

MARCH, 2017 VOLUME XXXIV, # 3

FIRST CLASS CARGO

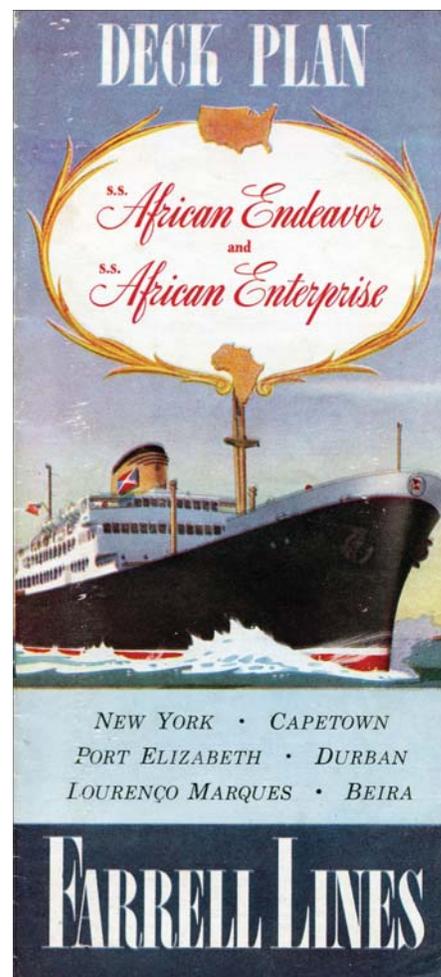
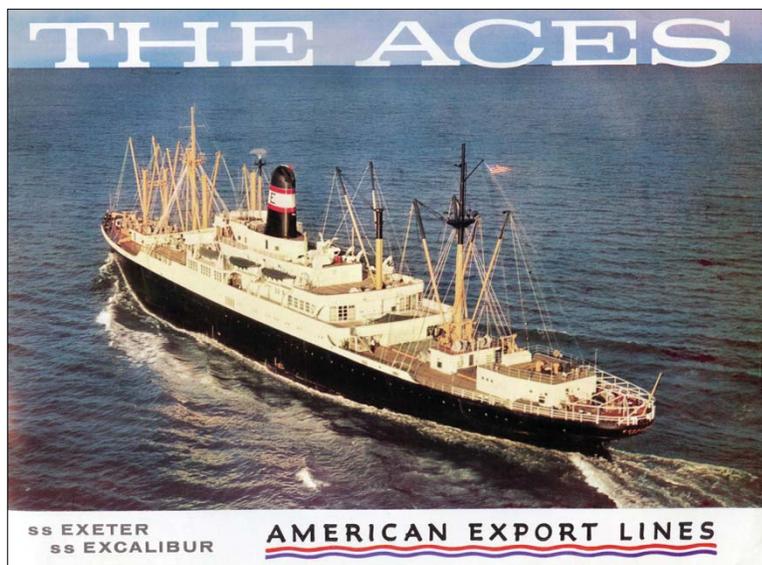
by Bill Miller

Friday, March 31, 2017 – 6:00 PM

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

They were a unique and once very popular type of ship: the passenger-cargo liners. More than 12-berth, passenger-carrying freighters, some of these combo ships, as they were often dubbed, carried as few as 30 passengers; others, as many as 400. They offered comfortable quarters, many amenities, and one-class accommodation; but they still were not classified as actual passenger liners. Belonging to well-known ship owners such as American Export, Blue Funnel, Farrell, Grace, and Zim Lines, their final heyday began just after the Second World War, in the late 1940s, and continued until the 1960s. But in the end, as air travel and containerization took hold, they were no longer practical or profitable.

One of Bill Miller's latest books is *First Class Cargo*, which covers many of these passenger-cargo ships. So climb aboard as we sail to the likes of Marseilles and Melbourne, Hong Kong and Durban. The cargo is loaded and the passengers are aboard!



