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Friday, April 25, 2014 - 6:00 PM
Community Church Assembly Room, 40 East 35th Street, Manhattan

VALARIE D'ELIA – A REPORTER'S LIFETIME ASSOCIATION WITH SHIPS



Valarie D'Elia, a passenger with her family on the QUEEN MARY's 1965 Thanksgiving Cruise (above left), and recently, boarding the laid up UNITED STATES in Philadelphia (above right).
 (Valarie D'Elia)

Valarie D'Elia was born into a family travel business dating back to 1902, when her great-grandfather booked his friends and relatives from Italy to Ellis Island in steerage class on transatlantic ocean liners as part of the immigration wave. Four generations later, Val took her first cruise on Holland America's 1938-built *Nieuw Amsterdam* when she could barely see over the banisters of the gangplank and sailed on the original *Queen Mary* to Nassau with her travel agency parents. To date, she has taken at least a hundred cruises and is the caretaker of a treasure trove of steamship memorabilia and other souvenirs relating to her family's travel business.

Val has parlayed her family background into a career as a travel journalist, with a century's worth of perspective. She began her broadcast career as a radio news anchor in Miami while a junior at the University of Miami, then went on to anchor and report for several radio stations in the New York metropolitan area before earning her master's degree from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. For nine years from January 1997, she was the talk show host of The Travel Show on WOR Radio, providing travel expertise on a nationally syndicated show airing in 100 markets. She is an occasional guest on NBC's Today Show and MSNBC among others and is contributing to Moment of Nature videos on CBS Sunday Morning. As the consumer travel reporter for NY1 News for the past 17 years, she covers the cruise industry, frequently reporting on new ship launches, ports of call, deals as well as safety & health issues. Her segments, which she produces, shoots, hosts and edits, air 20 times a week. Broadcast times and lots of consumer information for travelers can be found on her website: www.travelwithval.com.

NEXT EVENTS: Membership meetings on Friday, May 30; Friday, June 27 – programs TBA

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THE Porthole, published by the Port of New York Branch, World Ship Society, welcomes original material for publication. Address to the editor, Bob Allen, at oceanvoyag@aol.com or via the PONY mailing address.



MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



DISNEY WONDER at Miami FL, March 26, 2014

(Bob Allen)

MUSEUMS, LECTURES AND HARBOR CRUISES

CONTACT THESE INSTITUTIONS BY EMAIL OR PHONE FOR CURRENT EVENTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org or 917-492-3379.

MYSTIC SEAPORT www.mysticseaport.org or 860-572-0711.

VANCOUVER WSS & VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca for information or if you visit, contact Glenn Smith: 604-684-1240, email glen.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca.

NEW SOUTH WALES WSS: Meetings are held at the Uniting Church Complex in Lord Street, Roseville at 8:00 PM. Contact the branch at PO Box 215, Strathfield, New South Wales 2135, Australia.

THE NATIONAL LIBERTY SHIP MEMORIAL, INC. www.ssjeremiahobrien.org or liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org or 415-544-0100. 1275 Columbus Avenue, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94133-1315.

PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP www.liberty-ship.com or 410-558-0164

NEW YORK WATER TAXI, www.nywatertaxi.com or 866-989-2542. Harbor cruises departing from both South Street Seaport Pier 17 and Pier 84 at West 44th Street. Hop on – hop off service throughout New York Harbor is offered as well. Contact via website or telephone for departure times and prices.

CIRCLE LINE DOWNTOWN, www.circledlinedowntown.com or 866-989-2542. Harbor cruises on the ZEPHYR from April to December, and aboard New York Water Taxi from January to March, departing from Pier 17, South Street Seaport.

CIRCLE LINE, www.circeline42.com or 877-731-0064. Circle Manhattan and other harbor cruises, departing from pier 84 at West 44th Street.

NEW YORK WATERWAY, www.nywwaterway.com or 800-533-3779. Trans-Hudson ferry service and special-event cruises.

S.S. UNITED STATES: CHARTING A COURSE FOR AMERICA'S FLAGSHIP, MARCH 7 – SEPTEMBER 14

The Independence Seaport Museum in Philadelphia has a new exhibit about the s.s. UNITED STATES. Here is their description of the exhibit:

"SS United States: Charting a Course for America's Flagship explores the glamorous past and challenging present of one of the most famous passenger ships of all time. The exhibit spotlights the ship's Philadelphia connection, its heyday during the 1950s and 1960s, and the SS *United States* Conservancy's efforts to save her from destruction.

