

January, 2015

VOLUME XXXII, # 1

Friday, January 30, 2015 - 6:00 PM
Community Church Assembly Room, 40 East 35th Street, Manhattan
THE WAY WE WERE: PASSENGER SHIPPING IN 1965
by Greg Fitzgerald



Two legendary vessels that made their maiden voyages to and serviced the Port of New York from 1965, the year that the PONY WSS branch was founded. In this October 1974 photo, Home Line's OCEANIC has just sailed from Pier 88, bound for Nassau. Still tied up at Pier 90, Italia's MICHELANGELO departed shortly for Algeciras, Cannes, Naples and Genoa. (Bob Allen)

Fifty years ago, the World Ship Society - Port of New York Branch was formed onboard Norwegian America Line's Sagafjord. To commemorate the inception of the Branch, new Program Chair Greg Fitzgerald will present a retrospective on the state of passenger shipping in 1965.

A year on the cusp of major change in the passenger shipping industry, 1965 heralded a transition to a reduced calendar of year-round trans-Atlantic services to the beginnings of a mix of winter pleasure cruises and summer crossings. Summers would still be full of packed ships on the North Atlantic, with legendary liners such as the original Cunard Queens and the mighty S.S. United States plying the seas. These ships were nearing the end of their economic viability, however, and were pressed into warm-weather cruise service in the winter as low demand for rough-weather Atlantic crossings made that service unsustainable.

Meanwhile, newer North Atlantic tonnage, such as Rotterdam and France, thrived, and some of the last dedicated liners, such as the Italian beauties Michelangelo and Raffaello began their relatively short lives. The Soviet Union would launch the Aleksandr Pushkin, which celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 2015 as a rare survivor of that time. Meanwhile, the keel for what would be the last ocean liner of the golden age, Queen Elizabeth 2, was laid down in July 1965.

It was also a time of tragedy. The disastrous burning and sinking of the Yarmouth Castle would change ship design in years to come and usher in fire-safety mandates that sent many classic ships to the scrapyard.

This program promises to be a nostalgic flashback to the shipping industry at the time when the PONY branch was established.

NEXT EVENTS: Membership Meetings, February 27, March 27; April 24; May 29; June 26 programs TBD. Tour and Luncheon on NCL's NORWEGIAN BREAKAWAY, March 1

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MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



MEIN SCHIFF I at Bridgetown, Barbados on December 12, 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 glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca. The next meeting is on Wednesday, February 11, 2015.

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 next meeting is February 19, 2015 – Cruising PNG and the Solomons by Peter Plowman.

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 upcoming 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, such as 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

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
AMERICAN GLORY	Baltimore	Charleston	Intracoastal Waterway	Marge Dovman	11/14
VEENDAM	San Diego	San Diego	Hawaiian Islands	Judy, Jerry, & Stuart Gewirtzman	12/14
SILVER WHISPER	Bridgetown	Ft. Lauderdale	Southern Caribbean	Bob Allen	12/14

WORLD SHIP SOCIETY, PORT OF NEW YORK BRANCH RATIFICATION OF OFFICERS FOR 2015-2016 - RESULTS

Total Votes Submitted = 107

Chairman	Marjorieann Matuszek	105	98.13%
Vice Chairman	David Hume	106	99.07%
Membership Secretary	Mario De Stefano	106	99.07%
Branch Secretary	Greg Fitzgerald	105	98.13%
Treasurer	Carol Miles	105	98.13%

SHIP'S LOG - DECEMBER

Holidays were a-comin' in, and in keeping with the season our annual holiday party, aka our December meeting, took place at Piccolo Fiore, a very nice Italian restaurant on East 44th Street. 61 members and guests enjoyed the restaurant's cozy atmosphere, with its brick wall and paintings of evocative Italian scenes and Renaissance Italian ladies. Hosted by vice chairman David Hume and chairman-elect Marjorieann Matuszek, we enjoyed a delicious three-course lunch of antipasto; a choice of five entrees: penne, ravioli, chicken Francese, grilled steak or filet of sole; either tiramisu or cheesecake for dessert; and coffee or tea. Other beverages were available, as were other dishes for those with special dietary needs.

