewatin’s Future in Doubt?

In mid-August, Skyline International Development unexpectedly offered to donate the 109-year-old steamship Keewatin to the Huronia Museum in Midland, Ontario. Unfortunately, the vessel's upkeep was more than the museum could handle, and the museum declined the Edwardian-era passenger steamer. The vessel went through a valuation exercise earlier this year, and the resulting report indicated that a fair market value for duplicating the vessel was $32 million. In return for the ship, the museum would have been expected to issue a charitable receipt for that amount.

Relocated from Saugatuck, Michigan, to Port McNicoll, Ontario, in 2012, the steamship is intended to serve as an attraction for Skyline's $1.6-billion housing development in Port McNicoll, but construction has yet to begin.
WE ARE SADDENED that we must report the intentional pollution of the Great Lakes by several sailors aboard the integrated tug/barge Victory/James L Kriner a) Reserve between mid-May and June 2014. The indictment handed down during this news cycle indicated that those involved conspired to discharge the oil-contaminated water into Lake Huron and other areas of the Great Lakes during the dark of night to make detection difficult. Two men have been arrested in the scandal.

WHILE ARRIVING at the Port of Ogdensburg, New York, with windmill parts destined for a windmill farm located at Churubusco, Thorco’s 2001-built deep-sea vessel Thorco Marjanne a) Clipper Magdalena hit the dock with its bulbous bow on August 2. The vessel destroyed a portion of the concrete wall, valued at $20,000, and also received a large dent on its bow.

Change of Plans for McKeil Marine

McKeil Work Boats’ newly acquired bulker Ardita, an identical sister to Spivalda, which entered service as Evans Spirit in 2015, ran into unforeseen problems during the ownership change. It seems that the Italian bank wouldn’t release the vessel to McKeil Marine after it was delivered to Canada for reflagging and a partial payment was received. The vessel was arrested at Hamilton, Ontario, and as of this writing remains under arrest in Hamilton Harbor waiting an outcome.

MOVING FAST to replace the arrested Ardita, McKeil Marine purchased the 2004-built bulker Arklow Willow and brought the vessel to Canada in late June. The ownership change went smoothly, and the vessel was quickly flagged Canadian and received the name Florence Spirit, the name that had originally been welded onto Ardita’s bows. The vessel’s first cargo was powdered cement loaded at Clarkson, Ontario, for delivery in Newfoundland.

Mackinac Catamarans on the Move

The future of Arnold Transit’s three catamarans, used to shuttle passengers to and from Mackinac Island for over 20 years, is finally becoming clear after they were involved in a multi-year legal battle. The Brown family sold Arnold Transit Company, including the boats and docks, to Petoskey lawyer James Wynn in June 2010. Two of the catamarans were held as collateral, and when Wynn reneged on the payments the Browns initiated foreclosure action in United States District Court in Marquette. As a result, the two 82-foot passenger vessels, which have not operated since 2013, were sold in June 2015.

Pictured Rocks Cruises purchased the Island Express for $1.35 million, and it has entered the tour service around the Pictured Rocks lakeshore on Lake Superior carrying the name Pictured Rocks Express. The Brown family ended up repurchasing the Mackinac Express for $500,000, the minimum bid accepted, and has since resold the catamaran to Star Line interests. The vessel is once again operating to and from Mackinac Island. Arnold’s Straights Express has not run during the proceedings, but is currently undergoing refurbishment for Arnold and is expected to enter service soon.

Passenger Vessels

The passenger vessel Cabaret a) American Adonis II b) Island Princess has returned to the Great Lakes region after an absence of several years. Croisieres Cabaret purchased the 1972-built vessel late last year and relocated it from Florida to Baie-St.-Paul, Quebec. The vessel began offering tours of the Ile-aux-Coudres area of the St. Lawrence River on July 1. The aluminum vessel was built at Erie, Pennsylvania, for American Boat Line and was originally used in the Clayton, New York, area before being relocated to America’s East Coast.

Mercury Skyline Cruiseline’s inactive downtown Chicago tour boat Skyline Princess was reactivated for tours along the Manitowoc River and Lake Michigan during this summer’s Subfest at Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Skyline Princess made its initial voyage at Manitowoc on July 8, and the owner intends to permanently expand to the region if this summer’s tours are successful.

Deep Sea Visitors

Several unique deep sea visitors have come to our shores this summer. HNoMY Norge, King Harald V of Norway’s beautiful 264-foot royal yacht, visited Toronto this summer for the International 8 Meter World Cup Championship and Sira Cup races. The yacht spent parts of August and
September housing King Harald V at Toronto’s Royal Canadian Yacht Club. 

*Norje* is unique in that it’s one of only three royal yachts remaining in Europe. It was originally a gift to Norway’s King Haakon VII in 1947. Unfortunately for the current king, his 8 meter-class sloop *Sira*, built by his father, King Olav V in 1938, lost the Sira Cup to the sloop *Bangalore*.

**VICTORY CRUISE LINES’ *Victory I* a) Cape May Light b) Saint Laurent**, the much-maligned passenger vessel, headlined a group of small cruise ships that are visiting our inland seas this summer. The vessel entered the St. Lawrence Seaway in early August and spent the summer and fall visiting several destinations. Other cruise ships visiting the Great Lakes this summer include Pearl Seas Cruises’ *Pearl Mist* and U.S. Blount Cruises’ *Grande Mariner* and *Grande Caribe*. Nearly 20 different large cruise ships are scheduled to venture as far west as Montreal this sailing season.

**ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY’s** Kingston-class coastal defense vessels HMCS *Kingston* and HMCS *Goose Bay* are visiting the St. Lawrence Seaway and Lake Ontario during this year’s Great Lakes deployment. The *Emmett J. Carey* is unique in that it’s one of only three retired sandsuckers, owned by Osborne Materials, that are scheduled to venture as far west as California because the lake has areas of shallow, sandy lake bottom. Two of these small, retired sandsuckers, owned by Osborne Materials, were dismantled during this news cycle. The 1948-built *Emmett J. Carey*, was sold off-lakes during this news cycle while it was laid up at Quebec City. The vessel was now sporting the name *Ethan* and is registered in Tanzania, but at the time this column was submitted the vessel had not departed Quebec.

