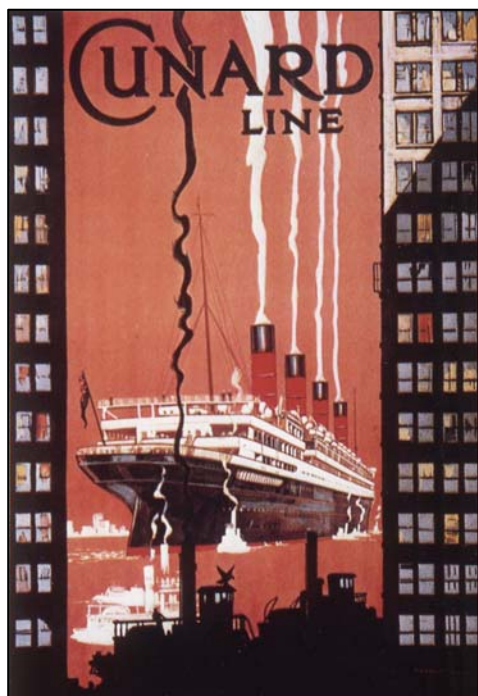


Friday, May 30, 2014 - 6:00 PM  
Community Church Assembly Room, 40 East 35th Street, Manhattan

**We Want You As A Passenger!**  
**Steamship Lines Promote Their Ships and Services**  
by Ted Scull



Three great ocean liner advertisements: AQUITANIA poster by Kenneth Shoesmith (1925); PARIS deck plan cover (c.1930); P&O Lines poster (1958) (Ted Scull)

From the earliest days of ocean travel, steamship lines used all manner of promotions to fill their ships. In this PowerPoint talk, Ted will look back at some of the ways they were able to catch our eye, using posters, paintings, print ads, illustrated brochures often with detailed deck plans, post cards and ship models. Some were created by the best artists and graphic designers of the day, while others were done in house to minimize expenses.

Outstanding posters and paintings represented popular styles of the period, while some depictions packed a lot of information above and below the images such as where the ships sailed, tonnage figures to impress and booking office addresses.

Ted Scull has collected posters for the last 40 years and nearly a score grace the walls of his apartment that he shares with his understanding wife Suelyn. Ship models are also on display in the living room and foyers, and many hundreds of brochures and post cards are either readily accessible or very hard to get at.

Drawing on his personal collection gathered over the years, Ted will give us a fond look at the promotions from the truly noteworthy to the mundane, at least in the eye of the speaker. Others may disagree with his evaluations.

Besides covering the well-known transatlantic steamship lines, the images will also include the Grace Line, Moore-McCormack, Orient Line, P&O, British India, Union-Castle, Messageries Maritimes and others.

**NEXT EVENT:** Membership meeting on Friday, June 27 – program TBA

**ADDRESS:** PO Box 384, New York, NY 101085-0384

**E-MAIL:** [wsspony@gmail.com](mailto:wsspony@gmail.com)

**WEBSITE:** [www.worldshipny.com](http://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](mailto:oceanvoyag@aol.com) or via the PONY mailing address.



## MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Celebrity Cruises' INFINITY arriving on her first call to New York, May 2, 2014

(Rob O'Brien)

### **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 917-492-3379.

**4MYSTIC 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). The next meetings are on May 14 and September 10, 2014.

**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 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.liberty-ship.com](http://www.liberty-ship.com) or 410-558-0164

**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<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> Street.

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

**INDEPENDENCE SEAPORT MUSEUM**, [www.phillyseaport.org](http://www.phillyseaport.org) or 215-413-8655. "ss UNITED STATES: Charting a course for America's Flagship", March 7 – September 14, 2014

## THE PROPELLER CLUB OF NEW YORK ANNOUNCES SPRING EVENTS

Join the Propeller Club's two spring events - May 28, cruise from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM on the HORNBLOWER SERENITY from Pier 15; June 12, visit the working tug ERIC THORNTON, 5PM to 7PM, Pier 40. For pricing and additional information, contact the club at [www.propellerclubnyny.org](http://www.propellerclubnyny.org)

