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## President's Column

## We've Lost a Great Friend CDR John Francis Hamma

June 17, 1941 - March 9, 2014

CDR John Hamma became a member of SSHSA in 1968. Like many members, he enjoyed receiving *Steamboat Bill* magazine, until he heard a higher calling to get involved. John joined the SSHSA Board in 2008 and was elected president in 2011. During his tenure as president, CDR Hamma was responsible for stabilizing and growing the organization, as well as bringing all SSHSA holdings together under one roof.

Particularly proud achievements were the organization's budget surpluses each year under CDR Hamma's leadership.

John grew up in Brooklyn and, as a child, loved to visit the ocean liners and the bustling Port of New York. He also attended the christening and launch of the *NS Savannah* as a teenager and had fond memories of Mamie Eisenhower breaking the bottle of champagne on the bow of the ship. Although a Michigan Wolverine during his undergraduate college years, he also was an intern "rolling plans" at the Gibbs & Cox firm in lower Manhattan. One anecdote he often shared was how all people working at Gibbs & Cox were to stop their duties every time the *SS United States* sailed in or out of port to salute her – by orders of Mr. Gibbs-- as she went by.

CDR Hamma spent twenty years in the Navy in a variety of roles as a commissioned officer on engineering duty. These included boiler officer for the *USS Newport News*, ship superintendent for the Long Beach Naval Shipyard,

It is with a heavy heart that my first column in *The Telegraph* as your incoming SSHSA President is also announcing the passing of our dear friend and leader, CDR John Hamma. I have had the honor and privilege to serve on the board with CDR Hamma over the past few years, and during his tenure at the helm, I had the opportunity to volunteer many hours under his direction, helping to sort, inventory, and assess the collections, participate on committees, and even (occasionally) have a few adult beverages with the CDR.

When CDR Hamma decided he needed to step down due to his illness, I had the chance to speak at length with him to share his thoughts and ideas about the future of SSHSA. I also was able to thank him for his hard work in guiding the ship, and he encouraged me to pick up where he left off and stay the course, steady as she goes. I will do my best to fill his shoes and continue moving SSHSA to where we need to be.

I'll have more information on the progress of our organization, new initiatives underway, and more in upcoming columns. Hope to see everyone in person in Newport May 15th-18th for ShiPosium. Meantime, please drop a line to me anytime!

Sincerely,

ERIK

Erik Ryan, SSHSA President

[eryan@ryan-designs.com](mailto:eryan@ryan-designs.com)

**Coming up in**

graduate student at MIT, combatant craft program officer for NAVSEC Norfolk Division, chief engineer aboard the USS *Columbus*, type desk officer for the Puget Sound Naval shipyard, type desk and budget/fiscal officer for COMNAVSURFPAC, repair officer on the USS *Dixie* and maintenance policy officer for the Office of the CNO.

After retiring from active duty in 1984, John continued to work for another twenty-eight years in the engineering/ship industry for various firms, often providing services back to the U.S. Navy. Later, CDR Hamma formed his own consulting business and worked on developing proposals for large companies such as General Dynamics NASSCO.

Ships, trains, and automobiles...these mechanical transportation devices were things that CDR Hamma particularly loved. Ever the inquisitive engineer, he collected and maintained a meticulous automobile memorabilia archive, enjoyed purchasing and building somewhat obscure ship models, and spent weeks riding the rails from coast to coast, on one mission or another to benefit one of his passions. He had a sharp memory and a crystal vision which was able to distinguish the year, make and model of any car, ship, or locomotive from what seemed like a mile away. And although well read and knowledgeable in his areas of interest, he was also a humble man. He always had a smile readily available and could find something good and funny to say in just about any situation.

We owe a great deal of gratitude to John Hamma as we essentially forced him into retirement by recruiting him to take on the full-time roll of SSHSA "Ambassador," a position in which he thrived. He will be greatly missed.

CDR Hamma's funeral service will be at 1pm on Thursday, March 20th at the Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá, San Diego, CA.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Apreva Hospice

1565 Hotel Circle South, Suite 320, San Diego, CA 92108

<http://www.aprevahospice.com/Donate.aspx>

## **Get Ready for ShiPosium III** **[To Register, Click Here](#)**

So you're planning to come to Newport for the ShiPosium in May? That's great news! Here's a little of what you can expect when you're there.