**THE VESSEL WAS BUILT** as a 335-foot bulker for N.M. Paterson & Sons at Collingwood, Ontario, in 1975 and entered service wearing the name *Ontario*. During its early life the vessel spent considerable time along the Canadian Maritime Provinces, Canadian Arctic and deep sea. The vessel was sold to Desgagnés Transport in 1990 and received the name *Melissa Desgagnés*. During the last 20 years the vessel continued to focus its activities along the lower St. Lawrence with less frequent trips to the Great Lakes.

**A MODEST SUCTION** dredging industry has flourished along the southern Lake Erie coast because the lake has areas of shallow, sandy lake bottom. Two of these small, retired sandsuckers, owned by Osborne Materials, were dismantled during this news cycle. The 1948-built *Emmett J. Carey*, was sold off-lakes during this news cycle while it was laid up at Quebec City. The vessel was now sporting the name *Ethan* and is registered in Tanzania, but at the time this column was submitted the vessel had not departed Quebec.

**GROUPES DESGAGNÉS’ GENERAL CARGO VESSEL** *Melissa Desgagnés* a) Ontadoe was sold off-lakes during this news cycle while it was laid up at Quebec City. The vessel is now sporting the name *Ethan* and is registered in Tanzania, but at the time this column was submitted the vessel had not departed Quebec.

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Empress of the Seas Update

**Royal Caribbean’s Empress of the Seas** a) Nordic Empress b) Empress of the Seas c) Empress returned to PortMiami to begin four- and five-night cruises last May 25. A number of technical issues and extensive refurbishments delayed her re-entry into U.S.-based operations, and even after she began service, occasional problems persisted.

In late June, a problem with one of the ship’s engines caused the vessel to sail at reduced speed, thus skipping some ports. Passengers on board were given spending credits or compensation, and an engineering team was able to resolve the unnamed technical issues.

**Royal Caribbean** wasn’t shy about admitting that they wanted to use the *Empress of the Seas* for cruises to Cuba, but as of early September, that authorization had not yet been granted.

This editor sailed aboard the ship in July and again in August and found everything to be fresh and refurbished, with revamped lounges and new dining areas. A major lounge located aft, “Boleros,” was Latin-themed with décor, music and ambiance suited to a Cuban itinerary. This vessel will be a good fit for Cuba cruises, being just small enough at 48,000 grt for the pier facilities in Havana, which cannot accommodate the larger ships.

Royal Caribbean to Build Iconic PortMiami Terminal

**Royal Caribbean** has reached an agreement with Miami-Dade County to build a dramatic new cruise terminal at PortMiami. An iconic building was promised, capable of handling an *Oasis*-class ship, among others.

The 170,000-square-foot terminal, with adjoining parking garage, has already been nick-named the “Crown of Miami” because of its distinct shape. When viewed from the water the design evokes a crown: The “M” of Miami when viewed from the eastern or western approaches, and a sense of waves when viewed from the land side. At night the terminal will be lighted to give a striking impression, visible for miles.

**Under the agreement** Royal Caribbean will fully finance the construction of the $247-million terminal, although the Port will contribute $15 million for surface and road work at the site. The location is to the east of the existing line of cruise terminals along the north side of Dodge Island, near the container yards. Royal Caribbean will also pay the county $7.5 million in annual rent.

**When completed** in 2018, Terminal A will have space for a 1,300-foot-long ship. (The *Oasis*-class ships are nearly 1,200 feet long) Royal Caribbean’s current Port-Miami dock at Terminal G can only accommodate ships up to 1,000 feet in length.

New Bahamas Ferry from Port Everglades

**The Spanish-owned and -operated** Balearia Caribbean celebrated the first voyage of its *Jaume 1* from Port Everglades to Freeport, Grand Bahama, on June 29, 2016. The 256-foot-long fast ferry accommodates 600 passengers and can travel at speeds up to 32 knots. She replaces the smaller, no-frills ferry *Pinar del Rio*.  

**Jaume 1 Features** a bar-cafeteria, retail shops and seating in both Economy and Superior classes. The ferry service runs daily, with departures from Port Everglades at 8 a.m., arriving in Freeport at 11 a.m. Return trips depart Freeport at 6:30p.m., with arrival in Port Everglades at 10 p.m.

**Balearia Caribbean** plans to expand with the addition of service to Nassau, and is also anticipating approval to sail to Cuba. The ferry company has operated daily services from Port Everglades since 2011.
Lady Luck Sunk as Artificial Reef

The 324-foot tanker Lady Luck arrived at Port Everglades under tow on July 20 in preparation for her sinking as an artificial reef. The Broward County Board of Commissioners voted to waive dockage fees at the port to help support the Lady Luck Reef operation. This project was also sponsored in part by the City of Pompano Beach, Isle Casino Racing and Shipwreck Park, Inc.

Prominent Pompano Beach artist Dennis Macdonald created a mock underwater casino on board the ship, complete with poker tables, roulette table and slot machines on the main deck. This underwater casino is the largest of its kind in the world, and provides a unique underwater photo opportunity for divers.

The ship, originally built in 1967, had been sold by the City of New York to Shipwreck Park, Inc. at a low cost. The Lady Luck was then towed to Miami for cleanup and installation of artwork before being towed to Port Everglades. She was sunk on July 23, off Pompano Beach, in 50 to 100 feet of water.

Crystal Returns to Port Everglades

Port Everglades is welcoming the return of Crystal Cruises’ luxury ships beginning in October 2017. Both Crystal Serenity and Crystal Symphony will operate a total of eight sailings to and from the port, beginning on October 27.

Crystal last sailed from Port Everglades in 2006, having spent the past ten years based at PortMiami.

