

# THE Porthole



FEBRUARY, 2017 VOLUME XXXIV, # 2

## BEN LYONS & THE ICE

by Ben Lyons

Friday, February 24, 2017 – 6:00 PM

At the Community Church Assembly Room, 40 East 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan

When WSS-PONY Branch member Ben Lyons left his chief officer position onboard QUEEN MARY 2 in 2008, he set a different course—often, deliberately sailing his ships into ice! Since then, he has become an ice pilot and has worked onboard a variety of vessels navigating in the Polar Regions. Ice navigation is still primarily a visual skill, and he will explain the differences in types of ice, the tools that are available to modern navigators, what the different ice classifications mean and why accurate weather forecasts are so important to those on the bridge. Ben will also walk us through navigating in ice on three different types of vessels: a private superyacht, the ice-strengthened expedition ship NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER, and Crystal Cruises' CRYSTAL SERENITY on its record-setting Northwest Passage transit in 2016. On the last named, he was an expedition team member.

On and often off *terra firma*, Ben is CEO of EYOS Expeditions, an outfit that plans expeditions for superyachts and provides the crews to carry out programs that span the world from Antarctica to the Russian Far East and Svalbard to Madagascar. In a recent development, on January 28, 2017, the 43,188-ton private yacht THE WORLD claimed the record for sailing the farthest south any vessel has ever sailed while cruising the Bay of Whales in Antarctica's Ross Sea. THE WORLD was assisted in this feat by EYOS Expeditions.

Bundle up and come down to our heated assembly room to hear about our speaker's adventures in the polar extremes.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ORION navigates the ice during a recent adventure cruise.

(Ben Lyons)

**NEXT EVENTS:** Membership meetings: March 31 – Bill Miller, "First Class Cargo - Combination Cargo-Passenger Ships"; April 28; May 19; June 23. Group cruise on the QUEEN VICTORIA, July 1-7, 2017.

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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](mailto:oceanvoyag@aol.com) or via the PONY mailing address.

## MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



ALLURE OF THE SEAS at Ft. Lauderdale FL, November 13, 2016.

(Bob Allen)

### ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Please send reports of your holiday and winter voyages to the Porthole editor for inclusion in the next edition.

### 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](http://www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org) or 212-748-8600.

History Happy Hour - Tea, Drugs, and Millionaires: New York and the China Trade

History Lecture and Discussion | February 22 6:30pm

A drink with a side of history, what could be better? Join the Seaport Museum's Historian William Roka for the first of our new monthly series: *History Happy Hour*. Enjoy a lively discussion on a fascinating tidbit of New York's maritime history.

February 22 (George Washington's birthday) marks the 233rd anniversary of when the *Empress of China* set sail from the East River on its way to Canton, modern-day Guangzhou, China. This mission marked the start of American involvement in the famed China Trade, which helped create some of the nation's first millionaires. William Roka, South Street Seaport Museum's Historian, delves into the secret history of Spanish silver, the Tea Trade, and the Astor family fortune. \$10 Suggested Donation You can make your donation online or in person at the event. Be sure to RSVP as space is limited.

At the Melville Gallery - 213 Water Street

**MYSTIC SEAPORT** [www.mysticseaport.org](http://www.mysticseaport.org) or 860-572-0711.

**VANCOUVER WSS & VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM** [www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca](http://www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca) for information or if you visit, contact Glenn Smith: 604-684-1240, email [glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca](mailto: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](http://www.ssjeremiahobrien.org) or [liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org](mailto:liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org) or 415-544-0100. 1275 Columbus Avenue, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94133-1315.

**PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP** [www.ssjohnwbrown.org](http://www.ssjohnwbrown.org) or 410-558-0646. Visit or sail on the World War II vintage Liberty Ship, based in Baltimore, MD. Contact for dates and more information.

**NEW YORK WATER TAXI**, [www.nywatertaxi.com](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.nywaterway.com) or 800-533-3779. Trans-Hudson ferry service and special-event cruises.

**THE NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM** [www.lighthousemuseum.org](http://www.lighthousemuseum.org) or 718-390-0040 – PLEASE NOTE NEW PHONE NUMBER! Contact for schedule of cruises and other events.