After time for eating and socializing, outgoing chairman Ted Scull presented retiring treasurer Alan Borthwick with a gift of two QUEEN MARY 2 glasses. And two other members were honorably mentioned: Richard Morse, approaching his 90th birthday, and Bernie Grandjany, who emigrated from France on the NORMANDIE as a child.

Then chairs were rearranged for the entertainment, a color film, "Deco, Age of Glamour," produced by the BBC in 1999 for the Victoria and Albert Museum. The film was an interesting history of Art Deco from its start in France in the mid-1920's to its demise as a result of the mayhem of World War II. Surprising to most of us, Art Deco spread all the way to India, and we saw several Art Deco buildings. Marking its only color-film appearance, the NORMANDIE's role in spreading Art Deco from France to other parts of the world was made clear as the camera toured parts of the illustrious vessel. Not surprisingly, Bill Miller appeared as commentator for this portion of the film. What a lovely holiday gift to us all!

We thank David and Marjorieann for their hosting, Marjorieann for suggesting the restaurant, Bill Miller for making the film available, and the friendly and efficient staff of the Piccolo Fiore.

Marge Dovman



WSS PONY members enjoy a holiday luncheon and presentation at the picturesque Piccolo Fiore.

(Marge Dovman)

SHIP LUNCHEON FOR WSS PONY AND THE PROPELLER CLUB OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

For our first cruise ship visit of the new year, we will be joining the Propeller Club of New York and New Jersey for a tour and luncheon on Norwegian Cruise Line's NORWEGIAN BREAKAWAY. This event will be on Sunday, March 1, 2015, and space is limited. Please see the enclosed flyer for details.

SHIP NEWS

VIRGINS TO CRUISING: The Virgin Group, led by founder Richard Branson, has finally taken the long-rumored plunge into cruising. In early December, they announced the formation of Virgin Cruises, to be led by industry veteran Tom McAlpin, a past president and CEO of The World condominium cruise ship, and president of Disney Cruise Line. Branson stated that “We plan to shake up the cruise industry and deliver a holiday that customers will absolutely love. They’ll be sailing on the latest ships offering great quality, a real sense of fun and many activities all delivered with the famed Virgin service.” Virgin has worked with Bain Capital on the financing of the new cruise line, which plans to begin operations in 2018.

EDGING INTO MORE GROWTH: Royal Caribbean announced the construction of two new vessels for their Celebrity Cruises division in early December. Dubbed Project Edge, the 117,000-ton vessels will be built at STX France for delivery in fall 2018 and early 2020. Just slightly smaller than their latest vessel, CELEBRITY REFLECTION, the new liners will accommodate 2,900 passengers. Celebrity has stated that the new class of vessel will be able to deliver “small ship itineraries with large ship amenities.” This claim was also made by MSC when announcing a new class of vessel last year. Neither company has explained how a vessel of over 100,000-tons, a length of nearly 1,000 feet, a beam of over 120 feet, and a capacity of almost 3,000 passengers will be able to achieve that goal.

ONE MORE OF EACH, PLEASE: The Carnival Corporation will be adding additional vessels to its Carnival, Holland America and Seabourn divisions, each a duplicate of ships already under construction. For Carnival, the new vessel will be identical to the CARNIVAL VISTA, and will be 133,500-tons, carrying 3,954 passengers. Holland America will gain a sister ship to the recently named KONINGS DAM, 99,500-tons with accommodations for 2,650 passengers. Deluxe operator Seabourn will build a sister to its 40,350-ton, 604-passenger vessel now under construction, which is said to be an expanded, improved version of the SEABOURN ODYSSEY-class of 2009. All three ships will be the largest in their respective fleets, and will be built at Fincantieri in Italy. Delivery dates are spring 2018 for the Carnival and Seabourn ships, and fall 2018 for Holland America’s new arrival.

