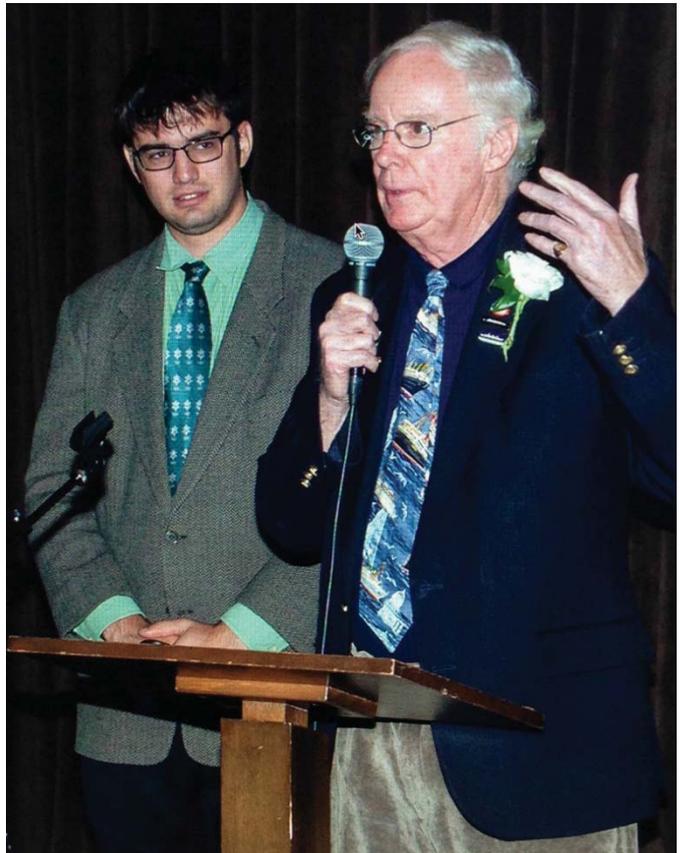




Happy Birthday, World Ship Society - PONY Branch!



Founding WSS Pony member and former chairman Bill Miller, with current chairman Marjorieann Matuszek, stand in front of the 50th Anniversary cake, adorned with an edible photo of the SAGAFJORD. (above, left) Branch Secretary Greg Fitzgerald looks on as Ted Scull, current board member and former chairman, delivers comments about the festivities during the 50th Anniversary celebration in New York on October 24, 2015. (above, right) (Tee Adams)

On Saturday, October 24th, WSS-PONY members and guests celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Port of New York Branch. Additional photos and a detailed account of the festivities by former Porthole editor and frequent contributor Marge Dovman begin on page 3 of this issue of The Porthole.

NEXT EVENTS: Membership Meetings: Friday, 1/29 – Princess Cruises 50th Anniversary, by Allan Jordan; Friday, 2/26; Friday 3/18; Thursday, 4/21; Friday 5/20; Friday, 6/24; PONY group cruise on the QUEEN MARY 2, July 1-6

ADDRESS: PO Box 384, New York, NY 10185-0384

E-MAIL: wsspony@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.worldshipny.com

MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



ALBATROSS at New York, October 16, 2015.

(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 glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca Per their website, monthly meetings have been eliminated for the foreseeable future.

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

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 44 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.circlelinedowntown.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.circleline42.com or 877-731-0064. Circle Manhattan and other harbor cruises, departing from pier 84 at West 44 Street.

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

THE NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM www.lighthousemuseum.org or 855-656-7469. Contact for schedule of cruises and events.

THE WORKING HARBOR COMMITTEE www.workingharbor.com or 212-757-1600. Cruises to both remote and well-travelled parts of New York Harbor - the Hudson River to view tugboat races, Gowanus Bay and Erie Basin in Brooklyn, and a circumnavigation of Staten Island.

THE NOBLE MARITIME COLLECTION, www.noblemaritime.org or 718-447-6490. Maritime lectures and art exhibits at the Sailor's Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island, NY.

