

# THE PORTHOLE



SUMMER, 2010

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Norwegian Cruise Lines' **NORWEGIAN EPIC** in New York on her christening day, July 2, 2010.

(photo by Bob Allen)

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NEXT MEETINGS:

Friday, Sept. 24; Friday, Oct. 29; Friday, Nov. 19

Wednesday, Dec. 15 - Holiday Party and John-Maxtone-Graham lecture on **FRANCE / NORWAY**

WEB SITE:

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

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## SHIP'S LOG

April brought us a meeting devoted to that old favorite, the ROTTERDAM (V), and Chairman Carol Miles introduced our speakers, our own old favorites Ted Scull and Tony Cooke.

First came Ted, with his own ROTTERDAM experiences. Ted worked for Holland America from 1964 to 1966, but had no opportunity to board the ROTTERDAM until after that. Ted's pictures took us along on that trans-Atlantic crossing as well as some later trips including the ship's last westbound voyage, in April 1997, which featured a ferocious and memorable storm.

Tony began his portion of the program, entitled "ROTTERDAM Preserved," with thanks - to Ted for the idea for the show, to one Willem van der Leek for much information, and to British World Ship member Bill Mayes for "the good photos," Tony considering his "less good." The distinction was left to the eye of the beholder.

The impetus was a weekend aboard of a group from the Ocean Liner Club of London, the ship now being preserved in her namesake city as a hotel and entertainment center. Tony and his companions found the visit somewhat disappointing, although he emphasized several times what a wonderful vessel the ROTTERDAM is and wished her preservers well for all their efforts.

First came a brief history of the factors surrounding the ROTTERDAM's construction, among them the changed postwar social order leading to much reduced demand for first class, and changing ideas in ship construction, such as the newfangled positioning of engines and funnels aft.

The main thrust of Tony's talk was the ROTTERDAM's preservation. On the 1996 announcement of her removal from service due to the expense of running her steam turbines and bringing her up to the new SOLAS standards, ROTTERDAM enthusiasts immediately suggested the ship's preservation in Rotterdam, under the city's control. This didn't float, and the following year the ship was sold to Premier, which spent the money to meet those SOLAS standards. When Premier foundered, the ship's fans, and her builders, persuaded the city to help buy the ship. The vessel is now owned by a semi-public entity concerned with low-cost housing and must sell it by this year. After work was done on the ship in various locations, raising the cost, she was opened in her current status in February.

And here commenced the onboard experiences of Tony and his group. They found the ship run by three different organizations: One runs conferences aboard and has most of the best rooms; enthu-

siasts run a museum. Many rooms were not available to the public, and the available food was inferior. The bridge, which took more than one try to get onto, still had much of the original machinery. We were treated to a photographic tour of the various rooms before and after, depending on the ability of the photographers to get into them.

This was Tony's first acquaintance with the ROTTERDAM, and he was pleased to find her an example of a genuine 50's vessel with much original onboard. He found his cabin very comfortable and reasonably priced, lacking many original furnishings but containing period artifacts.

Ending with some shots of the ROTTERDAM's shapely lines, Tony once again wished the preservers well and hoped they would get their act together.

For this very welcome and much anticipated presentation, Tony was presented with a copy of "Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller."

Following Tony, Membership Secretary Tom Rinaldi, who is writing his master's thesis on ship preservation, introduced Sue Caccavale of the S.S. UNITED STATES Conservancy, whose mother designed that ship's propeller. She spoke encouragingly of the organization's progress, which we could keep track of at [ssunitedstatesconservanc.org](http://ssunitedstatesconservanc.org) The DVD "SS UNITED STATES: Lady in Waiting" was won by Bob Allen for knowing, without an instant's thought, the ship's launching date.