GROWTH AND TRAGEDY FOR OCEANIA: It’s been a monumental fall season for luxury operator Oceania Cruises. First, the acquisition of Prestige Cruises International (parent company of both Oceania and Regent Seven Seas Cruises) by Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings was completed in November. Next, in early December, NCLH and Oceania announced that they are purchasing the 30,000-ton, 684-passenger OCEAN PRINCESS from the Carnival Corporation. She will be renamed SIRENA and operate alongside her sisters INSIGNIA, REGATTA and NAUTICA, all four of which were built as the R-ships for now-defunct Renaissance cruises. After a significant \$40-million refurbishment, SIRENA will begin her first Oceania cruise in late April 2016. Unfortunately, tragedy struck the company on December 11, when an engine room fire on the INSIGNIA killed two contractors and one crewmember. Fortunately, the vessel had just docked at Castries, St. Lucia, and all passengers and crew were safely evacuated. The balance of the 10-night cruise, which had departed San Juan on December 7, was cancelled and all remaining passengers were flown home. After inspection, it was announced that the INSIGNIA would be out of service until March 22. At that time, she will begin a shortened version of her world cruise from Singapore, which was to have departed Miami on January 10.



The stricken INSIGNIA docked at Castries, St. Lucia on December 13, 2014, two days after she suffered a deadly engine room fire. (Bob Allen)

FROM CARNIVAL TO PARADISE: Carnival Cruises has sold its COSTA CELEBRATION (ex-CELEBRATION, GRAND CELEBRATION) to newly named Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line as a replacement for their BAHAMAS CELEBRATION (ex-PRINSESSE RAGNHILD), which was badly damaged after running aground at Freeport on October 31. Built in 1987 as the third of Carnival’s HOLIDAY-class “superliners,” the 47,000-ton, 1,800-passenger ship also sailed with recently dissolved Iberocruceros (another Carnival Corporation division) as GRAND CELEBRATION, which will be the ship’s new name when she begins service in February.

A NEW LOOK FOR AN OLDER SHIP: A major refurbishment has been completed on Costa Cruises’ 1992-built COSTA CLASSICA, now renamed COSTA neoCLASSICA, part of the Costa neo-Collection of smaller, “slow-cruising” ships. The 53,000-tonner was Costa’s first newly built vessel since the EUGENIO C of 1966, and received high praise at the time of her maiden voyage 23 years ago for her simple, modernist interiors (by Italian Gregotti Associati) and uncluttered profile. Unlike her sister COSTA neoROMANTICA, neoCLASSICA did not receive additional decks of suites piled on top of the bridge, or balconies clipped onto the hull. Thankfully her profile is largely unchanged, and her interior renovation, by Hamburg, Germany-based Partner Ship Design, appears less radical than that of her sister-ship, which was created by the Swedish Tilburg Design group.

SHIP OF THE MONTH

by Bob Allen



s.s. FRANCE

(Bob Allen)