LIBERTY SCIENCE CENTER www.lsc.org or 201-200-1000. The center, located in Liberty State Park in Jersey City, NJ, has just opened a new exhibit, "Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition," which will run until May 30, 2016. The exhibit focuses on the dramatic stories of the TITANIC's passengers.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
SAGA SAPHIRE	Southampton	Quebec	Transatlantic	Tony Cooke	09/15
NORWEGIAN ESCAPE	Southampton	Southampton	"Nowhere"	Tony Cooke	10/15
ZUIDERDAM	Ft. Lauderdale	Ft. Lauderdale	Panama Canal	Marianne and Tom O'Reilly	11/15

SHIP'S LOG - OCTOBER

It all started with one of those "Save the Date" postcards – one side taken up with a photo of the SAGAFJORD by Bob Allen, captioned "It all began here...." The date? Saturday, October 24, 2015. The reason? We'd be observing the 50th anniversary of the Port of New York Branch of the World Ship Society. Some time later came the official invitation. On its cover was a copy of Stephen Card's painting of the MAURETANIA (II) sailing along an icy Hudson past the old Pier A (with thanks to the artist). Our celebration would be at the city's last surviving historic pier, now known as Pier A - Harbor House.

The clouds outside were certainly not reflected indoors, where 100 or so members and guests gathered for the great event on the pier's spacious top floor, which bore an interesting resemblance to a ship's dining room. Tables for eight, already set with salad, beckoned, and harbor views added to the illusion of being at sea. At every seat was a beautifully illustrated commemorative magazine, edited by Doug Newman with contributions by him, Stuart Gewirtzman, Bill Miller and Ted Scull. In it we could read 50 years' worth of history – of the branch, ocean liners in and sailing out of New York, and the more-than-50-year history of Pier A. Along with it was a handy blue bag to carry it safely home.

Each table's centerpiece included a small glass vase of flowers, which was lit from below by an intriguing blue light, and a photo of a liner ("Find a ship you like and sit at that table.")

At one side of the room stood an anniversary cake with a photo (edible) of the SAGAFJORD on top, along with candles in the shape of "50." Elsewhere, copies of the Branch's 2016 calendar, with illustrations provided by the winners of our 50th anniversary photo contest, were being sold.

Adding to the spirit of the occasion, the apparel of many attendees included some form of maritime or World Ship Society reference.

Overlooking the social scene from two of the walls was a continuous loop of members' ship photos, many taken by entrants in the contest that didn't win, others supplied by Stuart Gewirtzman and Bob Allen.

In due time we were invited to sit down at our favorite ship's photo, and the festivities began with welcoming remarks by our captain – er, chairman, Marjorieann Matuszek. After a bit of Branch history, she explained why we were celebrating in October instead of December, when the 1965 SAGAFJORD meeting took place: better weather in October; the 25th anniversary was celebrated in October, "so if it worked for them, it should work for us"; Bill Miller and Ted Scull were both available as speakers; and there were no competing events or visitors. She also provided a membership report: we now have almost 300 members, hailing from 16 states aside from the tri-state region, and those non-locals comprise 25% of the membership. Members from six of those other states were in attendance, and were asked to stand, to much applause. Also, 35% of the membership is female.

Congratulations came from our UK member, Tony Cooke, who was sorry he couldn't attend, as well as from the Belfast and New South Wales branches. David Littlejohn, chairman of the World Ship Society Ltd. in the United Kingdom sent a letter of congratulations and best wishes for the Branch's continued success, along with a certificate of appreciation from the Council of the World Ship Society Ltd.

Marjorieann then recognized the current board members (see the last page of The Porthole) for their work on behalf of the club, as well as non-board members who contribute their time and efforts: Brad Hatry, who provided cruise ideas and tried to get us aboard for ship visits; Mario and Anne Bozzolo, who oversee the refreshments at meetings, and Marge Dovman, who reports on our meetings. All received rounds of applause.