Port of Houston Gives Up Cruise Operations

A disastrous re-entry into the cruise industry for the Port of Houston approached its final chapter in July 2016, as port commissioners voted to sell the port’s passenger gangway system.
The Bayport Cruise Terminal opened in 2008, but sat dormant for years. The port tried to build up the cruise market in 2012 by essentially paying Princess Cruises and Norwegian Cruise Line to homeport in Houston instead of nearby Galveston. But despite having contracts and favorable financial arrangements, both lines soon left the port because of poor business and low yields.

Austral-Built LCS 6 Completes Shock Trials

Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) reported in July that the Independence variant Littoral Combat Ship USS Jackson (LCS 6) successfully completed Full Ship Shock Trials off the coast of Florida.

The purpose of these shock trials is to validate the operational survivability of newly constructed ships after exposure to underwater shock. Three tests were scheduled for the ship and each test was conducted with a 10,000-pound explosive charge.

On July 17 the USS Jackson was subjected to the third and final underwater explosion as part of the tests. The vessel performed “exceptionally well” according to NAVSEA, sustained minimal damage and returned to port under her own power. Large amounts of data are collected during these tests, to be analyzed for several months.

Austral, builders of the aluminum trimaran vessel, was reportedly quite pleased with the test results.

An interesting side note to this last test: on July 17 a minor earthquake was reported off the coast of Daytona Beach, Florida, which was later attributed to the shock testing.

Halimar Shipyard Delivers Supply Boat

Halimar Shipyard of Morgan City, Louisiana, delivered the 205-foot monohull crew supply vessel M/V Glenn Autrey to Barry Graham Oil Service in July. In collaboration with ship designer Incat Crowther, the newest vessel provides a modern and fuel-efficient design for use in the Gulf of Mexico.

Glenn Autrey sports a spacious aft cargo deck measuring 3,640 square feet. The main deck cabin has 72 passenger seats, shower, toilet, and additional storage space. The 12 crew members are accommodated in twin cabins. Powered by four Cummins diesel engines driving four Hamilton waterjets, the Autrey achieved a top speed of 35 knots during acceptance trials. ↓

Passenger/Cruise Ships Due

Carnival Spirit, Dawn Princess
Insignia, Pacific Aria, Pacific Dawn,
Pacific Eden, Pacific Jewell, Pacific Pearl, Sea Princess and Sun Princess.

Passenger Ship Cruise News

A number of passengers on a cruise visit to Port Villa, Vanuatu, aboard Pacific Dawn were seriously injured in a motor coach accident June 20. Two Vanuatu nationals, one of them the driver of the commuter coach, died when the ship’s tour coach collided head-on with a commuter bus. A number of passengers were medevaced to Brisbane, Australia, for urgent treatment.

Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines financially partnered with the government of Vanuatu in repairing the cyclone-damaged wharf, including new bollards at Port Villa. The pier at Mystery Islands, which was damaged during cyclones, was also replaced.

Carnival Spirit, which has sailed out of Sydney since 2012, will undertake cruises in China following a 2018 drydocking in Singapore.

In April 2017, Dawn Princess will transfer to the P&O Australia fleet and be renamed Pacific Explorer. Pacific Pearl has been sold out of the fleet effective April 2017. Under her new owners, Cruise & Maritime Voyages, she’ll be based year-round at Tilbury, United Kingdom, as Columbus. Pacific Jewell will take over Pacific Pearl’s cruises, which includes home-porting part of the year at Auckland, New Zealand.

Pacific Eden undertook a number of cruises out of Singapore along with SuperStar Gemini.
The Largest Container Ship to Visit Australia

Long Beach called at Port Melbourne and Sydney’s Botany over the last week in May and the first weekend of June 2016. Adverse weather affected loading and discharging at Port Botany. Many MSC containers were stacked aboard ship.

The first LNG shipment from the new Curtis Island Gladstone Plant to Japan took place during the first week in July.

Ferries

The ferry service between the Australian Mainland and Devonport, Tasmania, was halted from June 6 to 7 because of heavy rains that flooded the River Mersey, which flows through the Port of Devonport. The two ferries Spirit of Tasmania 1 and 2 were forced to remain at Port Melbourne, but once the weather abated, additional back-to-back sailings moved the backlog.

The famous former Manly ferry South Steyne vacated its former home berth at the Australian Maritime Museum so that work could be undertaken at the wharf.

A male passenger onboard Spirit of Tasmania 1 fell overboard on June 25. It was presumed that he jumped over the side. The alarm was immediately given and the ship retraced its course. Vessels in the vicinity, including the Spirit’s sister on the northbound voyage, scoured an area approximately 124 nautical miles south of Port Phillip Heads. The passenger was not located, but some of his belongings were found at sea. The search was called off the following day because of the mid-winter weather. The 45-year-old man would have perished in such cold water.

New Zealand/Pacific Islands News

The 1974-built Ro/ro ferry Suilven sank at the entrance of Suva Harbour on November 24, 2015. The vessel operated on voyages from Ovalau, a northern island in the Fijian Group.

The ship began to list while entering the port, apparently from the cargo shifting during transit. There were no passengers, and all the crewmembers were rescued with no injuries.

The former Cook Strait ferry Arahana, operated by the New Zealand government’s Interisland line, sailed for her last trans-Cook Strait service on July 24, 2015. The ferry was a veteran of 32 years of service. She had been built with classic lines, but her beauty was somewhat disfigured by later external refits. She met her end at the scrapper’s torch. She was replaced by Kaiarahia a) Stena Allegra.

Arataki was a World War II-built tug originally in service with the Royal New Zealand Navy. She later served under various Australian owners and then with a Pacific Island company until she was scrapped in New Zealand in August 2015.
The Chatham Islands off New Zealand’s east coast survive commercially by a life-line service from New Zealand. The Rangatira has been providing that service for the past 15 years, sailing between Timaru and the Chatham Islands. But the vessel made her last voyage in August and is being sold. She also provided service to Lord Howe Island in New South Wales, a Commonwealth of Australia island dependency.