Marge Dowman

## **SHIP'S LOG**, continued

On June 24<sup>th</sup> we were treated to a “history” of mechanical propulsion on the Atlantic, through the good offices of Paul Immerman and Ellen Meshnick. Festivities started (after a period of “readjustment”) with the BRITANNIA (1840) and other paddle-driven “sail-steamers” such as the GREAT BRITAIN, and the (not too) GREAT EASTERN (the QUEEN MARY of the 1860s). There were fascinating views (both exterior and interior) of these 19<sup>th</sup> century wonders. Interspersed were views of the new (1995) ORIANA, mainly passing through the Suez Canal. This was sort of “now” (cruising) and “then” (point-to-point voyages). Scenes of the construction of the TITANIC (what else?) and other “fin-de-siècle” vessels were fascinating. All this and no air conditioning!

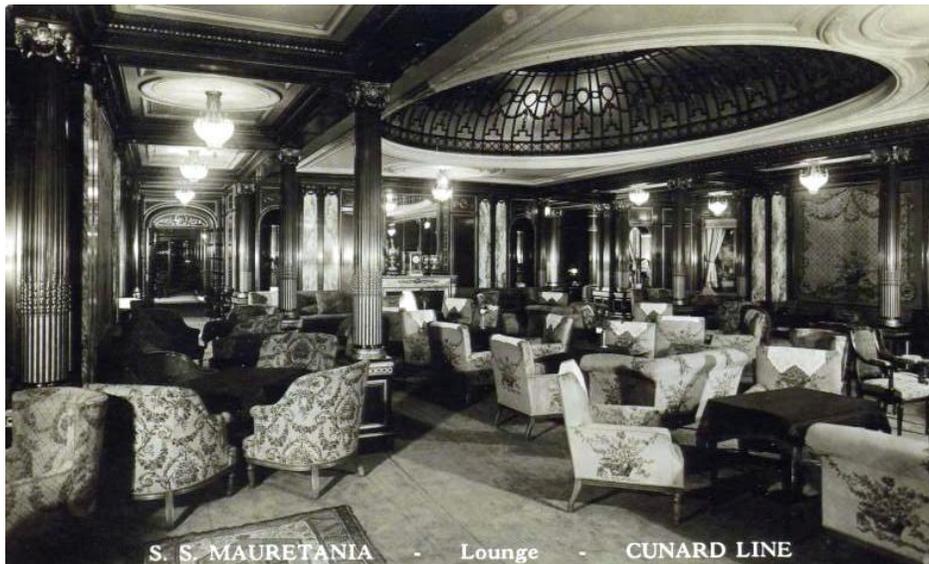
Apropos of TITANIC, the film showed two young men discussing a trans-Atlantic voyage – what ship were they discussing? The film also paid its respects to the Kaiser and his desire to make Germany supreme on the Atlantic. After treating us to MAURETANIA and LUSITANIA (1907), the film discussed IMPERATOR, VATERLAND and BISMARCK (1913-1914). We “oohed” and “ahhed” over the décor of the above. (Still no air conditioning!)

There were some “guest stars” on the programs; to wit, Frank Braynard, Bill Miller, John Maxtone-Graham, Arnold Kludas and others. Also, the show began with REX and NORMANDIE – thank God for small favors! Of course, we saw a couple of mistakes, such as QUEEN MARY masquerading as TITANIC. (God forbid!)

All in all, it was a fine program, beautifully presented. Even with the errors (explained by Paul Immerman), the film was entirely informative. Of course, ORIANA (1995) looked like she was fog-bound, but that can be forgiven.

Thank you, Paul and Ellen, for a nice evening.

Richard K. Morse



A lavish First Class interior of Cunard Line's 1907-built MAURETANIA. (Bob Allen collection)

## **POSTED ON BOARD**

To the Editor:

A solemn occasion was had on June 12, 2010 as 50 or so people gathered to pay homage to the over 1,000 people who died on the GENERAL SLOCUM. The 106<sup>th</sup> anniversary (with thanks to Dan Austin Sr. and Jr.) kicked off with prayers, bell ringers and speeches. Our safety in and around New York Harbor is due to the human sacrifices paid on June 15, 1904. Lest we forget!!