After this, it was time for that very important celebration – blowing out the candles, to which Bill Miller applied his lungs – surrounded by maybe half of the attendees, who all had to have a picture of the action.

Next – solving the mystery of those little yellow stickers that some found under their plates. Anyone with a sticker marked "50" got to take home the floral centerpiece – or convince a tablemate to take it. And those with a "65" sticker could do likewise with the ship picture. (Everything had to be cleared out so that the place could be set up for the next event. That meant we all had to eat the cake. Such a problem!)

Then it was time to eat. After the aforementioned appetizer (baby arugula and endive salad with local goat cheese, walnuts and chardonnay vinaigrette), we had a choice of either beef tenderloin with asparagus and potato gratin with black shallot sauce or Atlantic salmon with wild mushroom and corn risotto and port shallots, both quite tasty. And how can anyone resist a meal with two desserts? There was apple crumble with vanilla ice cream, and then the yummy SAGAFJORD cake, along with the usual tea or coffee, iced or hot. Equally usual alcoholic beverages could be purchased.

Meanwhile, regular programs were brewing. Greg Fitzgerald, as program chair, introduced Ted Scull as the first speaker. Ted first named Greg, Stuart Gewirtzman and Doug Newman as our younger members who would continue the work of the club, before he launched into the history of the Port of New York during the last 50 years, with many personal references. Working for Holland-America Line at Pier 40 in the 1960's, Ted was well positioned to observe the changes that were already taking place. Pier 40, he advised us, was built in Manhattan to preserve longshoremen's jobs, leading HAL to abandon Hoboken after many years. He described other hints of the decline of various aspects of shipping in New York Harbor and then took us on a

photographic tour of “then and now”: historic piers abandoned; the disappearing railroad ferries once in common use; the Brooklyn waterfront at its industrial best and now “all grass” as it converted to more recreational uses; the history of the High Line, another move from industry to recreation.

He was followed by Bill Miller with the 50-year history of the PONY Branch in terms of the people involved from the first meeting on the SAGAFJORD, and the Branch’s many activities, official and not so much: Board meetings on the laid-up CARIBIA (ex-CARONIA); ship visits and harbor cruises; attending the christening of the tanker BROOKLYN; publication of Bill’s first book; all-day seminars; club cruises, including the QE2 cruise in May 1999 that attracted over 600 passengers from various maritime groups; Ocean Liner bazaars and more. Less officially, there was the Saturday Club, consisting of some younger members visiting as many ships as they could (20 in one day in 1969), and outings to a member’s yacht. There were many people pictures, from fairly recent to long ago. It was fun recognizing faces from different times, and a bit sad to realize that many of them are no longer with us. Bill ended his talk with the thought of future ship enthusiasts wondering what happened to Bill Miller.

With the end of this festive afternoon, we dispersed, looking forward to the next 50 years of the Port of New York Branch of the World Ship Society.

With thanks to all those whose efforts went into making this event such a success.

Marge Dovman



The historic Pier A celebration venue is somewhat dwarfed by Battery Park City in lower Manhattan. (above left) Guests were greeted by elegant place settings, printed commemorative menus and a brilliant green salad upon arrival at Pier A. (above right) (Tee Adams)



Longtime member Marge Dovman chats with Mark Nemergut. (above left) Anthony LaForgia, Bill Miller and Richard Faber, engaged in lunchtime conversation. (above right) (Tee Adams)



The current World Ship Society Officers and Executive Board pose on stage after the Pier A reception. From left to right are David Hume, Marjorieann Matuszek, Doug Newman, Mario De Stefano, Carol Miles, Stuart Gewirtzman, Ted Scull, Greg Fitzgerald and Bob Allen. (Tee Adams)

SHIP'S LOG - NOVEMBER

November's meeting took us to a faraway exotic land where.....but before we get carried away, we should note that the travels came after our chairman, Marjorieann Matuszek, gave credit to Stuart Gewirtzman for his photographic contribution to our recent 50th anniversary luncheon, and to Doug Newman for judging the photography contest and editing both the calendar (they're still for sale) and the souvenir publication, which Marjorieann described as "one of the nicest" she's seen. After giving particulars of the upcoming holiday party, she turned the floor over to Doug to introduce the speaker, Tom Rinaldi.