The SS *United States* was a spectacular, mid-century, passenger ship. The engineering achievement, born out of the brilliance of Philadelphia maritime architect William Francis Gibbs, was a symbol of American's post WWII technological might. Enthralled with the science of maritime engineering, Gibbs was intent on designing the fastest and safest trans-Atlantic ocean liner ever. When commissioned to design the world's most advanced passenger ship, his commitment to the highest technological standards produced the most graceful, modern, powerful, and sleekest vessel in the world.

After shattering the trans-Atlantic speed record on her maiden voyage, the SS *United States* became "America's Flagship." She carried movie stars, entertainers, socialites and royalty across the Atlantic, making more than 800 crossings during her career. But no ship could compete with the allure of the jet age. In 1969, the SS *United States* quietly ceased her voyages. Since then, resting in various ports, the SS *United States* patiently waits as enthusiasts chart a new course for America's Flagship."

SHIP'S LOG

February Program:

It was a perfect match – that February weather and a speaker just back from Montreal, bearing a program about Canada Steamship Lines (we won't blame him for those icy blasts). John Henry, a journalist for over 40 years, has worked for newspapers like the Daily News and Newsday, and has had articles in Steamboat Bill, Steamship Historical Society's magazine, and the Great Lakes Historical Society's publication. His book, "The Great White Fleet: Celebrating Canada Steamship Lines Passenger Ships," will be in bookstores on May 4th. In a further background note, he and our chairman, Ted Scull, have been friends ever since meeting at school 55 years ago.

It is surprising, to him and us, that nobody has written this story before. It is also surprising the Canada Steamship Lines has not had conflicts with any other Great White Fleet, namely the United Fruit Company or the United States Navy.

Mr. Henry began his Power Point presentation with his early steamboat experiences. They sailed past his house. He loved the power that those three stacks conveyed. And a CSL brochure describing the size of the fleet and its many routes – from Detroit down the St. Lawrence River to Quebec and the Saguenay River – really impressed him.

Some ships only carried cargo, others carried both cargo and passengers, but it was the passenger steamers that brought prestige to the line and made it part of peoples' lives. Mr. Henry took us through the detailed history of the fleet. A consolidation in 1913 led to CSL's inheriting 51 ships (the company also had its own hotels and its own shipyard). We saw some of these vessels and heard comments on their characteristics, amenities, designs and designers. We enjoyed sights of the steamers' well-kept elaborate interiors. And despite the retrenchment that other lines were undergoing, CSL's routes remained intact for decades.

However, with the passage of time, obstacles arose – the Depression, World War II gas rationing, the death of the forward-looking CEO, fires – especially the horrendous NORONIC blaze – all took their toll. By 1951, only four ships were left – three on the Saguenay, including the comparatively luxurious RICHELIEU (simpler than her predecessors), and one on the Niagara. And by the 1960's, the decline in passengers, a collision and other factors led to the end of the passenger service. Ironically, for such a one-time prominent and popular means of travel, the demise was hardly noticed except for a nostalgic editorial in one Montreal newspaper.

It was a fascinating story, well told and documented, and we thank Mr. Henry for his presentation.

Marge Dovman



Canada Steamship Lines QUEBEC (left)



(John Henry)

March Program:

We welcomed the arrival (we hoped) of spring at our March meeting with an introduction to our new projection screen (for the use of all groups meeting at the Community Church) and an announcement of Bill Donnell's impending marriage. After which Mario di Stefano gave us a brief introductory bio of this evening's speaker, Porthole editor Bob Allen, who would help us observe the 100th Anniversary of the Norwegian America Line.

Bob's Power Point presentation would be illustrated with pictures taken from his collection of photos and brochures, his own slides that he began taking in 1978, and photos of illustrations from books in his and Charles Zuckerman's collections. His

(Bob's) introduction to the line came in 1965, when he saw some pictures in Life Magazine of the SAGAFJORD all lit up at her New York pier during a blackout, and it left a lasting impression.

Norwegian America Line was started in 1910 as a national carrier bringing Norwegian immigrants to New York, docking in Brooklyn, where many Norwegians already lived. The first ship, KRISTIANIAFJORD, was followed by the first BERGENSFJORD and then the STAVANGERFJORD. A rival of sorts, Swedish America Line, appeared in 1915, and so for each Swedish vessel on the scene, there was some slight upgrading by the Norwegians.