The 111-year-old Auckland ferry Kestrel, which sank in March at its Wynyard Street berth, has been raised. The superstructure broke away from the hull when the ferry sank. The ferry will be restored by its new owners.

New Zealand has provided its large patrol vessel, HMNZS Otago, to patrol the islands of the Southwest Pacific in the fight against illegal tuna fishing. The exercise will last at least two months.

Company News

The Australian government announced that the operation of a proposed new ice breaker has been awarded to DMS Marine, and the builders will be Damen. The ship is scheduled for completion in 2020. In the interim Aurora Australis will be the prime ship based at Hobart, Tasmania.

Illegal Arrivals

Australia’s success in stopping boats carrying immigrants from Indonesia and Sri Lanka continued over the past three years. The knowledge that no one who arrives illegally enters the Australian mainland, but is sent to refugee camps in Nauru or Papua, New Guinea, has deterred some immigrants from trying.

Tug Talk

With the sale of Pacific Basin tugs to Smit Lamlanco in December 2014, tugs in Melbourne, Port Botany, Sydney Harbour and Newcastle have had prefixes changed from PB to SL as they come up for docking. A number of the tugs formerly operating from those ports have been chartered to Svitzer towage and their logos have been replaced.

Naval

Australia has decided upon French-designed submarines for future vessels. They will be built at Port Adelaide and replace Collins-class submarines, which some believe were never entirely successful.

Port News

Many ports along the east coast of the mainland and some in Tasmania were closed from June 5 to 8 because of a large storm. The storm covered hundreds of miles and had swells of up to 12 meters.

Bass Strait News

The new cargo ferry Searoad Mersey II was launched to operate between Port Melbourne and Devonport, Tasmania. The problem will be servicing King Island; the present and much smaller Searoad Mersey was sized to allow calls to the island, in the middle of the Bass Strait.

The cable ship Ile de Rei reconnected the troubled Bass Strait cables between mainland Australia and Tasmania. One cable is for electricity, being supplied to Tasmania as its hydroelectric operations are in peril due to low dam levels caused by drought.

Shipping News

There has been an approximate 14 percent drop in shipping trade to and from Australia. Some 85 percent of all import and export trade comes to Australia by sea. A recent visit to Singapore found a similar situation. Asian trade involving offshore oil and gas accounts for much of the decline.
Towboat Doings

MISSOURI RIVER RUNOFF IS DOWN from projected levels, but the Army Corps of Engineers still expected that towboat operators on the Missouri would be able to operate on the lower portion of the river through December 1.

A TOWBOAT CAPTAIN recently learned the hard way never to apologize for being involved in a collision – the Coast Guard took his apology as a sign of guilt and suspended his license for a year. Only after going to court to challenge the Coast Guard ruling was the towboat captain able to prove that his tow was only partly at fault for the collision. Never apologize for an action while it’s under investigation.

THE TOWBOAT INDUSTRY is heavily objecting to the recently proposed Public Private Partnership to update the Western Rivers locks and dams, which calls for private investors to fund the upgrading and rebuilding. These private firms would then charge a toll on all commercial traffic passing through its locks. The towboat industry says that it pays a $.29-per-gallon diesel fuel tax to maintain these locks and dams, and that the water retained by these dams is used as reservoirs by river communities to provide potable water to their citizens. At present the maintenance of locks and dams on the Kentucky River is funded by a utility tax added to the water bill of the customers of cities that withdraw water from the Kentucky River.

Legal Matters

EVERY SO OFTEN THE QUESTION COMES up in an injured worker’s lawsuit as to whether the incident took place on a Western Rivers vessel. The answer was defined by a 2013 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that held “whether a reasonable observer, looking to the structure’s physical characteristics and activities, would consider it designed to a practical degree for carrying people or things over water.” This definition is important since it determines whether the injured person will be covered by the Workers Compensation Act, Jones Act or Longshore and Harbor Workers Compensation Act. Each act provides different benefits and different paths of adjudication.

INGRAM BARGE Company has filed a $666,000 suit against American River Transport Company for losses sustained during a collision on July 2, 2015, on the Lower Mississippi River between its boat David G. Sehrt and American Heritage. Ingram claims that American Heritage’s master, at the time of the collision, was operating his boat under the influence of one or more drugs.

Western Rivers Dredged

THE SUMMER OF 2016 HAS SEEN A number of dredging operations being proposed or undertaken on the Western Rivers.

DREDGING IS BEING carried out on the Mississippi River below New Orleans by the hopper dredge Wheeler and cutterhead dredge G. D. Morgan. The channel has filled in with silt at spots, decreasing the 45-foot-deep channel to 42 and 43 feet.

THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS is hoping to obtain funds to dredge the Lower Mississippi River channel to 50 feet from the Gulf Outlet to its city wharves. The cutterhead dredge E. Stroud is deepening Baptiste Collette to 12 feet to handle diverted traffic when the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal is closed for 120 days for lock gate replacement.

THE DREDGE POTTER has been working the Upper Mississippi River between Mile 201 and 273 to restore a nine-foot channel.

THE CUTTERHEAD DREDGE River Walker will widen and deepen the Upper Mississippi River channel between Mile 650 and 653.

THE CUTTERHEAD DREDGE Leonard J is working to restore the channel between Mile 120 and 121 on the Atchafalaya River.
**Newt Marine** is using a barge-mounted crane to remove sediment in the Upper Mississippi River between Mile 570 and 573. This sediment is being used to restore riverside wildlife habitat.

**The Corps** has also resumed rock removal on the Upper Mississippi River between Mile 38 and 46 to help ensure a nine-foot channel during times of low water.

**Locks & Dams**

The integrity of Upper Mississippi River Lock & Dam 5A is still being threatened by scour holes and erosion both upstream and downstream of the dam. Present plans call for rock to be dumped in the scour holes and the banks on both sides to be encased in stone.

Due to deterioration of the miter gates in the auxiliary locks of Upper Mississippi River Locks & Dams 3 to 10, the Corps is proposing to install upstream barriers that will close these locks to service to prevent loss of pool if the miter gates fail.