When you arrive, you can check in on Thursday afternoon at the Newport Harbor Hotel and pick up your schedule, program, and name tag from an SSHSA staffer. You'll also have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have thought of on your flight or drive to Newport. Then, you can head over to

## PowerShips

Don't miss the next issue of *PowerShips*, coming in April! [Renew your membership](#) if you have not yet done so to ensure continued service of your favorite magazine.

Next up in the Spring 2014 issue:

- The sinking of the *Vestris*
- A brief history of Farrell Lines' passenger-cargo liners *African Endeavor* and *African Enterprise*
- Onboard the *Frances Barkley*
- A history of the Knappton Towboat Company

Don't miss out!

## New Members

**Welcome aboard to SSHSA!**

Mr. Phillip Adams  
Mr. Thomas Aidala  
Mr. Charles Bednarik  
Mr. Michael Bezilla  
Mr. Richard Bingham  
Mr. Daniel Blanchard  
Mr. and Mrs. David Boone  
Mr. Gerald W. Bouchard  
Mr. Hallam Boyd, Jr.  
Mr. Juan Cantor  
Mr. Ernest Carr  
Vice Admiral Kent J. Carroll  
Mr. Richard B. Carson  
Mr. W.E. Christiansen  
Mr. Thomas Christy  
Mr. Mark A. Corigliano  
Mr. Daniel Mari  
Mr. Douglas Dease  
Mr. Jack Doyle  
Mr. George Dyson  
Mr. John H. Eagle  
Mr. James E. East  
Mr. Bob First  
Ms. Margaret Francis

the Sanford-Covell Villa Marina for an open bar at the President's Reception. This historic B&B overlooks Newport Harbor and is the perfect location for an evening party. During the reception you'll also have the opportunity to visit the house next store and tour the private collection of SSHSA members Bill Doyle and Jed Pearsall.

After a full night's rest, come down to ShiPosium III on Friday at the Newport Harbor Hotel. You won't want to miss out on this. Throughout the day, you'll hear from wreck divers and maritime archaeologists, yacht restorers, ship preservationists, and the U.S. Coast Guard's perspective on ship restoration.

During ShiPosium, you can enjoy complimentary coffee and refreshments in the morning, and a great lunch to fuel you for the afternoon's presentations. In the evening, a special ShiPosium reception is just down the hall for more food and drink.

ShiPosium continues on Saturday morning with a tour of the International Yacht Restoration School located nearby on bustling Thames Street (transportation provided if you choose), where you'll be able to see student projects in areas like boatbuilding and composites technology, as well as get an insider look at the *Coronet*, an 1885 steam yacht currently undergoing restoration at IYRS.

After getting lunch at one of the many phenomenal restaurants in Newport, join your fellow SSHSA members on the *Rum Runner II*. This classic motor yacht was used during the Prohibition era for, well... you know. Cocktails and refreshments will be abundant, along with great company as you cruise the harbor.

If you want to spend some free time seeing the sights of Newport, there is definitely plenty to do. The famous Newport Mansions are a staple of the city and will provide a lovely afternoon out. You also can't go wrong with taking a leisurely stroll around downtown Newport visiting the wharfs next to the hotel and doing some sightseeing with a cup of coffee and a snack.

On Saturday night, come to the Atlantic Beach Club (transportation provided if you choose), for our Awards Gala. Cocktails, a silent auction, dinner, and the Ship of the Year Awards ceremony are just the beginning of a great evening. Our Keynote speaker this year is Dennis Hale, whose new book, *Shipwrecked: Reflections of the Sole Survivor*, will tell the harrowing story of his experience as the lone survivor of the sinking of the *Daniel J. Morrell* on Lake Huron during a tragic storm. You won't want to miss his amazing story of survival.

To round out your busy weekend, enjoy a bountiful continental breakfast with fellow SSHSA members before the Annual Meeting on Sunday morning. Then, hear a special presentation from U.S. Coast Guard Traveling Inspector Marc