## THE NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM OFFERS BOAT TOURS

Join one (or all) of four cruises with the National Lighthouse Museum this summer - Sunday June 15, The National Lighthouse Museum Grand Tour; Saturday July 19, Circumnavigation of Staten Island; Sunday, August 10, Lighthouse Weekend Grand Tour; Sunday, September 7, East River and Long Island Sound. All cruises depart at 11:00 AM from the New York Waterway Terminal at Pier 11, East River, and last for three hours. Tickets are \$60, but are discounted to \$150 for three cruises. For additional information, contact the museum at [www.lighthousemuseum.org](http://www.lighthousemuseum.org) or 855-656-7469, PO Box 10296, Staten Island, NY 10301.

## ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

<b>SHIP</b>	<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>	<b>VOYAGE</b>	<b>PASSENGER(S)</b>	<b>DATE</b>
AZAMARA QUEST	Miami	Nice	Transatlantic	Karl and Laurel Zimmermann	03/14

## SHIP'S LOG

We were happy to play host at our April meeting to the personable and vivacious Valarie D'Elia, the well-known TV travel reporter who is also an enthusiastic cruiser, world traveler and collector of memorabilia, both maritime and family. Ted Scull's introduction outlined her biography and career.

Saying she was honored to be with us and noting the amount of maritime knowledge in the room, Valarie started her PowerPoint presentation at the beginning as she knew it with a picture of her ancestral Italian village, Castelfranco, from whence her great-grandfather emigrated, in steerage, eventually settling in Bridgeport. We saw photos of much family memorabilia detailing the family's history – her great grandfather's setting up a wine and grocery store selling Italian imports; his travel back and forth, in steerage, bringing back his supplies, family members, and other immigrants. His establishing a travel agency in 1902 was the official beginning of the family's travel interests. Valarie's grandfather took over the business after his father's death. By the next generation, it was her father running the agency, sharing the office with her uncle, who had a real estate and insurance business.

Valarie's travels began at age three and a half, when she flew (!) to Puerto Rico with her family. But her first cruise, to Bermuda on the NIEUW AMSTERDAM, came the following year, with the family enjoying the travel agent's rate – certainly an improvement over steerage. Her collection of memorabilia and photos from this and subsequent cruises evoked the sailings of the 1960's and 1970's. Particularly exciting was the invitation to the reception for the arrival of the QE2, where the guest list included some Rockefellers and a Romanoff prince.