Doug introduced Tom as someone who is able to take trips that most of us can't, who spends a long time researching ships and trains, and who has a degree in historic preservation; and the program as "unique and different."

Standing in front of a projection of the picture that had graced the front page of the Porthole, which showed a side-wheeler and some small oar-propelled boats, Tom remarked that it could have been taken 80 years ago. He described his trip, taken last March, as an "overwhelming experience" in a sort of "lost world." Several aerial photos and maps showed the area of Bangladesh where this trip took him, in particular the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta, was largely water and that boats were a necessity.

In a four-volume set of books published by the William Denny shipyard, he had found four survivors of a fleet dating back to the 19th century, owned by the Bangladesh Island Water Transport Corp. The vessels were built in Scotland to pretty much the same design, from 1929 to 1942.

Street scenes in Dhaka, the capital, left no doubt that Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world, with its old structures, teeming crowds and heavy traffic. However, Tom estimated that he and his traveling companion encountered no more than 12 westerners. His pictures – and all his photographs can only be described as spectacular – took us along the busy pier that he described as a "Bangladeshi Grand Central Station" before arriving at the end of the pier where the so-called Rocket Boats were docked.

Despite Tom's misgivings about the presence of bugs and the absence of hygiene, he found the ship, the OSTRICH, clean and bug-less, and his first-class cabin small and spare but clean and comfortable. His photographic tour of the vessel showed the various accommodations including those of the deck passengers (who slept on the deck). The galley, consisting of a wood-fired oven, turned out good food, relieving another of Tom's apprehensions. He appeared to have stuck his head into the paddle box to show deckhands cleaning it of vegetation after every port.

To Tom's surprise, passing a sister ship, MAHSUD, brought no particular recognition. Arrival in Morrelganj, at the end of the line, brought another surprise. The area is a brickmaking center, with all the work being done by hand. For Tom, who has written a book about industrial ruins along the Hudson, the manufacturing process was the same as it had been along the Hudson 100 years ago. A picture of the Hudson Brickworks appeared for comparison. Coal, the fuel of choice, was delivered by hand, in baskets. Also encountered along the way was an archaeological UNESCO site, and friendly people.

The return trip to Dhaka – back to "Grand Central Station" -- was on another sister, the TERN, and Tom ended this portion of the program with a photo of twilight on the Dhaka waterfront, with small ferries whose silhouettes against the vivid sky made them resemble gondolas. He followed this with a 15-minute video (taken on his phone) of many of the same scenes we had just seen, with the added advantage of motion and sound. This brought us closer to the action, so to speak, especially to one of the brick makers, about whom Tom commented that he had never seen anyone work so fast. That man's hands just flew!

Refreshments this evening had an East Asian flavor, with spiciness warnings throughout, provided by the galley crew. We thank Tom for one of the most enjoyable and evocative programs ever!

Marge Dovman



Tom Rinaldi's spectacular and evocative photos of the side-wheeler riverboats of Bangladesh helped make his November program a unique and fascinating treat!
(Tom Rinaldi)