Mr. William Fuller  
Mr. Kirk Hammond  
Mr. Richard Harrison  
Mr. Carl Hay  
Mr. Charles Herring  
Mr. Robert Hertel  
Mr. Kenneth C. Humphries  
Mr. John Ingram  
Mr. Matthew Jacobs  
Mr. Troy S. Jorgens  
Mr. William R. Kaufman  
Mr. Charles Keenan  
Mr. Derek Kendall  
Mr. Ian Kennedy  
Mr. Ron Kling  
Mr. Paul Kutta  
Mr. Francis Lazar  
Mr. Geoff D. Leece  
Mr. Clarence H. Lewis  
Mr. Edwin Libby  
Mr. John H. Lillis  
Mr. Theodore Lukawski  
Mr. Lars Norman Lundin  
Mr. Richard Mallery  
Mr. Nicholas Mannarino  
Ms. Deborah Hadden  
Mr. David F. Massie  
Mr. Larry McGee  
Mr. Robert McLaughlin  
Mr. Jeff McQuiston  
Mr. Robert Melzer  
Mr. George Miller  
Mr. William Mitchell  
Mr. Thomas O. Moes  
RADM David Nash, USN (Ret.)  
Mr. Gary Norton  
Mr. Michael O'Brien  
Mr. Marselis Parsons  
Mr. James C. Pendleton  
Mr. William Pichen  
Pilgrim Lutheran School  
MIT Pratt School of Naval  
Architecture and Marine  
Engineering  
Mr. Pierce Rafferty  
Mr. Douglas H. Ramsay  
Mr. Donald B. Raymond USN,  
(Ret.)  
Mr. Stephen Reeves  
Mr. Joseph E. Reid  
Mr. Walter Rouxel  
Mr. Frank Salvia  
Mr. Ken Seeman  
Mr. Kevin Sheehan  
Mr. Walter I. Shrake

Cruder on his experience traveling the country to assess historic ships undergoing restoration.

Wait, there's more - your weekend doesn't need to end there if you don't want it to! Not only are there an abundance of things to do in Newport and the surrounding area, but we have also arranged two great field trips that you can take advantage of. Journey to the Herreshoff Marine Museum on Sunday afternoon (transportation provided if you choose), and the New England Wireless Museum on Monday - both just a thirty minute ride from Newport.

We hope this itinerary sounds as exciting to you as it does to us as we work to plan a fantastic weekend for all of our guests! [To register, click here](#), or mail in the registration form you received via mail. You can also call us at (401) 463-3570 with any questions or to register by phone. See you there!

## Post-Conference Trip Added to ShipPosium Itinerary

On Monday, May 19th, take a short, thirty minute ride to East Greenwich, RI, to visit the New England Wireless Museum. The Museum features a steam engine collection, wireless collection, as well as the Massie Wireless System, the oldest surviving working wireless station in the world. Transportation is on your own. Meet at the Museum at 10:00AM, and tickets are \$15.00, payable to the museum, when you arrive. If you enjoy steam and wireless history, you will love to visit this museum. To sign up, please call the SSHSA office at (401) 463-3570.

## SSHSA Receives Important Grants

### Rhode Island Council for the Humanities

In 2012, the SSHSA Board of Directors unanimously committed to creating a program which would provide a tangible benefit to our society. It took little time to agree that this concept could best be achieved through an online educational outreach initiative utilizing our unique collections, library, and our own publications.

Mr. James Simonds  
Mr. Donald Smith  
CAPT James Smith  
Mr. Stephen Taksler  
Mr. Jim Taylor  
Dr. Bruce E. Tjaden  
CAPT Dan Turbeville  
Ms. Kate Vescera  
Mr. George Walton  
Mr. John Warner  
Mr. Robert Lee Zimmerman  
Mr. Erwin Zimmermann

## Captains' Circle

A big Thank You to our Captains' Circle members for their membership and support!

### **Commodore (\$500)**

Mr. Charles T. Andrews  
Mr. Preston B. Baker  
CAPT Ted and Sherry Davisson  
Mr. Donald W. Eberle  
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Ferguson  
Mr. Robert J. Golden  
Mr. Murray Kilgour  
Mr. John Mahoney  
Mr. Ralph S. McCrea  
Mr. William M. McLin & Mr. Samuel J. McKeon  
Dr. Laurence Miller  
CAPT & Mrs. Roland R. Parent  
Ms. Mary L. Payne  
Mr. Thomas C. Ragan  
Mr. William S. Reid  
Mr. William A. Schell  
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Shuttleworth  
Mr. Douglas A. Tilden

### **Commander (\$300)**

Mr. James Brandmueller  
CAPT Robertson Dinsmore  
Mr. William W. Donnell  
Mr. Clive Dudley, D.D.  
Mr. and Mrs. William Edwards  
Mr. Glenn P. Hayes  
CAPT Warren McDonald,  
USCGR, (Ret.)

We are very proud to announce that the SSHSA educational program has been honored with a major grant from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities and a matching grant from the Dibner Charitable Trust. These two grants will fund the second phase of a multi-year program to develop our first educational theme, "From Sail to Steam: A History of Transition in Rhode Island."