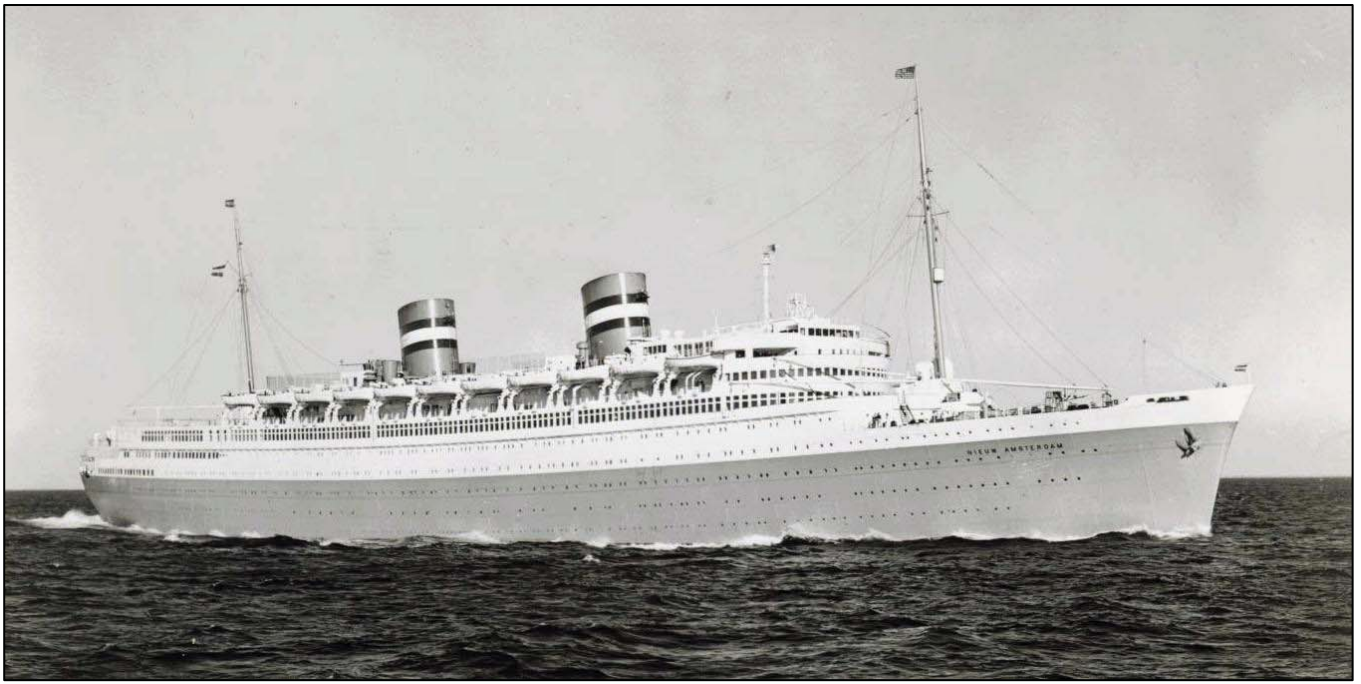
By the late 1970's the travel agency, seeing which way the travel winds were blowing, had branched out into cruises and resorts, and had added three branches. Valarie's father, looking forward to retirement, offered her the agency, but she wanted to go to college, which she did at the University of Miami and to graduate school at Columbia, and became a journalist. And what would be the perfect job but combining journalism and travel! Then Valarie took us through her career – among other gigs the Travel Channel, WOR Travel, and 17 years so far at New York 1, where she does her own production, photography, hosting and editing. She has covered sailings and christenings, admitting that she gets more excited about the christening of a ship than of a baby. She has reported from aboard ship on such events as the joint sailing of QE2 and QM2, and the TITANIC memorial cruise of the AZAMARA JOURNEY. We saw video clips of other news she has reported on, like the COSTA CONCORDIA disaster and the effect of Hurricane Sandy on the cruises of the NORWEGIAN GEM and the CARIBBEAN PRINCESS. And there were clips of interviews with some well-known people – Brad Hatry, Bill Miller and Ted Scull.

More personally, Valarie likes small-ship cruising, and on one such voyage she visited her 100<sup>th</sup> country, Montenegro.