Aside from the Swedes, there were other goings-on in the world to contend with, such as the effects of the Depression, and World War II, during which the BERGENSFJORD of the time served as an allied troopship, and the STAVANGERFJORD was an accommodation ship for the Nazis. Postwar, the BERGENSFJORD went to Home Lines as the ARGENTINA, and then to Zim Lines first as the JERUSALEM and then the ALIYA before being scrapped in 1958 after 45 years of service. The STAVANGERFJORD was updated and sailed until 1963, being scrapped the next year.

Bob steered us adroitly through these and subsequent events, with interior and exterior views of the various FJORDS, and pointing out for the most part, the pre World War II vessels still had throwback elements of the older ships.

We continued on through the postwar period, when four new ships were built, their more modern appearance designed by a new architect. They included the SAGAFJORD, which Bob considers "one of the most beautifully balanced ships," and then the slightly larger VISTAFJORD. New problems in the world arose. Competition was now provided by Royal Viking Line. There was a necessary change of emphasis to cruising, along with the necessary change of name to Norwegian America Cruises. Finally, in 1983, came the sale of the line to Cunard. The two ships were to retain their names and Norwegian flavor, but this did not necessarily happen. About some of the "improvements" Cunard made, Bob remarked, "It was the 1980's, when bad taste was rampant."

The story continued with the transfer to Saga Cruises. Before going on to her new company as SAGA ROSE, the SAGAFJORD was briefly chartered out as the GRIPSHOLM. The VISTAFJORD spent time as Cunard's CARONIA before becoming the SAGA RUBY. Luckily some of those Cunard "improvements" were improved upon.

Before ending, Bob treated us to slides of his 2009 SAGA ROSE and 2013 SAGA RUBY cruises to Norway, showing the ships, inside and out, and some of that spectacular Norwegian scenery, and also a very large and impressive Norwegian America Line anniversary exhibit at the Bergen Maritime Museum that included models, paintings and even some videos.

The BERGENSFJORD and STAVANGERFJORD may be gone, but their names will live on, on the two vessels of a new ferry line named Fjordline, which may have BERGENSFJORD memorabilia aboard.

Afterward, we enjoyed Norwegian noshes – herring, cheeses including gjetost (goat cheese) and the like, organized by Carol Miles. We thank her and her crew for the food, and Bob for such an interesting and wide-ranging talk. He has already been rewarded for his good work with a copy of Den Norske Amerika Linje 1910 – 1960. Mange takk, Bob!

Marge Dovman



Norwegian America Line's SAGAFJORD departing New York in late June, 1978

(Bob Allen)

SHIP NEWS

TWO MORE FOR MSC: MSC Cruises has announced that they have signed a letter of intent for two 167,600-ton cruise ships, at the cost of \$1 billion each. When delivered by STX France at Saint-Nazaire in 2017 and 2019, they will be the largest in the MSC fleet, with accommodations for 5,700 passengers and a crew of 1,536. The design is for a new prototype vessel, with details to be released at a later date. MSC will have the option of adding two additional liners of the same class.



A rendering of MSC's proposed cruise ship, which will be designed on a new platform for the fast-growing line. (MSC Cruises / STX France)

CLASSICA TO BECOME A NEO: Costa Cruises has announced the renovation of their oldest vessel, the 1992-built COSTA CLASSICA. Like her sister ship COSTA ROMANTICA, she will have the neo-prefix added to her name, and will join the part of the fleet specializing in destination-intensive cruises on modestly-sized ships. The 53,000-ton vessel, to be renamed COSTA neoCLASSICA, is one of the smallest in the fleet with a capacity of 1,766 passengers. If the renovation is similar to that undertaken two years ago on her sister ship COSTA neoROMANTICA, she will gain additional decks of suites above the bridge and some "tacked on" balconies on her hull.



COSTA CLASSICA as built (left), and COSTA neoROMANTICA as rebuilt in 2012 (right)

(Costa Cruises)

DINING ON QUANTUM: Royal Caribbean has announced a new dining concept on their latest ship, QUANTUM OF THE SEAS, which will be based at Cape Liberty, NJ beginning in November 2014. "Dynamic Dining" starts in the ship's main dining room, which will be divided into five separate venues, each with a distinct cuisine. One of those areas will be of particular interest to those who regret the passing of tuxedo-and-evening-gown-dress codes on board mass-market cruise ships. At The Grande, formal dress will be suggested every evening of the cruise, and menus will focus on "timeless" cuisine. There will be thirteen other dining experiences for passengers, including specialty restaurants branded to celebrity chefs such as the UK's Jamie Oliver and Miami's Michael Schwartz.