Martin Pietrusiewicz  
63-17 60<sup>th</sup> Place  
Ridgewood, NY 11385

Dear World Ship Society:

A great evening was had by all when Bill Miller gave a superb talk on the s.s. NORMANDIE on May 20. A group of about 30 people traveled back in time to the 1930's with the superb collection of Mario Pulice. Even though we were in a 17<sup>th</sup> Century building, the superb sets brought us back to the main dining room, Café Grill and the suite of this superb collection. The highlighted items included a piano once played by Marlene Dietrich, an etched glass panel from the perfume shop, and the NORMANDIE medallion given to passengers on the Maiden Voyage in 1935.

Bill Miller's expertise and anecdotes brought to life a ship that met her doom in 1942. As Bill Miller said, "Let's remember her short, great life and forget her tragic demise."

Three blasts on the ship's horn for Bill Miller.

Martin Pietrusiewicz  
63-17 60<sup>th</sup> Place  
Ridgewood, NY 11385

### **WELCOME ABOARD**

A warm welcome to Christine & Joseph Tessitore. Welcome aboard again to rejoining Richard ZainEldeen.

### **ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

Margaret Webster enjoyed a round trip from New York to Belgium, the Netherlands and France on the QUEEN MARY 2.

### **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

We know that many of you have great stories about your cruises, maritime interests, collections and other topics of interest to WSS PONY members. To contribute to the Porthole, just contact Marge Dovman at a meeting or via the P.O. Box.

### **HAVE YOU BEEN CRUISING?**

Let us know where in the world you've been cruising this summer, and on what ship(s), so that we can post your travels in the September issue of the Porthole.

### **SHIP NEWS**

- Norwegian Cruise Lines' NORWEGIAN EPIC arrived in New York on her maiden voyage on July 1. The 153,000-ton, 4,100-passenger vessel is the largest passenger liner that has ever called in New York. She was christened on July 2 by country and Broadway star Reba McEntire, and was the floating venue for a 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration featuring Justin Bieber. Despite strong criticism for her box-like exterior profile, she has earned some enthusiastic reviews for exciting on board interior design and innovative features such as an ice bar and cabins and a lounge dedicated to single voyagers. She entered regular Caribbean cruise service from Miami later in July.
- On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the SS United States Conservancy announced that they had received a 5.8 million dollar donation from Philadelphia philanthropist H.F. (Gerry) Lenfest, which will be used to purchase the 58-year-old UNITED STATES from her current owners, Norwegian Cruise Line / Genting Hong Kong. The agreement will also allow the funds to be used to maintain the vessel for 20 months while plans are developed for her future role and eventual rebuilding. On Saturday July 24, the Conservancy hosted a cruise in New York Harbor on the vintage tugboat EDITH THORNTON which visited potential sites for permanently berthing the UNITED STATES in New York.



The UNITED STATES as she appears today, berthed in the Delaware River in Philadelphia, PA.



A postcard from the early 1950's with a painting of the UNITED STATES by marine artist WJ Aylward.



A 1960's postcard of the UNITED STATES sailing past lower Manhattan, when she was holder of the Blue Riband and pride of the American Merchant Marine. (all images on this page from the Bob Allen collection)

- July 4<sup>th</sup> saw the christening of a ship with a great historical name: NIEUW AMSTERDAM. At a ceremony in Venice, Princess Maxima of the Netherlands christened the 86,273-ton vessel, the fourth to bear the name. Predecessors were the 17,149-ton single-funnel NIEUW AMSTERDAM of 1906, the 36,287-ton Art Deco masterpiece of 1938 and the 33,930-ton cruise ship of 1983, still sailing as the THOMPSON SPIRIT.