2015 PONY BRANCH CRUISE ON THE REGAL PRINCESS

by Marjorieann Matuszek

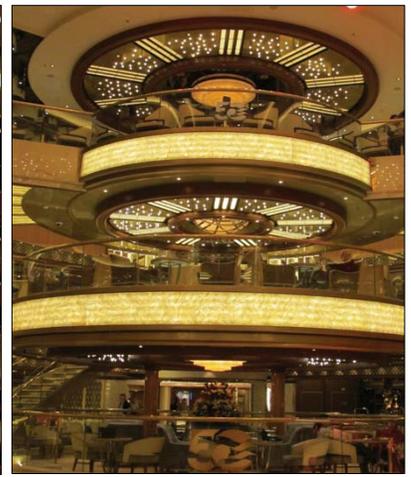
On a cool, partly sunny, October Saturday, seventeen PONY Branch members embarked on a seven-night, round-trip cruise to New England and Canada aboard the *Regal Princess*, the flagship of Princess Cruises. Our voyage was completely sold out. 3,560 passengers (called "guests" by our Captain), anticipated good weather, calm seas and interesting ports. As we sailed under the Verrazano Bridge, the ship's horns performed a raucous rendition of "The Love Boat" theme song. This was going to be a fun cruise! The weather cooperated all week, except in Saint John, where the rain dampened lobster bakes and tours to the reversing rapids.

Since we tendered into Bar Harbor and Newport, there were no port buildings, cranes or containers to crowd ship photos - just blue skies and plenty of sunlight. This picture of the *Regal Princess* was taken from the mile-long, waterfront promenade on the edge of downtown Bar Harbor, rather than a tender.

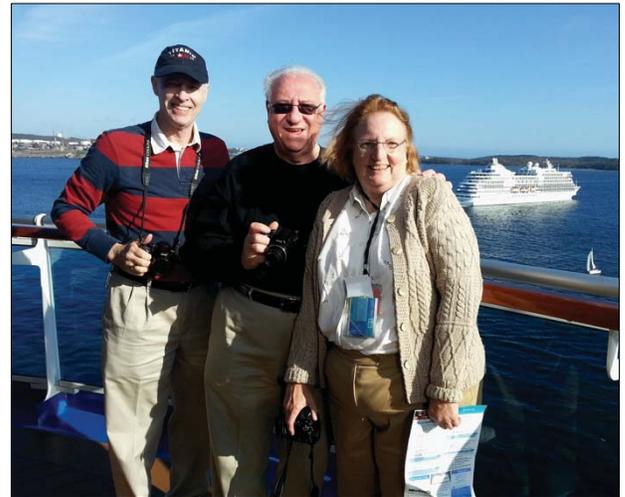


Princess Cruises 50th Anniversary logo (above left); The REGAL PRINCESS at Bar Harbor, ME. (above right)

(Marjorieann Matuszek)



REGAL PRINCESS interiors, left to right: 50th Anniversary logos on the glass railings; two views of the atrium, where circles and curves are clearly the consistent design aesthetic. (Marjorieann Matuszek)



PONY members enjoying the cruise (left); they're delighted to see the SEVEN SEAS NAVIGATOR at Halifax (right). (Marjorieann Matuszek)

2016 PONY BRANCH CRUISE – JULY 4TH WEEKEND ON THE NEWLY RENOVATED QUEEN MARY 2

Join us on Friday, July 1st for a five-night holiday weekend cruise to Halifax and Boston aboard Cunard Line's flagship QUEEN MARY 2. The QUEEN MARY 2 is the largest transatlantic liner ever to sail and many regard her as the grandest of all time. Cunard's service and cuisine are legendary. This will be the first voyage from New York following the extensive refit of the ship's Deck 7 dining venues and lounges, the replacement of the Todd English restaurant with the Verandah, the addition of new balcony cabins on Deck 13 and new single occupancy cabins on Decks 2 and 3.

Halifax is a favorite port of call for maritime historians and enthusiasts. Samuel Cunard was born here and Cunard Line has always been an integral part of the city. You can explore the city on your own, visit the acclaimed Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, or join one of several shore excursions to places such as Peggy's Cove and Grand Pre National Historic Site. Boston's Freedom Trail, Public Gardens, and nearby Revolutionary War sites beckon and we'll be in port for the spectacular July 4th fireworks display. There will be a party for members on board. Watch for news about a special program.