Combining original images, primary and secondary resources, artifacts, and archived audio recordings, From Sail to Steam will have a dedicated section on the SSHSA website, allowing teachers and students to access digitized materials and to connect to our Virtual Museum and Image Porthole.

SSHSA program staff and board members were recently invited to the presentation announcement at the RI State Capitol with Governor Lincoln Chafee, Secretary of State A. Ralph Mollis, and other supporters of promoting humanities projects.

Our thanks go to the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, the Dibner Charitable Trust, and the educators and professionals who have helped frame our first educational theme.

### **Museum Assessment Program**

In addition, SSHSA has been selected to participate in the Museum Assessment Program (MAP). Through guided self-study and on-site consultation with a museum professional, participation in MAP will empower SSHSA to better serve researchers across the country by meeting and exceeding the highest professional standards of the museum field.

The program is funded by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and throughout its 30 years has been administered by the American Association of Museums (AAM). As part of the IMLS National Leadership program, MAP advances best practices and fosters improvement in museums. The assessment positions SSHSA to better fulfill our mission to preserve and share maritime history through research and education.

(Above photo: SSHSA President Erik Ryan and Executive Director Matthew Schulte with RICH Executive Director, Elizabeth Francis at the major grant announcement.)

CDR Richard R. Paton, USCG  
(Ret.)  
Mr. Roy C. Rose  
Mr. William M. Rosen  
Mr. Stephen Smith  
Mr. Donn R. Spear  
Mr. Kent Strobel  
CAPT and Mrs. Terry Tilton, USN  
(Ret.)  
CAPT Joseph H. Wubbold III

### ***Mariner (\$200)***

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CAPT Lester H. Beck, USN (Ret.)  
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Mr. John N. Park Jr.

## Nominate Your Favorite Ship For An SSHSA Award

We are now accepting nominations for SSHSA's 2014 Ship of the Year Award, as well as nominations for Tugboat of the Year, Museum Ship of the Year, Cruise Ship of the Year, and more. The Awards will be presented on May 17th at SSHSA's Awards Banquet at the Atlantic Beach Club in Newport, Rhode Island, during ShiPosium III and Annual Conference.

To learn more about SSHSA's Awards and to download an Awards Nomination Application, please [click here](#).

## From the Collections

This remarkable little photo album was found in a box previously in storage. As we work through and assess our collections, we make small discoveries like this every day.

The album is composed of black & white photographs documenting a voyage aboard the SS *Transylvania* (built in 1925 for the Anchor Line) to Curacao, La Guaira, and St. Thomas in September of 1934.

The letter tucked into its pages is addressed to Mrs. Bertrand W. Story, from a Mr. Archibald Campbell, and dated January 5, 1935.

In his letter, Mr. Campbell relates:

"It has been my custom in recent years to make a number of such photograph souvenirs for lady acquaintances who have made my voyages more agreeable by their friendliness." He writes that he has made nine such albums for friends made on this trip alone.

This is interesting in light of today's use of the Internet, where people will share photos of trips and events through Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, and Tumblr. How would Mr. Campbell have used these inexpensive platforms? Would he have?

Mr. Campbell was evidently very interested in the art of photography, and discussed specific photos in particular:

"That sunrise picture came out better than I expected. I reckon it one of the few real pictures among the lot, because it complies with the rules laid down by artists for picture composition. If the two silhouetted figures were transposed the picture would not be so good. As it is, the eyes is led from the smaller figure to the larger, and from that to the real centre of interest, the sunrise, while the

CAPT Dave Pickering  
Mr. Richard Potter  
Mr. David L. Powers, Jr.  
Mr. George Prince  
Mr. Richard Rabbett  
Mr. W. Bruce Redpath  
Mr. Kenneth Schilling  
Mr. John W. Schumann  
Mr. Bruce C. Seibel  
Mr. John O. Snyder  
Mr. Alexander Swavy  
Mr. Peter Templeton  
CAPT John S. Tucker  
Mr. Richard Vanaria  
Mr. Hubert Wicki  
Mr. Gregory Williams

## Thank you Annual Appeal Donors

Thank you to all of our Annual Appeal donors in 2013. Your generosity will help to propel SSHSA forward during 2014. [Click here](#) to view our list of donors.

## Contact Us!

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Research & New Media

heavy black bar on the left counterbalances the mass of dark on the right. If you were an artist (perhaps you are) you would take note that the picture possesses the first requisite of picture composition, unity of interest."