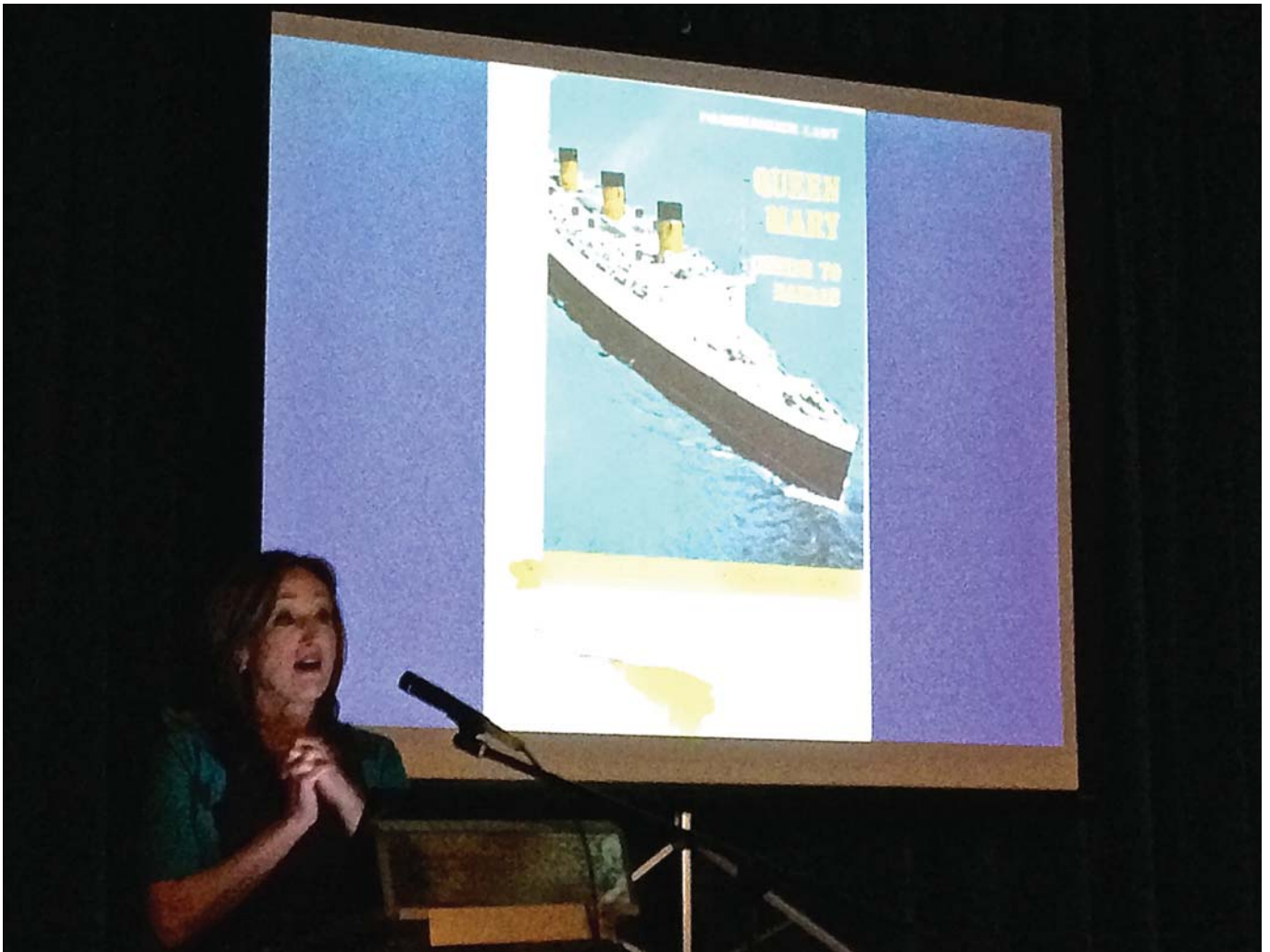
She ended her talk with thanks to her parents, and also thanked Branch Secretary Greg Fitzgerald for his electronic aid.

We followed this, one of our most interesting programs, with some Italian-style snacks, provided by Carol Miles and Mario di Stefano. Molti grazie a tutti!

Marge Dovman



Valarie D'Elia's first cruise, from New York to Bermuda in 1964, was on the glorious NIEUW AMSTERDAM of 1938. (Holland America Line / Bob Allen collection)



Our April guest speaker, New York 1's travel correspondent Valarie D'Elia, describing her 1965 cruise on the QUEEN MARY at the PONY WSS membership meeting on April 25. (Bob Allen)

# Save SS United States, “America’s Flagship”

By Basil Karatzas

She was built as an unsinkable ship, a claim allegedly attributed to Bruce Ismay, the managing partner of the White Star Line, the direct shipowning company of the famous *RMS Titanic*. The year was 1912, and liner companies were in fierce competition with each other for the Transatlantic passenger trade. Fate would not be kind to Ismay and *RMS Titanic* as both soon floundered spectacularly, both literally and metaphorically.