In July, the Corps had to undertake emergency repair work of five gates at the Lindy C. Boggs Lock & Dam, located at Mile 43.8 on the Red River, due to deterioration of the lifting mechanization of its gates.

The George W. Andrews lock at Mile 153 on the Chattahoochee River was closed by the Corps on June 2 because of damage from recent flooding. Due to the lack of funding, no date has been set by the Corps on when Andrews Lock will return to service.

Work continues at Lock & Dam No. 4 on the Monongahela River to enlarge the lock from 56 to 84 feet wide. Work started in 2005 and is to be completed in 2023, seven years late because of uneven funding by Congress.

**Operation of** the Hickman-Dorena Ferry has been suspended because of silt build-up at the mouth of the Lower Mississippi River entrance to Hickman, Kentucky.

**Freight Ups & Downs**

The Missouri River Port of Kansas City, Missouri, which reopened in 2015, reports that 17 barges carrying 25,500 tons were tied up at the port during the first half of 2016. The Port of Tulsa on the Arkansas River reported that in June 2016, 38 barges arrived with 56,739 tons of goods and 80 departed with
150,549 tons of goods. This is a 20-percent increase in business from 2015.

**Grain movement** on the Western Rivers continues to recover from the low levels of 2015. As of August 1, a total of 22,731 tons of grain has been moved by barge, up from 19,908,000 tons at the same time in 2015. Movement of corn has risen from 12,698,000 tons in 2015 to 14,772,000 in 2016.

**Tonnage of coal** moved by barge is expected to decline by another 14 percent in 2016. Covered barges now outnumber uncovered barges 14,000 to 9,000. Tank barges equipped with heaters for moving heavy Canadian oil are struggling for cargo since light oil recovered by fracking in 2016.

**Mississippi River** in August 2016 saw the luxury cruise boat Louisiana, formerly Columbia Queen, start cruising the Lower Mississippi River in August 2016.

**Senate Bill 1717**, which would allow Delta Queen to return to service, moved out of committee on June 29 for the Senate as a whole to consider.

**HiGman BarGe Line** received from Westport Orange Shipyard of Orange, Texas, the 2,000-hp Capt. Randy Hopson.

**Falls City Towing** purchased two boats from American Commercial Barge Line: the 2,000-hp Delmar Jaeger that they renamed Jacob Todd and the 1,950-hp Normania.

**Marquis Marine** added the 1,200-hp Mary built by Bourg Dry Dock of Bourg, Louisiana, to its fleet.

**Marquette Transportation** Company has placed in service the 2,000-hp St. Bartholomew, recently received from Master Marine of Bayou la Batre, Alabama.

**Genesis Marine** has taken delivery of the 2,680-hp Caroline Frances and Christopher Scott built by John Bludworth Shipyard of Orange, Texas.

**Florida Marine** has taken delivery of the 1,500-hp Lawrence Campbell from Eastern Shipbuilding of Allanton, Florida.

**D&S Marine Service** renamed its 2,000-hp towboat from Lawson Jude to Douglas Murphy. It also purchased the 1,200-hp Lavaca from Kirby Inland Marine and renamed her Michelle Elise.

**Badeaux Marine** purchased the 800-hp Catherine Mary from Lulich Marine and renamed her Barbara S. Badeau.

**Commercial vessels** operating on the Western Rivers must now have in place an EPA-approved plan that addresses the loss overboard of substances that can pollute. A total of 27 discharge points on a towboat must be monitored. Among these points are bilge water discharge, gasoline/diesel refueling points, refrigeration discharge, reverse osmosis brine, graywater, exhaust gas scrubber water, water cooling discharge, fathomer dome discharge, well deck effluent discharge, fire main discharge and deck wash-down water.

A **problem faced** by shipping companies, truckers and railroads is overweight containers. As of July 1, 2016, shippers must verify the weight of a container leaving their property. Over the past few years, random inspection of containers has found that their loaded weight is under-reported by as much as 10 percent.

**Casualties**

On June 28, flood water in the Kanawha River tore loose a number of barges tied up at various locations. Crouse Corporation had four barges and a crane barge break loose and strike the Dunbar Toll Bridge and the St. Albans-Nitro Bridge. Fortunately, none of the barges sank before they could be rounded up, and there was no damage to the bridges.

On July 6, the 6,140-hp Jerry Jarrett, owned by Marquette Transportation, spilled 50 gallons of diesel fuel while transiting Upper Mississippi River Lock & Dam 25. The lock was closed for 24 hours until the spilled fuel was recovered.

On August 13, the 6,140-hp Jaxon Aaron, owned by Western Rivers Boat Management, caught on fire on the Lower Mississippi River near Osceola, Arkansas. The interior of the boat was gutted by the fire, but she didn't sink and the crew suffered no injuries.

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![A view from the West Virginia side of the Ohio River toward a coal barge loading dock near Sardis, Ohio. Seen on the right, tied up at the river bank, are the 730 hp. J. W. Lizor and the 1,000 hp. Brenda L Murray, both owned by American Coal Sales. — Charles Bogart photo.](image-url)
New Tugboat News

Bay Houston Towing Company and Suderman & Young Towing Company held a dual christening ceremony for their newest tugs H. Douglas M and Zyana K in Galveston, Texas. The new tugs join their sisters Neptune, Triton and David B, delivered on June 15, already in service at Texas ports. Their builder, Eastern Shipbuilding Group of Panama City, Florida, also delivered the Oceanus to Suderman & Young on July 29. She’s the third of four Robert Allen-designed Z-Tech 2400-class terminal and escort tugs for this Texas fleet. The fourth sister, the Laura B, was launched on July 1.

BAE Systems of Jacksonville, Florida, delivered the tug Sea Power to Seabulk Tankers, Inc., for U.S. coastal operation. The 12,000-hp tug will work with a new 30,000-dwt chemical tank barge as an AT/B unit.