Combination passenger-cargo liners once connected the entire globe with first class passenger services. Among the best known were those of the American Export Lines, Farrell Lines and Orient Overseas Lines. (Bill Miller Collection)

NEXT EVENTS: Membership meetings: April 28; May 19; June 23. Group cruise on the QUEEN VICTORIA, July 1-7, 2017.

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

E-MAIL: wsspony@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.worldshipny.com

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



SAGA ROSE at Dubrovnik, Croatia, October 26, 2007.

(Bob Allen)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
CELEBRITY SUMMIT	Ft. Lauderdale	Ft. Lauderdale	Caribbean Jazz Cruise	C. Claiborne Ray	01/17
ROTTERDAM	Ft. Lauderdale	Ft. Lauderdale	Southern Caribbean	Matt Jacobs	02/17
ASTORIA	London Tilbury	London Tilbury	Northern Europe	Doug Newman	03/17
ASTORIA	London Tilbury	London Tilbury	Northern Europe	Tom Rinaldi	03/17

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 212-748-8600.

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.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 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 718-390-0040 – **PLEASE NOTE NEW PHONE NUMBER!** Contact for schedule of cruises and other 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.

SHIP'S LOG – FEBRUARY 2017

What could be more appropriate for a February meeting than a program about piloting ships through ice, according to Ted Scull in his introduction of our February speaker, Ben Lyons. So on the evening of a beautiful 70-degree February day, the PONY Branch gathered to hear Ben, our member the ice pilot, describe his career in and attraction to ice.

Continuing his introduction, Ted gave us a rundown on Ben's talks to the branch and his maritime career, including Cunard, culminating in his current position as CEO of EYOS Expeditions, a consultant for expedition cruises.

After a brief computer crisis, solved with a standby supplied by Ben's wife, Ben began with a scene of the LINDBLAD EXPLORER on its side on a bed of the frozen stuff, as an example of what not to do.

With no previous experience with or formal training for ice, Ben was joining the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER for its first rescue (of the above casualty). He was so enchanted by the ice that he turned his professional attention in that direction.

Ice navigation, Ben told us, is mainly a visual skill, and requires knowledge of the different kinds of ice and their characteristics, as well as effects of wind on ice, and the fact that the ice is constantly changing. He showed photos from official websites that provide important navigational information. We heard facts (real ones) about the physical needs of a vessel navigating in ice, such as sponsons to protect the stern, the ship's most vulnerable area when in ice.

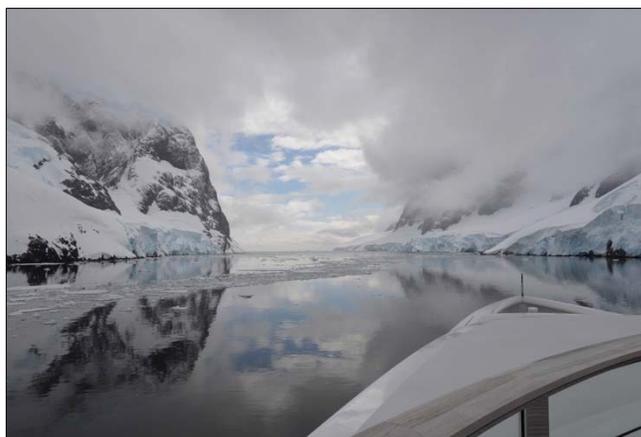
Ben showed what could be done with ice when one is familiar with it. A shot of what looked like a ship with its bow stuck in an iceberg was just illustrating that the ship was using the ice as a dock. We were shown, as an example of fun in the ice, the silhouette of a ship's bow projected against a glacier. Another fun thing is to get really close to an iceberg – safe because in that spot the navigator can see under water.