Four decades later, a longer, beamier, stronger, more powerful passenger vessel would be built in the US at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company in Virginia for the same trade. Like *RMS Titanic*, her maiden voyage made great news as well at the time as she crossed eastbound the Atlantic Ocean in record time of about three days and eleven hours. Soon thereafter, she pulverized the record for the more challenging westbound leg of the Transatlantic trip with a record of about three days and twelve hours. She earned the Blue Riband, the trophy for the fastest average cruising speed on both directions of the round Transatlantic voyage, a record that she still holds today, six decades later. Now, an arthritic, gracious, old lady past her prime and with the memory token of the trophy misplaced somewhere in the attic that today’s grandchildren of history would barely care getting bothered about. The name of the distinguished old lady is *SS United States* and her figurative attic is Pier 82 on the Delaware River in Philadelphia.

Her speed may have placed her name on the record books, but she has been a remarkable ship in more ways than one. With 990 ft length overall, she was 110 ft longer than *RMS Titanic* and well within comparison to the 1,000-ft length commanded by today’s supertankers and monster containerships. Despite her length, her beam was kept narrow at 101 ft so that she could pass gracefully through the Panama Canal if her voyage called for it. Her steam turbines were capable of producing 248,000 shaft horsepower (SHP) – more than twice the power of today’s either typical supertanker or a two-engined Boeing 777 airplane. She brought the Blue Riband to American shores from *Queen Mary* by sailing as fast as almost 36 knots (approximately 41 mph), which is believed to be even today the fastest crossing of the Atlantic Ocean in both directions by a standard mono-hull, merchant vessel. Last decade, when the world economies were growing robustly and just in time inventory was in vogue, containerships – the fastest commercial vessels these days – were crossing the oceans at twenty-four knots maximum speed, while in today’s anemic economic environment and high bunkering fuel cost, the fastest containerships typically slow steam at sixteen knots. Cruiseships are capable of achieving close to thirty knots, but usually barely sail above twenty knots in order to economize on fuel expense. Being built after *RMS Titanic*’s tragedy, the International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) in 1914, and after her sistership *SS Olympic*, *SS United States* was an embodiment to prevention and safety in the event of unforeseen events.

The vessel was launched in 1952 at a contract price of \$78 million, or approximately \$690 million in today’s purchasing power. With 4,060 berths, her contract price was 50% more expensive than today’s cruiseships (though she was a different, now extinct ‘asset class’, an ‘ocean liner’); efficiencies in shipbuilding can attribute to savings, but *SS United States* was distinctly a luxury vessel with half of her passengers traveling in first class (versus one-third of *RMS Titanic*) and she had one crew member for every two passengers (versus one crew member for every three passengers on *RMS Titanic*.) The high cost of the vessel was also partially attributed to increased specifications for military use, as less than a decade after World War II and with Cold War just settling in when she was built, the US government wanted access to passenger vessels in order to move rapidly military troops worldwide in case of military action. Although the vessel could accommodate up to three thousand passengers on a commercial voyage, five times as many (15,000) soldiers would be transported on one of the vessel’s military trips. As such, the vessel’s hull was built with re-enforced steel in order to sustain hostile fire and she was heavily compartmentalized with water-tight doors and bulkheads in order to prevent heavy flooding. For the right of having access to the vessel in time of emergency, the US Navy paid \$50 million of the contract price, while \$28 million was paid by her official shipowner and manager, the now defunct United States Lines (signage of the company can be seen today along the Chelsea Piers on the Hudson River in Manhattan.)