Carnival Corporation chairman and CEO Mickey Arison and party at the christening of the NIEUW AMSTERDAM (IV) in Venice, Italy on July 4. (photo by Holland America Line)

- The KRISTINA REGINA, built in 1960 as BORE, may be preserved as a floating attraction on the River Aura in Turku, Finland. She is one of several vessels due to be retired as the SOLAS 2010 regulations take effect on October 1. The 4,295-ton liner was the last steamship built for service within Scandinavia, but was re-engined for diesel power in 1987. In addition to Baltic Sea services, she is also known for diverse European cruises.
- MONA LISA (ex-KUNGSHOLM, SEA PRINCESS, VICTORIA, OCEANIC II / SCHOLARSHIP) is another SOLAS 2010 casualty that may be reprieved as a floating museum. Despite years of effort by Swedish entrepreneur Lars Hallgren to create a solid development plan, intended host City of Gothenburg offered only a five-year lease to berth the liner, deemed insufficient for long-term viability. However, Mr. Hallgren has now approached officials at the Port of Stockholm (who were originally uninterested in acquiring MONA LISA) and has reported some progress in negotiations. KUNGSHOLM, built on the River Clyde in Scotland for Swedish America Line in 1966, is an ideal candidate not only for preservation but for restoration as well. She was considered one of the best looking liners of the post-war era, featuring an exceptionally well-proportioned twin-funneled profile and exquisite interiors. Unfortunately, she was mutilated by new owners P&O Line during a 1979 refit. Her forward funnel was cut down, her aft funnel was raised, and half of her long row of public room windows was plated over and replaced with small cabin windows. Several major public rooms were also demolished so that additional cabins could be added. Hopefully, Mr. Hallgren will be successful in saving and then restoring this once-magnificent vessel.



The MONA LISA, ex-KUNGSHOLM at Stavanger, Norway in 2010. (photo by Tom Rinaldi)



It's easy to see from this 1970's postcard view why many consider the KUNGS HOLM, in her original configuration, to be the most beautiful cruise ship ever built. (Bob Allen Collection)

### **FAREWELL, DER SCUTT**

Long time WSS member, renowned architect and ocean liner collector Der Scutt was buried at sea on July 5, 2010. The Service for the Committal of Ashes to the Deep took place on board the **QUEEN MARY 2** during a Canada / New England cruise from New York, on which WSS had a group. Captain Nick Bates officiated, and the ceremony took place on Deck 5 aft; ship's position was Latitude 40 degrees 33 North, Longitude 70 degrees 33 West. In attendance were Der's widow Lena Scutt, her son and two grandsons; Brad Hatry and Marilyn Riccatelli; Dick Faber and Hank Grossman.

### **YOUR DAILY PROGRAMME**

**South Street Seaport Museum**, [www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org](http://www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org). Contact via email [reservations@southstseaport.org](mailto:reservations@southstseaport.org) or call 212-748-8786. **Decodence Tours** (the continuing exhibit about the spectacular French Line's NORMANDIE of 1935): 12-1 PM and 2-3 PM at 12 Fulton Street. **Historic Seaport District Walking Tours**: 6-8 PM at 12 Fulton Street. **New Amsterdam Walking Tours** – discover what life was like in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch New Amsterdam: Sunday 8/15, 1-2 PM and Wednesday 8/18, 6-8 PM at 12 Fulton Street. **Revolutionary War Walking Tours** – learn how the city fared during the war in Lower Manhattan: Wednesday 8/25, 6-8 PM and Sunday 8/29 12-2 PM at 12 Fulton Street. **Free Friday – Size Matters**: Compare the NORMANDIE and the PEKING, two of the largest ships of their kind. Tour the NORMANDIE exhibit and visit the PEKING: contact the Seaport for dates. **The Battle of Brooklyn Cruise** aboard the schooner PIONEER: Sunday 8/28, 1-5 PM. **Mini-cruise aboard the tugboat W.O. DECKER**: Thursdays through Sundays, until October. **Lunch Tours** (10 AM – 2 PM) and **Sunset & Supper Cruises** (5-8 PM) on Saturdays until October aboard the W.O. DECKER. Contact the Seaport for pricing and reservations; cruises depart Pier 16.