Ben then turned to his own company, which worked with the floating condominium THE WORLD when it sailed the furthest south of any ship ever. Using one of what he termed "superyachts," he described the means necessary to ensure a safe trip, considering the yacht's capabilities. Ben has recently been an expedition team member of the CRYSTAL SERENITY as it traversed the Northwest Passage, heading east from Alaska, the largest vessel to do so. It was the longest trip the ship had ever made, at the highest per diem rate it had ever charged. He described various aspects of the voyage, from the "great procession" that accompanied the CRYSTAL SERENITY as it started the cruise, to several unscheduled stops, to the reduced amount of ice to be found in the Arctic Ocean, which Ben found "shocking." Advance preparations started several years ago, and included a familiarization cruise on which Ben discussed the upcoming adventure with the officers, and receipt of much useful information from the Canadian Ice Service.

Showing a picture of a lone polar bear on a small piece of ice, Ben closed with further comments about the shrinking ice and its dire results for both wildlife and humans.

We thank Ben for this very interesting, unusual and spellbinding program.

Marge Dovman



Here are two fascinating images of Ben Lyons' remarkable voyages through the world's ice fields.

(Ben Lyons)

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, 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 ambiance, and plush accommodations. (Cunard Line)

SAVE THE DATE!

World Ship PONY has another ship luncheon in the works for Sunday, August 20 on Celebrity Cruises' SUMMIT. We will be visiting this elegant ship, recently refurbished to include the latest features of the SOLSTICE Class, at her Bayonne, NJ terminal; motor coach transportation will be available. Details will follow in a future issue of The Porthole.



CELEBRITY SUMMIT at King's Wharf, Bermuda, May 27, 2011.

(Bob Allen)

SHIP NEWS

FAREWELL, NAL: The sad but perhaps inevitable news has arrived -- the OASIA, ex-VISTAFJORD, CARONIA, SAGA RUBY has been sold for scrap. She was the final vessel built for the Norwegian America Line, and was the last major passenger liner built in the UK. Completed in May 1973 at Swan Hunter Group, Wallsend on the River Tyne, she was an updated version of the 1965-built SAGAFJORD, which was scrapped in 2010. VISTAFJORD had one additional superstructure deck than did her

sister, which accommodated officers and engineering staff; the slightly smaller SAGAFJORD actually had a greater passenger capacity. Otherwise, both vessels had an almost identical general arrangement, except for the placement of the dining room. On VISTAFJORD, it was one deck higher than on the earlier vessel, and was fitted with full height picture windows, a recent trend in cruise ships of the era. This was a sensible arrangement, since VISTAFJORD was built for full-time cruising, while SAGAFJORD had a two-class arrangement, and was used for transatlantic service in her early years.

SAGAFJORD and VISTAFJORD were at the upper end of the luxury market in the 1970's, competing mainly against the Swedish America Line and Royal Viking Line. But SAL was running at a loss and exited the market in 1975, leaving NAL in competition with Royal Viking, who operated a brand new, highly efficient fleet of three identical vessels. In 1979, RVL made an unsuccessful bid to purchase NAL's cruise operations. In 1980 NAL rebranded as Norwegian America Cruises, and renovated the 15-year-old SAGAFJORD. Unfortunately, the finances still didn't make sense – in 1983, NAC agreed to a takeover by the Cunard Line who purchased both ships, as well as the company name, now marketed as Cunard-NAC. Complete renovations of both ships followed. Both gained balcony suites, glass walled discos, and a more traditional Cunard décor, replacing their mid-century Scandinavian interiors. SAGAFJORD also gained windows in her dining room to match those built into VISTAFJORD. Due to their superb reputations and per the purchase agreement, Cunard did not change the names of their newly acquired luxury vessels.