There were twenty-two decks and plentiful luxurious common areas for the enjoyment of her privileged passengers, amenities such as indoor and outdoor promenades and sundecks, huge library with high ceilings and large, sunny windows in the front of the ship, ball room and dance floor with a dome structure, theater stage, tennis court, an elevator to the the master staircase, a luxurious bar opening to the sun deck in the rear of the vessel, a swimming pool complete with sand around it for the passenger’s enjoyment. All such luxury had to be dispensed without the presence of wood onboard the vessel in order to avoid fires; extensive use of aluminum substituted for wood, and Steinway himself had to demonstrate that the specially made piano for the ship was fire proof indeed and could actually cannot be set on fire (the piano and the butcher’s block were the only two wooden pieces ever allowed onboard.)

Two 65-ft tall, brilliantly red-painted funnels with small wings and gently leaning backwards, with a white stripe on top in parallel to a white stripe along the upper end of a black-painted hull, and almost a vertically raked bow and

round 'spoon shaped' stern typical for ocean liners of that age, *SS United States* was cutting a graceful figure over the water and on the horizon and her New York City port calls have been immortalized on numerous post cards. Even today, the faded red color of the two funnels is an eye-catcher when one is crossing the bridge approaching Philadelphia and from afar from the Seaport up the Delaware River; almost like two faint, red candle-flames over the horizon, two candle flames of the memory and glory, a prayer that the wind of modern times will not peel off the colorful existence altogether.

In her 800 Transatlantic crossings over her seventeen year career ending in 1969 (about one crossing per week), notable politicians and celebrities enjoyed unparalleled luxury in her fast and graceful sliding over the ocean; Marlon Brando, Coco Chanel, Sean Connery, Gary Cooper, Walter Cronkite, Salvador Dali, Walt Disney, Duke Ellington, Judy Garland, Cary Grant, Charlton Heston, Bob Hope, Marilyn Monroe, Prince Rainier and Grace Kelly, Elizabeth Taylor, John Wayne, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor are known to travelled with her. Four U.S. presidents sailed aboard *SS United States* overtime, Harry

Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy and Bill Clinton, the last as fresh graduate from Georgetown was on his way to study at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar in 1968, one year before the retirement of the vessel.

Ever since her retirement from active duty in 1969, the ship has been having a tumultuous life seeking a purpose and a permanent home; she has changed ownership several times since then, with buyers hoping to find commercial uses for her. She was designed as a passenger liner vessel to travel fast and her conversion to a cruiseship or theme vessel or a floating hotel is not absolutely ideal, as she's too narrow by her beam and her fuel consumption (replacing diesel powered steam turbines) will be high. She has been gutted internally and most of the asbestos has been removed, so she's ready for her next development stage. There have been proposals for her to be developed as a museum or theme vessel and get relocated to major metropolitan areas, possibly New York, perhaps along the historic aircraft carrier *Intrepid* or find a place with Vision 2020: New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan.

At present, the vessel is owned and controlled by the SS United States Conservancy (<http://www.ssusc.org/>), an non-for-profit organization, under the leadership of Susan L. Gibbs, the granddaughter of ingenious William Francis Gibbs, the naval architect and marine engineer who designed *SS United States* (and also notably the vessels that would be known as 'Liberty Ships' during WWII.) Through sizeable donations and ongoing fund raising efforts, the Conservancy has kept a close watch over the vessel and her constant need for upkeep and continuous cleaning efforts. However, a couple of recent proposals for the ship's development have fallen apart, and the running costs of keeping the vessel at her present location is more than \$60,000 per month.