Chesapeake Shipbuilding delivered the 3,000-hp Sassafras-class tug Fort McHenry to Vane Brothers Company of Baltimore, Maryland, and she is now working in New York Harbor. The Hudson joined the fleet earlier this year. The next tug of this class will be named Fishing Creek, with the next two 4,200-hp Elizabeth Anne-class tugs to be named Baltimore and Delaware. On September 2, Vane signed contracts with Chesapeake to build three more ocean-going tugs, making them the 18th, 19th and 20th tugs built there since 2008.

Young Brothers Ltd., Hawaii’s largest inter-island cargo service provider, and Conrad Shipyard of Morgan City, Louisiana, signed a contract to build four new tugboats, spending almost $80 million. The first tug is due in the first quarter of 2018 and the fourth tug by the first quarter of 2019.

Harley Maritime Corporation of Seattle ordered two 4,560-hp AT/B tugs from Conrad Shipyard. Harley also took delivery of the AT/B Dale R. Lindsey from Vigor Shipyard, also in Seattle, on July 16. This tug will be used in the U.S. coastal petroleum trade. This is the 11th vessel built by Vigor for Harley. Vigor’s Portland, Oregon, yard has delivered two 83,000-barrel tank barges to Harley, the Fight ALS and Fight Fanconi Anemia.

Western Towboat Company of Seattle launched its newest tug at its Ballard shipyard on June 23. The Bering Titan will be employed towing rail barges from Seattle to Whittier, Alaska, for Alaska Marine Lines. They will be building another tug, to be named Mariner, for the same service.

Marcon International, Inc. of Coupeville, Washington, has been named the exclusive broker to handle the shipyard licensing for construction of an innovative new tug in the Americas. Called the Giano tug, the vessel is a compact double-ended tug that can produce 4,562 hp for escort and ship-docking service. The first tug has been built in Italy for inspection and demonstration, and the design has been patented in more than 40 countries.
**Tugboat News**

**Moran Towing Corporation**
sold its tug *St. John* to the George Gradel Company of Toledo, Ohio, where the tug was renamed *George Gradel*. They also sold the *Turecamo Boys* to Gimrock Marine Construction of Hialeah, Florida, where she was renamed *Hannah Marie*.

With a fleet of almost 100 tugs, there are only five that are single screw. As new tractor tugs enter the fleet, these tugs will certainly be sold off. The 6,000-hp tractor tug *Jack T. Moran* entered service in the company's Norfolk fleet in May. A few other tugs were repositioned: *Diane Moran* from Miami to San Juan, *Z-One* from San Juan to Philadelphia and *Cape Romain* from Philadelphia to Jacksonville. The newest tug, the 6,000-hp *Cooper Moran*, was launched in Maine on June 3. This tug will be followed by another sister in the third quarter of 2016, with two others due out in the first and second quarters of 2017.

**TradeWinds Towing** of St. Augustine, Florida, purchased the tug *Hollywood* from Seabulk Towing Services of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The twin-screw tug is rated at 4,200 hp.

**Kirby Offshore Marine** purchased four tugs from Crosby Marine Transportation of Golden Meadow, Louisiana. The tugs are the *Allison Crosby*, renamed *Mount St. Elias*; *Crosby Liberty*, renamed *Brooke Chapman*; *Crosby Skipper*, renamed *Denali*; and the *Crosby Resolve*, renamed *Mount Bona*. The Crosby tugs became company surplus with the downturn in the Gulf of Mexico oil industry. Kirby also bought the *Cameron Cenac* from Cenac Marine Services. Kirby sold its long-out-of-service tug *Barents Sea* to Donjon Marine, where she was renamed *Atlantic Enterprise*. After a small refit in New Jersey, the tug left for an extensive overhaul at the company's shipyard in Erie, Pennsylvania.

**The Tug Realist** has been sold by Specialist LLC of Montauk, New York, to Robert B. Our Company of Harwich, Massachusetts, who also bought the tug *Lucinda Smith* from Smith Marine Towing of Morgan City, Louisiana.

**The Manfred Nystrom,** formerly the *Helen Turecamo* and *El Zorro Grande*, was sold to Gregor Pacific Marine of Napa, California, and will be renamed *Pomaikai*.

**Crowley Maritime** Corporation's Invader-class tug *Monitor* towed the 33-year-old ex USS *Taylor* (FFG 50) from Philadelphia to the Detysen Shipyard in Charleston, South Carolina, for conversion and upgrades before being sold to the Taiwanese government.

**Vane has laid up** its tug *Houma* at the company headquarters in Baltimore and has listed her for sale. Built in Oyster Bay, New York, in 1970 as the Texaco *Houma II*, the tug was renamed *Houma* when Eklof Marine Corporation bought her from Texaco in 1989. K-Sea bought Eklof in 1993 and Kirby bought K-Sea in 2011, where the *Houma* remained a hard-working vessel. Kirby sold off several surplus tugs in 2013, with the *Houma* being sold to Vane Brothers.
DAN ON TOWING’s Shannon Dann towed the last un-flown space shuttle external fuel tank from Florida to California aboard the barge Gulfmaster I. It will become an addition to the space shuttle exhibit in Los Angeles. While off the west coast of Mexico, the tug rescued four passengers from a sinking fishing boat and delivered them safely to San Diego. Another Dann tug, the Thomas Dann, experienced an engine room fire while towing a dry cargo barge off the east coast of Florida. Her six crewmembers were rescued without injury. The tug’s deckhouse was completely burned out and the tug was towed to Jacksonville for an inspection.

TUGS TO THE TORCHES

The Brian A. McAllister has been towed from New York to Fall River, Massachusetts, where she’ll be scrapped. Built in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1961, the tug was phased out of service in 2013.