MANY MORE VIKINGS ARE COMING: Viking River Cruises set another Guinness World record for the most ships launched by one company in a 24-hour period – 16 – breaking their own record of launching 10 ships in one day last year. Three of the ships were launched in Avignon, France; four in Rostock, Germany and nine in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Viking founder and chairman Torstein Hagan has overseen the delivery of 30 new river vessels since 2012, with more planned for 2015.



The "Longship" VIKING AEGIR is one of 30 new vessels that have entered the Viking River Cruises fleet since 2012 (Viking River Cruises)



s.s. FLANDRE

(Bob Allen collection)

Compagnie Generale Transatlantique's (French Line's) first newly built post World-War II liners were a pair of near-sister ships for North Atlantic service from Le Havre to New York and the French West Indies, ordered in 1950. CGT's flagship LIBERTE, the rebuilt former North German Lloyd EUROPA of 1930 had entered transatlantic service to New York that summer, joining the 1927-built ILE DE FRANCE on the express route. FLANDRE, the first of the new liners, was built at A et C de France, Dunkirk, and was launched in October 1951, intended for North Atlantic service in summer and West Indies service in winter (and limited seasonal cruises) alongside sister ship ANTILLES. Although nearly identical, ANTILLES was built at Naval Dockyard, Brest, featured a somewhat taller funnel, and was painted white for her Caribbean service.

FLANDRE, ready for her maiden voyage to New York in July 1952, was a striking, modern-looking ship. She had a long forward section with two cargo holds serviced by low electric cranes, a low funnel just aft of a streamlined mast, a cruiser stern, and sheer accentuated by CGT's traditional upswept paint line near the bows. Departing Le Havre on July 23, bound for Southampton and New York, she soon developed mechanical problems in her fuel system, which were repaired and then failed again before finally being resolved. Her captain reduced speed for the remainder of the crossing, delaying her arrival for nearly an entire day. Once off Quarantine Station at New York on July 30, she anchored to prepare for the final short, celebratory journey to Pier 88, and immediately suffered a major power failure caused by a short circuit in the main switchboard. The crippled ship was finally towed to her pier in early afternoon, under the unforgiving glare of the New York media. FLANDRE's maiden voyage reception, intended as a signal of the rebirth of the French merchant marine, instead became an embarrassing debacle earning her the nickname "The Flounder." Adding to the humiliation, these events took place just three weeks after the s.s. UNITED STATES had triumphed with a flawless Blue Ribband-winning maiden voyage. CGT promptly cancelled voyages scheduled for the balance of 1952, and after temporary repairs were made to her electrical system, FLANDRE proceeded back to her builders at Dunkirk. Permanent repairs took more than six months to complete, and she finally returned to service in April, 1953.

Once the memory of the disastrous maiden voyage faded, FLANDRE settled down to regular service on the North Atlantic, supplementing the larger and faster LIBERTE and ILE DE FRANCE for most of the year, then joining the ANTILLES for a few mid-winter months on the West Indies route. Half the size of the ILE, FLANDRE was a more intimate and relaxed choice for a crossing, with elegant First Class accommodations, and more modest Cabin and Tourist Classes. By 1955 she was converted to a two-class liner (Cabin Class was eliminated), a trend that was gaining popularity in the 1950's. Her interiors were typical of the period, featuring a wide array of highly polished wood veneers (walnut, teak, ash and birch, in both classes), adorned with beautiful murals, bas reliefs, paintings, decorative glass panels and mirrors; leather-upholstered furniture, patterned linoleum decking, and what seemed like miles of fluorescent tube lighting. A unique feature was her terraces adjoining the spacious, domed First Class Main Lounge: glass-enclosed winter garden-style rooms placed on the open promenade deck, easily visible even at a distance, below the third lifeboat. FLANDRE also had two outdoor pools, libraries, a gymnasium, and children's playrooms and dining facilities. Public rooms were mostly on the Upper Promenade (Boat) Deck, and aft on the decks directly below; the wide, glass-enclosed promenade deck surrounded First Class staterooms.