SAGAFJORD enjoyed 13 successful years under the Cunard-NAC banner, but due to engine problems she was sold to Saga Holidays in 1996. VISTAFJORD continued, and had a strong reputation in Northern Europe while she was based in Germany for many years during the summer months. In 1999, Cunard renovated and rebranded the 26-year old VISTAFJORD as CARONIA, reviving the name of their beloved cruise liner of the 1950's and 1960's. However, by the end of the 1990's Cunard had a new corporate parent – the Carnival Corporation, and they had little interest in older tonnage. Carnival supplied financing for the new QUEEN MARY 2 (2004), and CARONIA was sold a few months after the QM2 debut.

To the delight of ship buffs, CARONIA was sold to Saga Holidays, who were enjoying much success with sister SAGAFJORD, now operating as SAGA ROSE. Renamed SAGA RUBY, Saga spared no expense in updating the vessel for her new career catering to the upscale British market. Her maiden voyage for her new owner was in March 2005. The former sisters sailed the world's oceans together for the next five years until the SAGA ROSE was retired, and SAGA RUBY continued four more years until her retirement in 2014 at the age of 41.

SAGA RUBY was sold to Millennium View of Singapore in early 2014 and renamed OASIA. Her new owners planned to convert the vessel into a hotel ship and museum, and dock her permanently in Burma. Unfortunately, the plan collapsed in February 2017, despite reports that \$10 million in renovations had already been completed. OASIA will be towed from her current location in Thailand to scrappers in India. It's an extremely sad end for a superb vessel, the final link to the glorious passenger services of the Norwegian America Line.



SAGA RUBY at Flam, Norway, July 7, 2013

(Bob Allen)

CUTTING EDGE DESIGN: Celebrity Cruises, a “premium” mass-market line owned by Royal Caribbean International since 1998, has been a leader in modern cruise ship design. Their first newly built vessels were the stylish HORIZON (1990) and ZENITH (1992), with their rakish yacht-inspired exteriors by Jon Bannenberg and simple yet slick interiors by John McNeece. The impressive follow-up to these ships was the stunning CENTURY class, which represented a high point of liner design in the 1990s. CENTURY (1995) and sisters GALAXY (1996) and MERCURY (1997) were widely praised for their sophisticated, resort-like interiors by the Los Angeles firm of Birch Coffey, among others; they also featured sleek exterior profiles by Bannenberg. Celebrity’s acquisition by Royal Caribbean resulted in sufficient capital infusion to produce a new series of ships, the MILLENIUM class -- 4 liners introduced in 2000-2002. A natural progression of the CENTURY class, these ships featured a la carte restaurants unique in the cruise industry. Each was decorated with artifacts from and themed to 4 ocean liners of the golden age: OLYMPIC (1911) on the MILLENIUM; UNITED STATES (1952) on the INFINITY; NORMANDIE (1935) on the SUMMIT; and ILE DE FRANCE (1927) on the CONSTELLATION. Unfortunately, these restaurants have all been demolished and replaced with look-alike Italian eateries; artifacts have been relocated to display cases. The next design advance for CELEBRITY was the SOLSTICE class, a series of 5 vessels introduced between 2008 and 2012. These vessels featured light, fresh interior design, incorporating signature venues popular with Celebrity passengers such as Michaels’s Club and the Martini Bar. New public spaces including the deluxe restaurant Blu, the Lawn Club, and the Adam Tihany-designed main restaurant received rave reviews. On the exterior, these ships are somewhat angular and unusual in profile, with two thin stacks placed well aft, only one of which carries the famous Celebrity “X” logo. With the HORIZON and CENTURY class vessels long since retired from the fleet, Celebrity unveiled their next-generation vessels on March 13. The new EDGE class will debut in December 2018, and continues the Celebrity touch for innovation. With design coordination by highly regarded Nate Berkus, these vessels will introduce some remarkable firsts. The design team has completely rethought the cruise ship balcony. On EDGE, cabins with “Infinite Verandahs” will feature a deck-to-deck wall of glass; the top half will lower electronically to create a glass railing, opening the entire room to sea breezes. There will be a pair of folding glass doors positioned where a regular balcony would start; when closed, the traditional indoor/outdoor arrangement is achieved. Since the entire stateroom up to the glass exterior bulkhead will be air-conditioned, effective usable space will be increased by approximately 23%. The resort (pool) deck will be asymmetrical, with terraced deck chair areas overlooking the ocean on the port side, and a bi-level jogging track connecting the two decks above. On the starboard side are a series of spacious cabanas, and a huge cantilevered bar set on tracks, literally beyond the edge of the ship. Dubbed the “Magic Carpet,” this deck extension will be like an exterior aircraft elevator on a carrier, capable of being raised or lowered; it will change functions depending on its position. At the uppermost level, it will be an exclusive, 90-seat outdoor restaurant at the top of the ship; at the next lowest level, the aforementioned pool bar; outdoor seating for a seafood restaurant at the public room level; and finally, a huge, comfortable tender landing (with adjacent interior lounge/waiting area) at water level. Rather odd-looking and painted bright orange in contrast with the ship’s deep blue hull, one wonders if we will see more EDGE renderings (and later photos) from the side with or without the cantilevered deck. The traditional Celebrity funnel marking is absent, but the funnel’s forward profile is of the famous “X” shape. Other innovations are yet to be announced; following industry trends, there will be an exclusive Suite Class with a private pool deck and dining room.