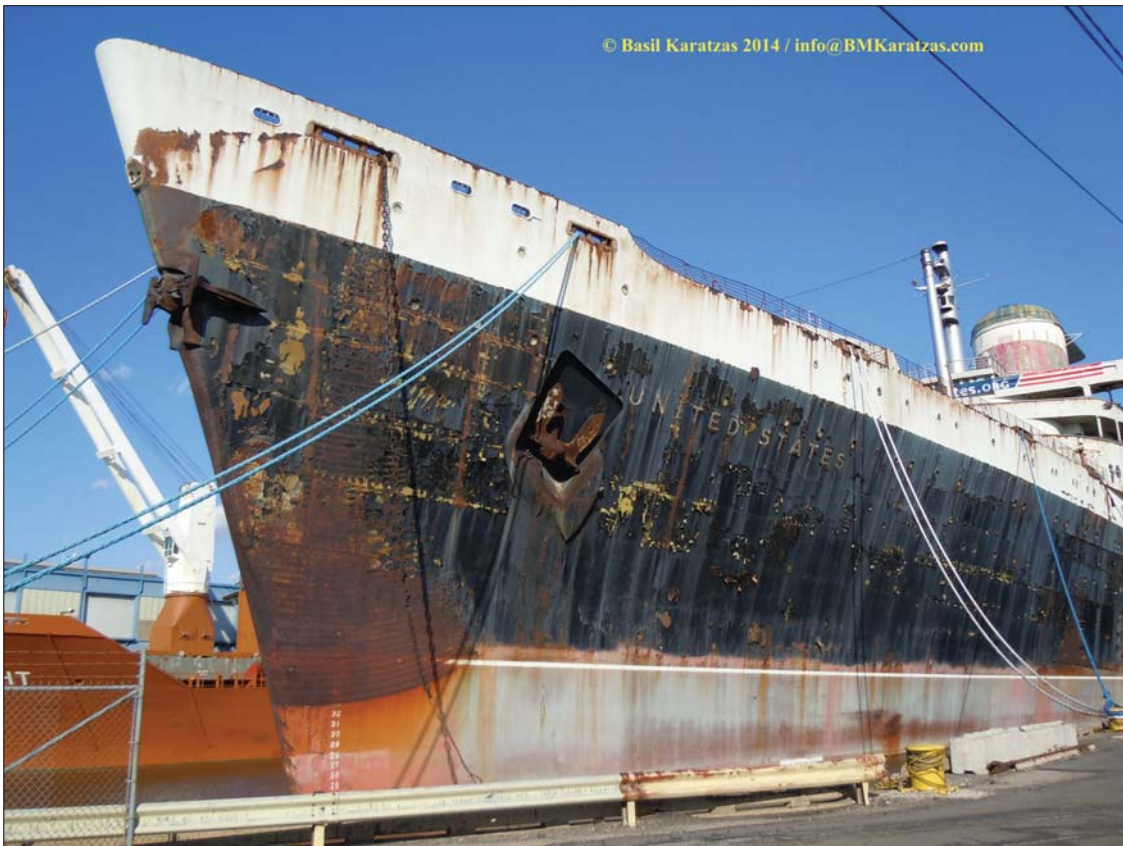
We have had the distinct honor to be invited recently by the SS United States Conservancy to board and tour the vessel, to be allowed to get a glimpse through history's spider-webbed, broken glass of a porthole into another age and way of life. It was a breezy, sunny day in March after a long winter in Philadelphia and the Northeast; just to envision for a few hours the luxury ship built with military grade steel and aluminum superstructure careening effortlessly fast over the ocean, with Marilyn Monroe lingering on a chaise lounge chair on one of the sundecks portside and Salvador Dali pondering on surrealism by his cabin starboard, John Kennedy leaning over a book in the library while there was a stage performance in the theater abaft, it was indeed a unique invitation to have a front row viewing to a maritime and historical miracle, a project of supreme American engineering and soaring ambition, to a ship that links us to the roots of American maritime tradition which regrettably seems to slip further away from us by the day. While 'unsinkable' *RMS Titanic* got crushed by fate soon in her maiden voyage, *SS United States*, more than sixty years after she was launched from a navy shipyard, still stands tall, a testament to her shipbuilder's ambition for building a ship that 'you cannot catch her, you cannot set her on fire and you cannot sink her'.