Vinik Marine, Inc., of Keyport, New Jersey, sent two of its old tugs to be cut up for scrap. The Mike Azzolino and Charles Oxman have been seen at

Jane awaits her fate. – Will Van Dorp photo

The Charles Oxman rests alongside the Mike Azzolino at a Staten Island boatyard. (See “Tugs to the Torches”) – Photo courtesy of Will Van Dorp.
THE HEROIC AGE OF DIVING: America’s Underwater Pioneers and the Great Wrecks of Lake Erie

This is a very interesting book on a subject that I previously knew little about. Having visited the Vasa museum in Stockholm this summer, I was aware that underwater salvage using diving bells dated from before the 17th century. In The Heroic Age of Diving, author Jerry Kuntz introduces us to the pioneer divers and inventors who developed more modern diving equipment in the mid-19th century. The first of these was George W. Taylor, who, motivated by the plight of free pearl divers, had conceived submarine armor with an assisted-breathing apparatus.

In May 1842 Taylor attempted to dive to the wreck of the steamer Erie, lost to fire on Lake Erie in August 1841 with about 250 of her 350 passengers and crew. His equipment consisted of a “copper case for the head and shoulders, with india rubber arms attached. The lower part of the body and legs are also encased in a copper case, giving every freedom to the limbs; over these is drawn a huge pair of india rubber trousers with shoes attached.” This and other attempts to reach the Erie were unsuccessful, but they opened an intensive period of diving and equipment development on the Great Lakes. I was somewhat dismayed to learn that some of this diving was done for less than noble intentions, to relieve victims of their possessions.

By the late 1850s railroads took over the role of palace steamers for westward immigration. The great wrecks of the steamers Erie, G.P. Griffith and Atlantic had taken hundreds of lives, and many wrecks were explored using ever-improving equipment. By then the often fatal phenomena of diver’s squeeze (the loss of pressurized air to the diver’s body) and the bends (decompression sickness) had become better understood.

This book is the product of extensive research, and it’s illustrated with images of historic vessels, equipment, divers and inventors. The author says, “The lasting significance of these pioneers is not in the mechanical details of their technology, but in the daring they exhibited and limits they tested.” William A. Fox

LIVERPOOL DOCKS: A Short History

This is a very nice, concise history of the Port of Liverpool from the year 1206, when King John laid out Liverpool, to 2015. As might be expected in any overview of history, some time periods receive more emphasis than others, with the 19th and 20th centuries forming the heart of the book.

The book makes clear that Liverpool for many years served as England’s export center for shipping its finished goods to the world, and its receiving center for raw materials. The port, over the years, had to adapt as sailing ships became larger, sail gave way to steam,

iron hulls replaced wooden hulls, ships grew larger in length, beam and draft, and general cargo tramps and liners saw their cargos moved to specialized ships dealing in carrying oil, containers, bulk grain, and cars and trucks. Adapting the Port of Liverpool to meet these seagoing technological changes meant spending money to build new wharves and piers, highway and rail infrastructure, warehousing and various support facilities, and to maintain a navigation channel. Mixed in with the port’s efforts to meet the challenges of the changes to seagoing ships are the topics of government policy and labor relations.

This well-written and very nicely illustrated book can be read as either maritime or economic history and should stand the test of time as an outstanding look at the Port of Liverpool. It will be interesting for those living in 2030 to look back upon those topics the author has identified as hindrances to the rejuvenation of the Port of Liverpool and see if the challenges were met. Charles H. Bogart

PASSENGER AND MERCHANT SHIPS of the Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Northern Railways

This book is a detailed description of the evolution of two little-known groups of steamship companies of the west coast of Canada, Washington State and the Canadian
Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway. Although not well known to U.S. readers, both railway systems have been well written about, but not their maritime adventures of the early 1900s. Each system was ultimately incorporated into the Canadian National Railway in the 1920s.

Starting with the Mackenzie Brothers, Ltd., vessels in 1884, the author traces the vessels, specifications, and their movements and cargoes, the various intervening companies, and the Grand Trunk Pacific Steamship Co. until its bankruptcy in 1918 and subsequent takeover by the CNR. All of its vessels are covered – the Prince Ships, the tug boats and barges – as well as its docks and piers and connected river stern wheelers on the Skeena and Fraser rivers.

The author details the history of the Canadian Northern Railway steamship companies and its entry into the transatlantic trade with the “Royal” ships and the West Coast trade with its “Duke” ships. These enterprises were essentially acquired by Cunard after World War I. The volume also covers the company’s activities on the Great Lakes’ Canadian side, including its excursion steamer to the Lakeside amusement park, its activities at Port Arthur and Lake Ontario, and other fresh-water adventures. Included are the usual Doxford concept “Turret” steamers (similar to whalebacks), of which the company owned five.

The volume includes contemporaneous photographs of each of the vessels covered as well as tables of specifications, ownership and history. All are very informative of these little-known vessels and ship lines. However, it would have been helpful, especially for U.S. readers, to have included more maps of the areas serviced by these vessels, especially the rivers and West Coast ports. Given the ultimate demise of these companies, although some were subsumed by the CNR or others, one wonders whether they were failures or groundbreakers. T. A. Ulrich

SS UNITED STATES: The View From Down Below

This new book from enthusiast Bob Sturm provides “an insider’s view of the history, construction, operation and ‘secrets’ of this magnificent vessel,” mainly shown below decks in her machinery spaces. Sturm is a Kings Point graduate who served as an engineer aboard Lykes, Delta, Socony-Mobil and United States Lines ships. His book is oversize, glossy and full of good photographs.

In the first chapter the stage is set for the new SS United States. The history of transatlantic liners and their design is covered, and the ship’s innovative features are discussed. Following chapters cover her detail design, first and typical voyages, dry docking and her many “secrets.” A final chapter and epilogue describe her demise and current hope for salvation. Chapter 2, Details of the Final Design, is the heart of the book. Her machinery, auxiliaries and hull design are described and several interesting sidebars are provided.