He goes on to discuss how critic's natural reaction is to wonder why they aren't looking at the camera, which he shuts down:

"If you tell them the plain truth that by turning around they would spoil the picture they are apt to think you are saying something uncomplimentary about their looks. Whether a lengthy explanation would make the matter clear to them I don't know."

Nevertheless, his letter shows that certain concerns persist today: how to share memories of events and experiences, and how to adequately capture them. He closes his letter by relating with some disappointment that the photo of "First Sight of Curacao" would have been much clearer, "but the mists came down so fast that what I got was quite different from what I tried to get."

How different would these photos be if they were in color, especially the admired sunrise image? Like much of history, we can only make an educated guess.

## SSHSA to Participate in Upcoming Maritime Conferences

The Council of American Maritime Museums (CAMM) will be having their Annual Conference from April 27th-30th at the National Museum of the Great Lakes in Toledo, Ohio. The National Museum of the Great Lakes is a brand new museum that will be opening its doors in April. They are showcasing the collections of the former Inland Seas Maritime Museum, Great Lakes Historical Society, and the historic vessel Col. James M. Schoonmaker. SSHSA will participate in the conference along with maritime museums from around the country.

SSHSA will also attend the Tenth Maritime Heritage Conference in Norfolk, Virginia, from September 17th-21st. During this Conference, you will be able to visit various exhibits, and several educational sessions will be held. To learn more about the Maritime Heritage Conference and to register, [please click here](#).

## In Memoriam

We are sad to inform our readers of the passing of two other longtime SSHSA members, Mr. Andrew (Andy) Kilk and Mr. Richard Elliott.

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Mr. Kilk joined SSHSA in 1975, and became a lifetime member in 2001. He was a renowned ship photographer, and his images have been in many ship-related publications, including SSHSA's *Steamboat*

*Bill* and *PowerShips*. Born in Estonia in 1940, his family fled during the outbreak of World War II and eventually lived in St. Thomas. It was in St. Thomas where Andy discovered his love of ships-- an interest that he carried throughout his life. Later,

he was an engineer for the State of California and pursued his interest in ships during his free time. Mr. Kilk took countless cruises throughout his lifetime, and spent much of his childhood exploring the cruise ships and liners that arrived in his years living in St. Thomas and his summers in New York. He will be greatly missed. Thank you to David Powers and Tim Dacey for notifying SSHSA.

Mr. Elliott joined SSHSA in 1962, and was a former Editor of the High Seas column in *Steamboat Bill*. Following active duty in the U.S. Navy, he joined the American Merchant Marine Institute and later The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey as editor of *Via Port of New York*, its trade promotion magazine. Additionally, he served as SSHSA's first Public Relations Director, and was the founder of SSHSA's Westchester Chapter. Mr. Elliott's book, *Last of the Steamboats: The Saga of the Wilson Line*, was published with much acclaim in 1970. Recently, he wrote two articles for SSHSA-- "R. Cornell White's Rockaway of 1877- The Greatest Excursion Steamer New Yorkers Never Knew- And the Siblings They Did" in *Steamboat Bill* issue #272, and "The Sylvan Dell of 1872- Remembering a Pioneering New York Commuter Steamboat" in *PowerShips* issue #280. Prior to his passing, Mr. Elliott completed a two-volume manuscript of the history of New York Harbor day passenger steamboats of the 19th and 20th centuries. Mr. Elliott was a great friend to SSHSA, and will be missed. Thank you to Bill Muller, Jack Shaum, and Barry Eager for notifying SSHSA.

(Above images: Andy Kilk- a photograph used in Peter Knego's article, [An Afternoon With Andy](#), Richard Elliott from *PowerShips*.)

## Chapter News

### Golden Gate Chapter

The Golden Gate Chapter recently met at the Elks Lodge in Alameda, California, during which members and guests listened to three talks: the first with Captain David Foote (US Navy, Retired), who presented an illustrated slide presentation titled "Overview of American Troop Transports - 1776-2000;" the second was a presentation of Chapter Secretary Norbert Ulbrich's latest ship-in-a-bottle of the Finnish four-masted barque *Pamir* when she entered Wellington Harbor, New Zealand, on July 29th, 1941; and the third

was a discussion on the history and future of the world containership industry by Chapter President Norm Freitag.

To read a more detailed account of what's going on with the Golden Gate Chapter, please [click here](#).

*The Telegraph* is the quarterly electronic newsletter for members of Steamship Historical Society of America. It is produced in March, June, September, and December.

Alissa Cafferky, Editor, *The Telegraph*