See the enclosed flyer for details, and make your reservations soon for this wonderful summer cruise on the great QUEEN MARY 2 before it's too late! To reserve your cabin or for more information, please contact **Brad Hatry** at **Pisa Brothers Travel** at 212.265.8420 ext 222; 800.729.7472 ext 222; fax 212.265.8753; or email: brad@pisabrothers.com

WHAT DAY IS TODAY?

You won't have to ask if you buy a WSS PONY 2016 Anniversary Calendar! Featuring 13 stunning ship photos from our own superb maritime photographers, this calendar can be yours for only \$10, or \$15 for two, while supply lasts. Pick one up at a membership meeting, or request one by email: WSSPONY@gmail.com.

SHIP NEWS

RETURN OF AN EMPRESS: Royal Caribbean International has announced the return to North American waters of their unique and once very popular EMPRESS OF THE SEAS, which will commence 4 and 5-night cruises from Miami in March 2016. The 48,500-ton, French-built vessel was designed specifically for short cruises from Miami, which she started in 1990. Early brochure renderings featured panoramic views of the Miami skyline during a sunset sail away, through her 2-deck high aft dining room bulkhead. Upon inspection of EMPRESS OF THE SEAS deck plan, it is clear that the horseshoe-shaped dining room balcony was designed to keep the aft glass bulkhead clear to allow the dramatic views. A one-of-a-kind vessel, she was commissioned by Admiral Cruises in 1987 as FUTURE SEAS, and has no sister ships. After Admiral was purchased by RCCL in 1988, the vessel was completed as NORDIC EMPRESS, and renamed EMPRESS OF THE SEAS following a 2004 refit. She was also used for seasonal Bermuda cruises from New York before being transferred to Spanish-market Pullmantur Cruises in 2008, her name then shortened to EMPRESS. She will make her second Miami debut as something of a party ship, offering Sunday brunches with complimentary mimosas or Bloody Marys, and some itineraries will include overnight stays in Cozumel, Mexico – an imaginative twist to a familiar itinerary. According to Royal Caribbean's president and CEO Michael Bayley, the EMPRESS OF THE SEAS will give "adventure-seekers the opportunity to party, chill and repeat. They will feel like it's the weekend every day on EMPRESS." Her size, while not exactly intimate with a capacity of 1,602, is about one-quarter that of the OASIS class, representing a refreshing change in mass-market cruising from South Florida.



Royal Caribbean's EMPRESS OF THE SEAS will return to familiar waters in early 2016.

(Royal Caribbean International)

OH CAY! MSC TO DEVELOP PRIVATE ISLAND: MSC Cruises will be the next major Caribbean operator to develop a private island paradise for their passengers. Ocean Cay is the name selected for their \$200 million "marine reserve island experience," located about 20 miles south of Bimini in the Bahamas. Besides the usual pristine white sand beach, newly-constructed island features will include a berth for visiting vessels, a 2,000-seat amphitheater, an architecturally accurate Bahamian village, a music gazebo, and of course many shops and restaurants. MSC Yacht Club passengers will be treated to their own corner of the island, complete with private bungalows and massage huts to create a deluxe tropical spa-like environment. The island will be landscaped with more than 80 types of local trees, plant and flowers, and over 200 Bahamians will find employment building and operating the facility. Once completed in 2017, Ocean Cay will become a port-of call for all MSC vessels operating in the Caribbean, including the new MSC SEASIDE, which will begin service from Miami late that year.



MSC Cruises' new resort island will be the Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve in the Bahamas, opening in 2017.

(MSC Cruises)

OFFICERS

Chairman: Marjorieann Matuszek
 Vice Chairman: David Hume*
 Branch Secretary: Greg Fitzgerald
 Membership Secretary: Mario De Stefano
 Treasurer: Carol Miles*

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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* Past Chairman