**THE WORKING HARBOR COMMITTEE** [www.workingharbor.com](http://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](http://www.noblemaritime.org) or 718-447-6490. Maritime lectures and art exhibits at the Sailor's Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island, NY.

## **SHIP'S LOG – JANUARY 2017**

Our first meeting of the New Year swept us from a chilly, gray winter evening in New York City to the sunshine of Miami, Florida. Our speaker was the incredibly knowledgeable and always interesting maritime author and lecturer Allan Jordan, whose topic was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the innovative Norwegian Cruise Line.

In a talk illustrated with a wide variety of fascinating photos, memorabilia and rarely seen cruise ship design images, Allan transported us back to the birth of the modern cruise industry in the mid-1960's. An Israeli trucking magnate and entrepreneur named Ted Arison, having relocated his family from his homeland to New York and then Miami in 1966, was running a tiny, start-up cruise business. Arison had chartered the small Israeli-owned passenger liner/car ferry NILI, and was filling the ship with passengers who enjoyed the comforts of the modern, 2-year old vessel. Allan reminded us that in those days, most cruises from Florida were on older converted coastal steamers built in the 1930's or before. A vessel of this type, the 1927-built YARMOOUTH CASTLE, was devoured by flames while on a cruise from Miami, resulting in dozens of deaths. This tragedy occurred in November 1965, just months before Arison arrived in Miami. As the NILI's passenger lists were growing rapidly, Arison received word that her owners were in deep financial distress, and the NILI was repossessed by its creditors. He suddenly had passengers and no ship. At the same time, a Norwegian ship-owner, Knut Kloster, found himself in the exact opposite situation. Kloster was running the brand-new passenger liner/car ferry SUNWARD from England to Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar, filling the sparkling new ship with eager British sun-seekers. However, in the fall of 1966, the Franco government in Spain closed the port of Gibraltar to the British; the political tension immediately ended demand for the cruises to the Iberian Peninsula. Now, Kloster had a ship and no passengers! Looking for a way to employ his ship, Kloster and Arison arranged a hasty meeting in Miami, and a partnership deal was struck.

Arison and Kloster decided that the new SUNWARD should sail her maiden voyage not from downtown Miami, but from the large new port which was being developed on Dodge Island, in Biscayne Bay. The port was so new, that as passengers lined up in the Florida sunshine to board the glistening new vessel on December 18 1966, a frantic rush to locate a gangway ensued. The venture was a tremendous success. The delightfully modern, stylish 558-passenger 8,500-ton SUNWARD was just what cruise passengers wanted – she sold out. By mid-1967, Kloster placed an order for a new 16,000-ton liner, the first ever purpose-built for Caribbean cruising from Florida. Christened STARWARD, her maiden voyage was in December 1968. Earlier that year, the venture was officially named Norwegian Caribbean Cruise Lines (NCL), and the race for the rapidly growing cruise market was on. In order to meet demand, the new SKWARD joined the fleet in January 1970, followed by the SOUTHWARD in November 1971. With their "White Ship" fleet of four, NCL was achieving 98% occupancy loads and were at the forefront of Caribbean cruising.

Allan explained that after the breathtaking rise of NCL, serious competition was emerging. Royal Caribbean Cruise Line introduced their first vessel, the newly-built SONG OF NORWAY in 1970. Ted Arison split with Kloster in 1971, and founded his own cruise line the following year. Arison purchased and refitted an out-of-work transatlantic liner, Canadian Pacific's 1962-built EMPRESS OF CANADA. Renamed MARDI GRAS, she became the first "Fun Ship" of the new company, Carnival Cruises. But it wasn't enough to just have more ships to fill in the early days of cruising. Innovation was key, and the NCL team was expert at innovation. Kloster hired marketing professionals from the airline industry, rather than seeking talent from Arison loyalists, or employees of other cruise lines. This turned out to be an excellent strategy. To market their cruises across the United States, NCL pioneered the fly-cruise concept in 1975 with "Cloud 9 Seven Day Fly/Cruises," partnering with major air carriers. NCL also spent considerable resources to make their ships floating destinations, complete with Las Vegas-style acts and big-name headliners. Not only were 7 and 14-day cruises booming, but short 3 and 4-day getaways to the Bahamas were thriving as well. NCL bought the 6-year-old CUNARD ADVENTURER in 1977 and converted her into the SUNWARD II (replacing the original SUNWARD), specifically for the mini-cruise trade. The real news wasn't the ship, but the destination. In addition to Nassau, these "Bahamarama Cruises" stopped at a private Island that NCL had purchased. Here, day-long beach parties on a pristine unpopulated beach paradise thrilled passengers with an experience unmatched by the competition.