By the late 1950's, CGT began modernizing their fleet for the coming decades, retired the aging ILE DE FRANCE in 1958, and ordered a new liner to replace her as well as the LIBERTE, which was retired in 1961. The new flagship FRANCE arrived in February 1962 and was briefly paired with FLANDRE on the North Atlantic run. However, it was a mismatch at best; the gleaming new 66,000-ton FRANCE, with stunning up-to-the-minute accommodations and facilities in both classes, was far more popular than the older, smaller FLANDRE. With rapidly declining passenger counts in the new jet age, FLANDRE was restyled for year-round Caribbean service from Le Havre, and more cruising. She received a white hull to match ANTILLES, and both ships lost their lovely, domed main lounge and adjacent terraces, which were replaced by deluxe staterooms and a small, 154-seat balconied cinema. Interestingly, the outboard portion of those winter garden terraces was used as passages along the boat deck, rather than being incorporated into the new suites. The grand aft-facing First Class Smoking Room, with a small adjacent salon, became the main social venue on board. After a few more years servicing the French West Indies, it became very clear by 1967 that CGT no longer needed two vessels sailing from France to the Caribbean. After some final summer transatlantic crossings to Montreal in conjunction with EXPO '67, the 15-year-old FLANDRE was sold to Costa Cruises of Genoa.

Costa took delivery of FLANDRE in early 1968, and sent her to Italy for rebuilding. Rechristened CARLA C, she represented a new focus on US-market cruising for Costa, which had been best known for liner operations from Italy to South America, and cruises within Europe. She emerged from the shipyard in December 1968 as a virtually new ship, with accommodations for 754 First Class cruise passengers. Gone were her polished wood veneers and linoleum decking – the CARLA C had light, Mediterranean-themed interiors, similar to those on the Costa flagship EUGENIO C (1966). A new main lounge was constructed on a deck forward of the bridge, with large windows on three sides capturing panoramic views over the bow. Responsible for the transformation was the legendary interior architect Nino Zoncada, who had been designing liners since the 1930's and whose portfolio included almost all Costa ships, as well as major contributions to ships of the Italian Line, Home Lines, Swedish America Line and many others. CARLA C's first assignment was a charter to rapidly growing Princess Cruises, for US West Coast cruise service to Mexico. Marketed (but not officially renamed) as PRINCESS CARLA, she left Los Angeles on her maiden voyage on January 10, 1969 and was said to be the setting of the novel *The Love Boat*, although the TV series was later filmed on the PACIFIC PRINCESS. In 1970, under the Costa flag, she started the first of her many seasons of 7-day Caribbean cruises out of San Juan, PR, replacing the small FRANCA C and the FULVIA (ex-OSLOFJORD of 1949), which burned and sank in the Atlantic while employed on a Costa charter. Extremely successful in the early 1970's, Costa invested further in CARLA C, replacing her still-troublesome steam turbines with new diesel engines at Amsterdam in the winter of 1974-75. By 1974, the FRANCE had been laid up; sister ship ANTILLES had been lost in a fire off the Caribbean island of Mustique in 1971, leaving CARLA C as the last French Line-built vessel in service. Ironically, the growing success of the cruise industry resulted in the revival of the FRANCE as NORWAY in 1980, so two former CGT transatlantic liners were in competition as deluxe Caribbean cruise ships.

CARLA C (renamed CARLA COSTA in 1986) continued her popular San Juan deployment, with some very limited European cruising in summer months, until the arrival of a new generation of vessels including the COSTA CLASSICA in 1992. That year, she was sold to the Greek Epirotiki Lines, for Greek Island/Turkey cruises from Piraeus as PALLAS ATHENA. On March 23, 1994, at the age of 42, PALLAS ATHENA caught fire and was a total loss, and was sold for scrap at Aliaga, India later that year. The once humiliated FLANDRE had enjoyed a remarkable 25-year career as a popular cruise ship, redefining the Costa cruise product, and proving that even the unluckiest of vessels can be redeemed.



CARLA C, as rebuilt in 1969

(Costa Line / Bob Allen collection)



FLANDRE's intimate First Class Terrace, adjoining the Main Lounge



FLANDRE's elegant First Class Smoking Room (CGT / Bob Allen collection)



CARLA C's newly constructed Ballroom overlooking the bow (above left) and Aft Lounge (above right) typify the timeless architectural style of the great maritime interior architect Nino Zoncada.



(Costa Line / Bob Allen collection)



CARLA C's Dining Room.

(Costa Line / Bob Allen collection)

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