The innovative 117,000-ton CELEBRITY EDGE, due to enter service in December 2018.

(Celebrity Cruises)

CUTTING EDGE DESIGN TOO: Also long associated with design innovation, Norwegian Cruise Line has revealed early renderings of the LEONARDO class, their newest. The new vessels, the first of which will be introduced in 2020, are clearly influenced by the bold MSC SEASIDE class, due at the end of 2017. The design concept is basically a hull-platform with a narrowed hotel tower above, maximizing outdoor deck and public spaces near the ocean. The reverse cant of the bow and unusual hull profile are said to improve performance and efficiency. NCL has revealed little about the ships, as they are still building expanded BREAKAWAY class liners for the US and Chinese markets. Four to six 140,000-ton, 3,300-passenger vessels are planned for the class.



NCL's LEONARDO class will share features with MSC SEASIDE; both are being built at Italy's Fincantieri Yard.

(NCL)

LONG LIVE THE QUEEN?: Disturbing news has emerged regarding the condition of the QUEEN MARY, this year celebrating the 50th anniversary of her arrival as a floating hotel and tourist attraction in Long Beach, CA. The 81,237-ton, former Blue Ribband holder and transportation legend has been floating in a contained lagoon since 1971. Severely deferred maintenance over the decades, and a poorly executed conversion completed almost a half century ago are two major factors in the ship's continuing demise, according to a 396-page engineering survey. Most serious is corrosion throughout the vessel, largely related to the continuously leaking sewage system, as well as significant corrosion to the steel hull in the area of the engine room. Fire code violations, including a non-functional sprinkler system, number nearly 1,000. Bilge pumps, essential in her seagoing days, are also non-functioning, and watertight doors that could mitigate flooding have been removed. The QUEEN's owner, the City of Long Beach, is about halfway through correcting the fire code violations, using a \$23 million fund approved in November 2016. But the most recent estimate for complete repairs range from \$235 to \$289 million, and 75% of those are deemed critical. The ship's new lessee, Urban Commons, is in the process of creating a development plan for the area adjacent to the QUEEN MARY, which could generate revenue for the urgent repairs. The Scottish government, fiercely proud of the QUEEN MARY -- their design and engineering achievement from the 1930's -- has called for international donations to save the 81-year-old ship. In the meantime, large areas of the ship are closed due to their deteriorated condition, and saving her for future generations to enjoy has become a race against time.



Couples dance the evening away in the restored Verandah Grill, during Art Deco Weekend on the QUEEN MARY in 2011. Without an infrastructure investment of almost \$300 million, the QUEEN MARY's future is questionable. (Bob Allen)