By the end of the 1970's the cruise business was growing at a phenomenal pace, and Kloster was desperate for new tonnage. In 1979, he made his biggest, boldest gamble yet. NCL shocked the maritime world by purchasing the laid-up, 66,000-ton s.s FRANCE. The former liner had last sailed in 1974, when she concluded the French Lines 100-year plus transatlantic service. Kloster, his naval architect Tage Wandborg, and interior designer Angelo Donghia had a vision for the FRANCE, which was renamed NORWAY. At the risk of repetition, Allan told us of their legendary, utterly brilliant renovation plan, which opened the vast ship up to the balmy breezes of the Caribbean. The lengthy First Class glass-enclosed promenade decks became chic boulevards lined with café tables, off which opened lounges, nightclubs and shops. The huge windows of the Tourist Class promenade decks became the glass walls of spectacular suites. The theatre, which had accommodated each class on a separate level and was the largest afloat, became the showplace of the Caribbean. It featured full-scale Broadway productions, and top talent was hired for a wide variety of exciting performances. For the athletic minded and sun worshippers, the aft decks were rebuilt with a vast lido, swimming pool and outdoor self-service restaurant. A second outdoor pool was fitted into a top

deck well which had been a central patio, originally built to shield suite passengers from brisk Atlantic winds. Perhaps most remarkable of all, two huge landing craft were fitted to enormous davits on the forward deck. They would be needed to tender passengers ashore, since the NORWAY's draft would restrict access to the private island and to virtually all other Caribbean ports. It wasn't only the renovations that stunned, but the idea that demand for 7-day cruises would fill a 66,000-ton ship with a capacity for more than 2,000 passengers. NORWAY was almost double the size of her largest competitors, and several times larger than the average cruise ship of the late 1970's. However, once the maiden voyage on June 1, 1980 commenced, it was clear that Kloster and NCL had another hit. The NORWAY became an instant sell out sensation.



The STARWARD of 1968 was the cruise industry's first vessel purpose-built for the Miami market.

(Norwegian Cruise Line / Allan Jordan Collection)

Allan told us how the success of the NORWAY encouraged the competition to build bigger and better ships, but after 1980, NCL took another path. They diversified by purchasing several other cruise lines (Royal Viking Line and Royal Cruise Line were just among the first). By the mid-1980's Kloster strongly advocated more investment in mega-cruise ships – which he had invented with the NORWAY - but the NCL board of directors resisted. Among other reasons, the purchase of the other cruise lines was a great strain on their ability to build new ships. Therefore, Kloster departed NCL to focus on Project Phoenix, a proposed 250,000-ton floating city. In 1987, Royal Caribbean introduced the first cruise ship to exceed the NORWAY in size, the 73,000-ton SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS, which was followed by two sister ships. Other lines were building or planning spectacular large ships as well. NCL, however, introduced the modest SEAWARD in 1988, and then began absorbing a hodge-podge of smaller ships from the lines that they had purchased over the years. They renovated and enlarged the NORWAY in 1990, regaining for her the title of world's largest cruise ship. But the glory was short-lived, for in 1996 NORWAY was eclipsed by Carnival's new 101,000-ton CARNIVAL DESTINY, the first of many huge ships Carnival had on order. NCL did build two more ships in the early 1990's – the 43,000-ton DREAMWARD and WINDWARD of 1992-93. They had innovative features, reminiscent of NCL's trailblazing days of the 1970's. The sister ships featured multiple small restaurants, with sweeping ocean views and dramatic architecture. Varied dining venues were just beginning to be introduced on mainstream cruise ships in the late 1980's and early 1990's, and NCL was certainly thinking in that direction. But by 1992 their fleet was wildly mismatched and expensive to operate, and they almost couldn't make the payments necessary for delivery of the DREAMWARD. More hodge-podge followed: NCL bought the unfinished hull of the COSTA OLYMPIA, and finished her as NORWEGIAN SKY, introduced in 1999. Simultaneously, they invested heavily in enlarging the sisters DREAMWARD and WINDWARD in 1998, which were having successful seasons on the Bermuda run from New York, in the Caribbean and Alaska. But all of the efforts came too late for NCL; they couldn't survive independently. Carnival swooped in, attempting to buy the struggling company, but the highest bidder turned out to be the huge Genting Group of Malaysia, owners of a vast array of resorts, casinos and Far East operator Star Cruises. They became NCL's new corporate owner in 2000.