'America's Flagship' has done her duty to her country and to her owners and her passengers, glamorous or not; she has served history well. We owe it to her to keep her afloat in glamor and perseverance, to get involved, to volunteer or donate for her maintenance until the right development is found for her. One can find more about the vessel and the Conservancy at <http://www.ssusc.org/> and donations are strongly encouraged at <http://www.ssusc.org/give-and-join/donate/> or at <https://www.savetheunitedstates.org/>

The pictures taken during the recent visit are a testament to her magnificent structure and an invitation and challenge to see the ship restored to her past glory; we owe it to her!

[Additional pictures, including many historical pictures collected from the internet, can be found on the Pinterest page of Karatzas Marine Advisors, board for SS United States!](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Basil M. Karatzas, CEO of Karatzas Marine Advisors & Co., recently contacted PONY WSS to inform us of his great interest in preserving the ss UNITED STATES. He has graciously authorized The Porthole to repost the above blog and the photos taken on his March, 2014 visit to the derelict superliner. His Pinterest page on the UNITED STATES has many other superb photos of that visit, and recounts the ship's fascinating history.



Remarkable photos from Basil Karatzas' recent visit to the ss UNITED STATES in Philadelphia include these of her imposing bow and still-majestic red, white and blue funnels. (Basil M. Karatzas)

## SHIP NEWS

**AIDA AFLOAT:** AIDA Cruises' AIDAPRIMA was launched at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Shipyard in Nagasaki, Japan on May 3. The 124,000-ton vessel represents a new platform for the German-market line, and has aroused considerable interest with her knife-edge straight stem and vast glass-enclosed deck spaces. The prototype vessel contains new technology, such as "air lubrication," allowing the ship to move through the water on a cushion of bubbles, designed to reduce drag and fuel consumption. Interiors will be themed to the four elements of earth, air, water and fire, and will include a wide variety of public spaces. Her first year of operation will be northern European cruises from a homeport of Hamburg, Germany. Delivery of the new ship has been delayed to October 1, 2015, when she will commence her maiden voyage from Yokohama to Hamburg.



Shipyard workers at MHI Nagasaki pose before hull number 2300. (left) AIDAPRIMA afloat for the first time on May 3. (right) (Aida Cruises / MHI Nagasaki)

**BREAKAWAY TROUBLES:** Norwegian Cruise Lines' NORWEGIAN BREAKAWAY suffered an embarrassing delay in the full glare of the New York media, just off her Manhattan dock on May 4. Although first reported as an unidentified engine problem, later clarification from NCL blamed strong tides for the delay. In addition, NCL indicated that "maintenance issues" with the ship's Azipod propulsion system were observed, requiring to the captain to be "very cautious" while docking, which was assisted by tugs. NORWEGIAN BREAKAWAY finally docked at 10:00 AM, three hours late, and departed on her next Bermuda cruise at 6:00 PM. An on board celebration of the ship's first anniversary was cancelled due to the delay.

**BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR QM2:** Cunard's flagship QUEEN MARY 2 celebrated her 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a gala event in her homeport of Southampton, England. In a rare gathering, QM2 and her fleet mates QUEEN VICTORIA and QUEEN ELIZABETH arrived in the dawn hours of May 9. Festivities included a luncheon on QM2 with His Royal Highness. The Duke of Edinburgh, followed by a spectacular fireworks sendoff for the three liners, with QUEEN MARY 2 leading the way down Southampton Water.

**QUANTUM LEAPS TO CHINA:** Although originally announced as a New York based ship, Royal Caribbean's new QUANTUM OF THE SEAS will spend only one season cruising from her Bayonne, NJ terminal. In a surprise move, RCCL is moving the ship to China, where revenue for the company is rapidly increasing. Currently, they operate VOYAGER-class vessels from Tianjin/Beijing and Shanghai, where QUANTUM will be based.



QUANTUM OF THE SEAS will debut in Bayonne in November 2014. (left) The "North Star" viewing capsule will be a unique seagoing attraction. (right) (RCCL)

### SHIP OF THE MONTH

Ship of the Month will return in the June issue of the Porthole.

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