She was one of a kind – a ship that defined 1960's style on the North Atlantic, yet achieved her greatest success as a pioneering “megaship” in the sunny Caribbean. The French Line's legendary FRANCE (III) was conceived as an economical replacement for both the aging LIBERTE (1930) and ILE FRANCE (1927). With a capacity of 2,044, a service speed near 30 knots, and an efficient layout for fast turnarounds, she was designed to carry approximately the same number of passengers per year as the LIBERTE and ILE combined. She also served as a headline-worthy prestige project for the de Gaulle government, and a long overdue replacement for the NORMANDIE (1935), which tragically burned in New York in 1942. Planning started in the mid -1950's and construction began at St. Nazaire in October 1957. Madame de Gaulle launched her with much fanfare in 1960, and the maiden voyage to New York was in February 1962. Like the ROTTRERDAM (1959), the general arrangement of the FRANCE provided a full deck of public spaces (including glass-enclosed promenades) for each of the two classes - First and Tourist - creating a very spacious feeling throughout the ship. Although off-season cruising was not uncommon for the French Line, no accommodation was made for leisure voyages, unlike on ROTTERDAM and many of her contemporaries. Even her outdoor pool (a Tourist Class space) was covered with a fixed glass dome to shield it from the harsh North Atlantic winds. Décor was high-style 1960's, a cross between Mad Men and the Jetsons, with a European flair. The FRANCE's angular furniture was custom designed for many of the venues, mostly upholstered in monotone fabrics and leathers, and had incredibly thin legs – the epitome of early 1960's fashion. Palettes were mostly bright solids, with murals, lacquer panels, glass screens and various artworks adding texture and brilliant splashes of color. The main public rooms were almost all domed or featured a second level creating a grand, traditional feel with clear links to the past. There was no observation lounge, as the forward portion of the superstructure was used for staterooms. Lighting consisted of miles of fluorescent tubes, consistent with French Line design of the period, along with a few unusual chandeliers, flush mount fixtures and can lights. The overall effect was of modern good taste and style, but she lacked the decorative flair of her predecessors, especially the magnificent NORMANDIE. On the exterior, however, FRANCE was rakish and stunning, her sheer exaggerated by an upward paint line at towards the bows. Her sleek hull and towering superstructure were capped by massive red and black funnels, topped with wings angled to perfection, designed to disperse engine exhausts over the side of the ship.

Despite the shortcomings of the FRANCE's design, she was an instant sensation on the North Atlantic. Her reputation for superb food, service and captivating atmosphere was well deserved. Word spread on both sides of the Atlantic that a crossing on the FRANCE was one of the world's greatest travel experiences. She operated at near 100% capacity for her first four seasons, a remarkable achievement in an era where ocean liner travel was rapidly declining, even on the express run from New York to England and France. Her few cruises were also sellouts, but by the late 1960s the competition from the jet plane was more than even the most remarkable ship could withstand. Passenger counts started dropping rapidly. Many more cruises were added to her schedule, including spectacular world cruises in 1972 and 1974, and a cruise to South America (for Carnival in Rio) and Africa in 1973. The end came swiftly; in 1974, at the height of the oil crisis, the French government preferred to subsidize the Concorde supersonic airliner project rather than a fuel-guzzling ocean liner; FRANCE's last voyage was scheduled for October of that year. The crew, in protest, took over the ship outside Le Havre on September 11; passengers were tendered off the following day, while the crew held out until October 9th, when they finally permitted the ship to dock. It was her last voyage under the French flag - the last few departures were cancelled, and the ship was decommissioned at the end of October, and laid up in mid-December. The reign of the glorious s.s. FRANCE was over in just 12 short years.

SHIP OF THE MONTH, PART 2 – s.s. NORWAY – COMING IN FEBRUARY



FRANCE interiors, clockwise from top left: Salon Fontainebleau (First Class Lounge); Salon St. Tropez (Tourist Class Lounge); Tourist Class Writing Room; Tourist Class Stateroom; Salle a Manger Chambord (First Class Dining Room); First Class Smoking Room (CGT / Bob Allen collection)

Owner: CGT (French Line), Paris
Builder: Penhoet, St. Nazaire, France
Route: Le Havre, Southampton, New York
Service speed: 30 knots
Pass. capacity: 407 First Class; 1,637 Tourist Class

Dimensions: 1,035' x 110.5'
Gross Tonnage: 66,348
Maiden Voyage: February 3, 1962
Last Voyage: September 5, 1974
Demise: After crew takeover of vessel, docked at Le Havre October 9, 1974; decommissioned October 30, 1974; Laid up December 19, 1974

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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