

JUNE, 2016 VOLUME XXXIII, # 6

Friday, June 24, 2016 – 6:00 PM

Community Church Assembly Room, 40 East 35th Street, Manhattan

## THE WACKY, WACKY WORLD OF A MERCHANT MARINER

By J. Fred Rodriguez Jr.

Our June guest speaker, maritime historian J. Fred Rodriguez, was immediately inflicted with a condition when he first saw a well-painted Revell model of the s.s. UNITED STATES in 1954. The condition is understood by only a select few, and to this day no one really knows how it starts within us - only how to keep it under control. The visiting family Doctor eventually hung a name on it: he called it "Shipitus," and the rest is history.

You are warmly welcomed to come, sit and hear the real life stories of a U.S. Merchant Mariner and the sometimes wacky, wacky stories of lives at sea that will cover the good, the bad and the sometimes ugly of the vast "Maritime Industry" that affects all of us one way or another.

J. Fred Rodriguez has been a Merchant Mariner of both brown and blue water for 31 years, and holds the title of "Able Bodied Seaman-Unlimited." J. Fred has also guest lectured on 76 different passenger and cruise ships on well over two hundred voyages, using 51 slide presentations that he's researched and produced. June's program evolves from the many great people within the maritime industry who have crossed his headings both on deck and at the Port of New York Branch of the World Ship Society, where he is a "Plankowner" of the branch.



The UNITED STATES, seen here in a 1960's postcard view, is one of many vessels on which Fred Rodriguez Jr. has served.

(USL/Bob Allen collection)

**NEXT EVENTS:** PONY group cruise on the QUEEN MARY 2, July 1-6

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**WEBSITE:** [www.worldshipny.com](http://www.worldshipny.com)

## MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



EXPLORER OF THE SEAS at Halifax, NS, October 2011

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

**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.com](http://www.ssjohnwbrown.com) or 410-558-0646. New York City visit, celebrating the school ship years, with cruises and ship visits, September 8 – September 19, 2016.

**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 855-656-7469. Contact for schedule of cruises and 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.

### **ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

<b>SHIP</b>	<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>	<b>VOYAGE</b>	<b>PASSENGER(S)</b>	<b>DATE</b>
MARINA	Papeete, Tahiti	Lima, Peru	Transpacific	Charles & Marjorie Zuckerman	04/16

**PLEASE SEND DETAILS OF YOUR SUMMER VOYAGES TO THE PORTHOLE FOR INCLUSION IN UPCOMING "ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES."**

## SHIP'S LOG – MARCH

March took us once again to far-off and exotic places, this time to some of the more offbeat travels of long-time member and travel writer Ted Scull. Introduced by branch secretary/program chairman Greg Fitzgerald and his "special friend," Ted related how, back in the 1980's and 1990's, faced with a shrinking supply of the liners he so enjoyed as many of them turned to cruising, he adapted by taking ex-liners and various smaller ships to out-of-the-way places.

And so, reverting to that long-ago era, we saw in the ancient form of slides Ted's masterful photos of four of his very interesting travels.

He began with Turkish Maritime Lines' AKDENIZ. (He thought TML had some of the best-looking ships around.) Getting to the AKDENIZ was an excursion in itself, involving ferries and trains, for him and his not-yet-wife, Suellyn. As with all the vessels in this Ted talk, we were regaled with a brief history of the ship and shown views of the vessel interiors, including in this case the bridge and engine room in their entire historic splendor. We also saw slides of some of the travelers (including Ted and Suellyn), and of course the various ports-of-call as they cruised along the Turkish coast. With this trip taking place during an extremely hot summer, there was some commentary about cruising during those non-air conditioned times.

Next we boarded the 1927-vintage DELTA QUEEN in the company of Ted and his brother, for the first of Ted's five cruises to some not-so-exotic ports along the Mississippi, Cumberland and several other rivers. The DELTA QUEEN got its start as a car-carrying night boat on the West Coast before its sale to the Green Line on the Mississippi. And one of the interesting events on board was a mysterious knocking on the windows as Ted passed certain cabins. This was attributed to the spirit of the owner, river pilot Margaret Greene, trying to communicate with him. Apparently she liked him.

Then it was off to Scotland to cruise among the Upper Hebrides on a 49-passenger former car ferry, where the cabins were named after local castles, and the lounge sported a fireplace. Here we saw the passengers playing a game that could have been played on a long-ago liner.

And finally, the most interesting cruise of all was aboard OPRHEUS, chartered by Swan Hellenic, a company which provided "cruises for educated people" who sought more in-depth travel. This ship took Ted and his traveling companion from Thessaloniki, Greece to Aqaba, Jordan by way of Turkey, Syria and Egypt. This being six months after the end of the first Gulf War, one cruise activity was a surprise boarding by the Multi-National Forces, somewhat delaying dinner. Since these Multi-Nationals were Americans, and most of the passengers weren't, Ted felt he was looked upon unkindly for a while. Among the 250 passengers was the just-retired Archbishop of Canterbury and his wife.

In Aleppo, Syria, there was a visit to an ancient hilltop fort, long unused and then put back into service by one of the Assads. A service was held on board on November 11 (Armistice Day to us) as the vessel passed through the Suez Canal. In Great Britain the day is observed as a very serious holiday, Remembrance Day. In Egypt, at the Valley of the Queens, Ted asked the guide if she had been in the area during that first terrorist attack on tourists, and she described how she had been. Ted also told us of his visits to Amman and Petra - to see these pictures in the context of today's news gives them a whole different dimension.

Applause to Ted for one of his best programs, and his great photography.

Marge Dovman

**Editor's note: The review was scheduled to appear in the May edition of the Porthole, and is regrettably being published late.**



The ORPHEUS at Gulluk, Turkey

(Ted Scull)

## SHIP VISITS

It's cruise ship-visiting season at World Ship Society, PONY Branch! On June 11, we boarded Royal Caribbean's 166,000-ton ANTHEM OF THE SEAS in Bayonne, NJ for a tour and luncheon; on June 25, we will visit the CARNIVAL SUNSHINE at her Manhattan pier. Reviews of both events will be published in the summer edition of The Porthole.



ANTHEM OF THE SEAS towers over the Cape Liberty Terminal in Bayonne, NJ

(Bob Allen)

## SHIP NEWS

The largest passenger ship in history made her maiden voyage from Southampton, England – a short cruise to Channel ports – in late May. Royal Caribbean's HARMONY OF THE SEAS, with a gross tonnage of 226,963 and a length overall of 1,188 feet, is a slightly expanded version of RCCL's OASIS Class, introduced in 2009. She has capacity for 6,360 passengers with all berths filled (5,479 double occupancy), and a crew of 2,165 – 8,525 total capacity. Royal Caribbean has contracted to add one more sister ship to the OASIS Class before 2020.



The largest passenger ship ever built, HARMONY OF THE SEAS, arrives in Rotterdam in May, 2016

(Royal Caribbean Cruise Line)

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