I was somewhat disappointed that Chief Engineer Bill Kaiser wasn’t mentioned. And the great liner Normandie is repeatedly referred to as Normandy. But Supervising Engineer Nicholas Bachko, well respected in Newport News, was the subject of a sidebar. At the end the author notes that the SS United States never suffered a major problem or machinery failure during her career. That, he says, is the very definition of a product of genius (that of William Francis Gibbs). You will enjoy this book. William A. Fox

The Merchant Marine Lighter Side of World War II

It can be said that a principal reason the U.S. Navy engaged in combat during World War II was to guarantee free passage of the ships of the American Merchant Marine. It was the ships of the Merchant Marine that carried raw goods to the United States and carried away finished goods. The story of the men of the Merchant Marine is often overlooked in accounts of World War II. This fact is amazing, since one out of every 26 sailors in the Merchant Marine became a casualty.

Professor Reminick, within the pages of this book, has compiled an excellent selection of firsthand accounts of events experienced by various Merchant Marine personnel during the course of the war. The stories within the book cover the humor of life at sea and ashore on all of the seven seas between 1941 and 1945. The reader is presented with accounts from the engine room to the bridge and also life in prisoner-of-war camps. Some stories recount the danger of war, others boredom at sea, and still others the delights of foreign ports.

This book will appeal to anyone interested in the Merchant Marine or “I Was There” accounts of World War II. Charles H. Bogart &
A

rthur L. Johnson wrote from Potsdam, New York, in response to our last column: “I enjoyed the piece on the Alexander Hamilton (Fall 2016). Sorry I never got to ride it.

“As a young boy I did, unknowingly, ride a couple of Hudson veterans from Boston to Nantasket Beach in the 1940s. I knew them as the Nantasket and the Allerton. Many years later I learned from W. Bartlett Cram’s Picture History of New England Passenger Vessels (1980) that they had begun as the Newburgh and the Homer Ramsdell respectively, both in Hudson River service. They were wonderful steamers. I have good memories of cruising down the harbor and, after a day at the beach, returning on the 9 o’clock, the last boat, to the lights of Boston and getting the last train to Natick on the Boston & Albany from South Station.”

How these steamers came to run at Boston is an interesting story in itself. As late as 1929 the Nantasket Beach Steamboat Co. operated six sidewheel steamers, all built for this route between 1891 and 1916. Disaster struck on Thanksgiving Day of 1929. The company’s fleet was laid up for the winter at the Nantasket pier. A great fire consumed the wooden pier and destroyed five of the line’s steamers as well. Left with only its oldest boat, Mayflower of 1891, the company spent the winter replacing its fleet.

R. Loren Graham, one of the Society’s founders and Steamboat Bill’s photo editor in its first years, wrote an article on the company’s later years in SB

Steamer Nantasket was built as Newburgh in 1886 by Neafie & Levy at Philadelphia for Hudson River service between Newburgh and New York City for the Homer Ramsdell Transportation Co. – Edward O. Clark photo, SSHSA Archives.

#74 in 1960. The Nantasket Line had excited his interest in steamboats at an early age. He described the acquisition of these boats as follows: “A pair of propellers, and the first of such, were brought from the Hudson River, being Newburgh and Homer Ramsdell. The Ramsdell had not run for some time and was so loaded with ashes and in such apparent disrepair that Capt. [George] Ellis had difficulty in getting the men to begin their tasks. After alterations, Newburgh, renamed Nantasket, opened the 1930 service and soon her companion went on the line, renamed Allerton.”

These iron-hulled steamers ran to the beach, along with a succession of other old boats, through the 1951 season. By the following year, Wilson Line had taken over the route and the old steamers were headed for scrap.

Write Barry Eager at Box 87, Berlin, MA 01503 or fantail@sshsa.org
Repositories of the Sacred Tradition

“...you’ll never ride the night boat again,” lamented George Hilton. “The last one has slipped the stern line and sailed into the night that has no dawning.”

Long-time SSHSA member Hilton wrote those melancholy lines back in 1968 when he published his photo-filled book The Night Boat. From the 1840s into the 1960s, night boats provided overnight links between cities. So important were these ornate steamers to long-ago transportation networks that SSHSA was founded in 1935 by enthusiasts alarmed by their loss.

Hilton dedicated his book “to the repositories of the Sacred Tradition, the members of the Steamship Historical Society of America.” Forty-nine years later we’re still upholding that tradition. Next time you amble by our Ship History Center, be sure to pause at the glass display case just inside the front door.

You’ll find a colorful plate with a map of the Chesapeake Bay. To celebrate its centennial in 1940, the Old Bay Line commissioned a commemorative plate full of historical references. The Old Bay Line operated overnight steamers from Baltimore, Maryland, at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, down to Norfolk and Newport News, Virginia, with an occasional foray up the Potomac to Washington, D.C. Those cities and others are represented in symbolic buildings. Historic sites such as Williamsburg, Mount Vernon and Yorktown are also shown in miniature. Around the perimeter are famous vessels from the line’s history including the President Warfield of 1928. Little did the plate designers know in 1940 that the President Warfield would make world-wide headlines after World War II as the famous Jewish emigrant ship Exodus 1947. A short history of the line is written on back. The Old Bay Line shut down its engines for the last time in 1962.

On the opposite side of the display case are two dining room plates from the Georgian Bay Line. No discreet house flag marks this china; instead the company used an enticing logo of a ship’s wheel surrounding an anchor with the line’s two big Great Lakes vessels, North American and South American, on either side. Underneath is the line’s burgee. Three gulls are tossed in for good measure. While the twin steel-hulled vessels of 1913 and 1914 were marketed as cruise ships, they also provided overnight trips throughout the Great Lakes. Both ships upheld the night boat tradition of an elegant restaurant where weary travelers could enjoy a fine dinner at a reasonable price. The two dishes on display at SSHSA are probably from the post-World War II era when prohibition was but a distant memory. After an excellent meal with libations, many a passenger slipped one of these handsome dishes into a pocket or bag as a souvenir. The Georgian Bay Line sailed on far longer than its competitors, finally extinguishing the fires in 1967.

There are many other souvenirs on display at the Ship History Center. Make the pilgrimage to come see why you, and your society, are “the repositories of the Sacred Tradition.”

Write Don Leavitt at Nautiques, 255 Pleasant St., South Ryegate, VT 05069 or dml@nautiques.net
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