Allan described the purchase of NCL by Genting as a dramatic new beginning for NCL. Infused with new capital, they built NORWEGIAN SUN, a sister for NORWEGIAN SKY. The multiple restaurants on the SKY were transformed into a new dining concept – Freestyle Dining. No longer would passengers have to eat in the same dining room and at the same seat every evening. Cruise ship dining was suddenly like an all-inclusive luxury resort, with the option of eating when and where you pleased. Although some cruise passengers, particularly of earlier generations, resisted, the concept took hold. NCL instituted the Freestyle concept on all of their ships except NORWAY, which did not have adequate infrastructure to support the concept; also, she was to be redeployed to the Far East. A vastly bigger building program followed with the introduction of the NORWEGIAN STAR in 2001, purpose-built for Freestyle Dining; she was the first of a multi-ship order. Even NCL's one-off

ships of the Genting-era have been successful. The PRIDE OF AMERICA (2005), which is employed year-round in Hawaii, commands the highest per diems in the fleet, and is extremely popular. The NORWEGIAN EPIC (2010), which has several design flaws including awkward bathroom layouts and an ungainly exterior profile, is nevertheless very popular as well. The innovative NCL was back, and growing rapidly to keep pace with worldwide demand for cruise products.

Allan told us of the sad end of the NORWAY - she suffered a deadly boiler explosion while docked in Miami in 2003, and was subsequently sold for scrap. However, Genting and NCL continued to move forward, introducing another successful new cruise ship platform in 2013 with the NORWEGIAN BREAKAWAY. She and her multiple sisters, several of which are still under construction, are wonderfully innovative and have achieved great success. While the NORWEGIAN STAR-Class ships have exclusive deluxe penthouse areas on their top decks, BREAKAWAY-Class vessels feature The Haven. This is a totally separate enclave featuring its own dining room, lounge and swimming pool. It's truly a ship-within-a-ship, or from a more historical perspective, the return of the two-class ship. BREAKAWAY-Class also has The Studios, single-occupancy cabins hardly bigger than the footprint of a bed. Studio occupants have access to their own "singles" lounge, and the concept has been tremendously popular. Another extremely innovative concept on the vessels is the Boardwalk, now being emulated on other ships. A wide open deck surrounds the main public rooms, which open with folding glass screens to create an al fresco environment when weather permits.

Allan ended the program with some contemporary photos of NCL founder Knut Kloster, who is still living in Norway. Modestly, Kloster stated that he was successful basically because "the timing was right." Allan also noted that the Project Phoenix, which was envisioned by Kloster in the mid-1980's finally emerged in a modified form as a competitor's gigantic new ship. Royal Caribbean's 225,000-ton OASIS OF THE SEAS contains many features that Kloster envisioned, and is of the approximately the same size as the Phoenix design.

We thank Allan for this fascinating talk and all of his exhaustive research, which revealed the ups and downs of one of the most important cruise lines of our time.

Bob Allen and Marge Dovman



In this remarkable photo of the SUNWARD taken around the time of her December 1966 maiden voyage, Miami's Dodge Island consists of no more than a pier shed, giving little indication that it will soon become the world's busiest cruise port. (Norwegian Cruise Line / Allan Jordan Collection)



Norwegian Cruise Line's PRIDE OF AMERICA is seen here on her only visit to New York, during her 2005 delivery voyage from Germany to Hawaii.  
(Norwegian Cruise Line)

#### **WSS PONY BRANCH PLANS CRUISE TO VENICE, ITALY IN 2017**

The PONY WSS Branch's annual group cruise departs Civitavecchia (Rome), Italy on July 1, 2017. The itinerary is around the "boot" of Italy, calling at La Valletta, Malta and the Dalmatian coast ports of Kotor, Montenegro and Zadar, Croatia before arriving in the magical city of Venice one week later. We will sail on Cunard Line's elegant QUEEN VICTORIA, fresh from a multi-million dollar renovation. Contact Brad Hatry at Worldview Travel soon for the best stateroom selection. [Brad@worldviewtravel.com](mailto:Brad@worldviewtravel.com), or 212-265-8420 or 800-729-7472, x 222.



QUEEN VICTORIA of 2007 is a perennial favorite of Cunard passengers. You can join WSS PONY on a cruise around Italy on this luxurious ship next summer. She is renowned for her superb service, ocean liner ambience, and plush accommodations.  
(Cunard Line)



The elegance of the QUEEN VICTORIA is evident in these photos of her main lobby and one of the passageways.

(Marjorieann Matuszek)

### SHIP NEWS

**CIRCLE LINE COMES FULL CIRCLE:** New York Cruise Lines will merge their Circle Line Sightseeing Cruises with newly purchased Circle Line Downtown and New York Water Taxi to create a larger, more competitive company operating local ferry and cruise services. In 2016, the De Blasio administration selected Hornblower Cruises and Events over New York Water Taxi to operate city ferry routes. In danger of going out of business when they were not selected, New York Water Taxi will now be part of a stronger corporate ownership, with 25 ships offering sightseeing, dinner, entertainment and charter yachts.

**BERMUDA IS ON THE HORIZON:** Carnival Cruise Lines has added five short Bermuda cruises from New York to CARNIVAL HORIZON's inaugural season itineraries. Currently under construction in Italy, the HORIZON will be part of the 133,500-ton, 4,000-passenger VISTA Class. Her maiden voyage is scheduled from Barcelona on April 2, 2018, and she arrives in New York on May 23 following a 14-day transatlantic crossing. The newly announced Bermuda cruises will be marketed as long weekend getaways, sailing from Manhattan on Thursday afternoons, returning on Monday mornings. Following her New York season, CARNIVAL HORIZON will reposition to her homeport of Miami, FL.



CARNIVAL HORIZON, which will sail a cruise program from New York in 2018, is a sister to the CARNIVAL VISTA, seen here. (Carnival Cruises)

**CRUISE SHIP ACCIDENTS CONTINUE:** A deadly accident struck the EMERALD PRINCESS while she was docked in Dunedin, New Zealand on February 9. While working on a hydraulic tender launching system, a gas canister exploded, killing one crewmember. EMERALD PRINCESS was not damaged in the explosion, and continued her cruise after local authorities concluded their investigation. Also on the same date in New Zealand, Ponant Cruises' L'AUSTRAL came in contact with rocks as she was entering Milford Sound. Minor damage was repaired, and the New Zealand Transport Accident Investigation Commission looked into the accident when L'AUSTRAL docked in Dunedin on February 11. This was the second accident of a similar nature experienced by L'AUSTRAL within the last month. On the very same date, Norwegian Cruise Line's NORWEGIAN STAR lost engine power in the Tasman Sea approximately 20 miles of Melbourne, Australia. Fortunately, passenger services were unaffected. Towed back to Melbourne, repairs are now under way, and NCL expects the February 18 cruise from Auckland to operate as scheduled. Passengers on the ill-fated sailing will be able to stay on board as repairs are carried out, and will receive a full refund and a 50% credit on a future voyage. A fourth accident occurred three days later, when the brand new SEABOURNE ENCORE snapped her mooring lines due to high winds. Docked in the New Zealand port of Timaru, the 40,350-ton ultra-deluxe cruise ship drifted out of control across the basin, leaving a gangplank dangling from her starboard shell door. Despite the deployment of her thrusters, SEABOURN ENCORE struck the MILBURN CARRIER II, piercing one of her ballast tanks. Once the high winds abated, tugs were able to push the liner back to her berth. Fortunately there were no reported injuries, and most of the ENCORE's passengers were ashore and returned to the vessel unaware of the incident. The luxurious cruise ship was required to spend the night in port, while the New Zealand Transport Accident Investigation Commission looked into the cause of the collision.



Ponant Cruises' sleek L'AUSTRAL was involved in two incidents in New Zealand waters this year.

(Bob Allen)

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