**Project Liberty Ship**. [www.liberty-ship.com](http://www.liberty-ship.com). Contact via email [john.w.brown@usa.net](mailto:john.w.brown@usa.net) or call 410-558-0646 for information or 410-558-0164 for tickets. **Living History Cruises** on the historic Liberty Ship SS. JOHN W. BROWN from Baltimore, MD: 8/28 and 10/16; Port visit in Providence, RI: 9/25.

### **GUEST EDITOR**

Marge Dovman continues her long and well-deserved rest from editing responsibilities; Bob Allen continues as guest editor this month.

### **OUR VISIT TO S.S. ROTTERDAM** (as posted on Liners List)

Charles Zuckerman

This past April, My wife, Marjorie, and I took a two-week repositioning cruise on CONSTELLATION, from Miami to Hamburg. We loved the ship, the food and the service. After eight sea days (heaven), we visited LeHavre, Dover and Rotterdam.

In Rotterdam, the plan was to visit the Hotel New York (former Holland America headquarters), just a few steps from the pier; visit ss ROTTERDAM and have lunch aboard; and then head to the Maritime Museum until time to return to the ship.

Well, we did visit the Hotel New York. It is a funky, shippy, niche hotel that was almost like a mini HAL museum with posters, models and photos. Well satisfied, we hailed a water taxi at the base of the hotel, which took us directly to ss ROTTERDAM. As we neared the ship, my heart was racing. From the water, she looked almost brand new and as if she were about to sail. I couldn't snap enough pictures.

Once on board, we never left. Never got to the museum and just made it back to CONSTELLATION in time for sailing.



ROTTERDAM at Nassau, Bahamas in June 1977 with OCEANIC and EMERALD SEAS. (photo by Bob Allen)



ROTTERDAM at her permanent berth in Rotterdam, Holland in early 2010. (photo by Thijs Tuurehout)

I had sailed on ROTTERDAM four times, 1961 in tourist class westbound (after a summer abroad as a student, having sailed eastbound on NIEUW AMSTERDAM), in 1965 in first class eastbound, in 1997 for the last leg of her last world cruise (and last trans-Atlantic crossing as ROTTERDAM) and in 2000 as REMBRANDT on a New York-Montreal Cruise. I had also visited the ship many times, including during her layup in Freeport. I still think that she had the most innovative design, revolving around that double staircase that rarely made one feel restricted, no matter in which class in which they were traveling. And the ship was easily converted to one-class cruising status by just sliding open a few panels. Brilliant. But you all know this.

We entered at the stern, one of the three entrances, and landed on the outside deck by the wading pool. We then proceeded along the starboard promenade to the entrance to what was the former Lido Restaurant (ugh), now serving a la carte meals and looking much better. (The room was stunning as the Café de la Paix, the original tourist night club. It later became what was one of the first Lido Restaurants afloat. Very successful and very unattractive. Further down the deck must have been the area where one purchased tours. We, however, missed that experience.

From the Lido we proceeded directly into the Club Room. This is now a proper dining room and looks better than it ever did. The recreated tapestries in the four corners of the room looked beautiful and the whole room sparkled. I remember showing the newly arrived captain of REMBRANDT, when the ship was laid up in Freeport, how the original tapestries were attached by Velcro and could easily be removed for cleaning. Of course, a year or so later these tapestries disappeared. This room was ghastly when used as a casino, and it was great to see much of the original furniture was utilized in the reconstruction. We then entered the Lynbaan shop, where there were quite a few goodies to interest me. Knowing we'd return, we continued along the interior of the ship.

We had expected to meet some resistance to our meandering, but encountered none. And from what I had heard, we had expected to find many locked doors. We found none. We peeked into the Ocean Bar, which looked just fine, although not exactly original, and the tourist class lounge, also looking just fine. (I couldn't stop taking photos and was glad that the sim card had 4000 pictures left.) Then it was on to the Theater (I believe that it was the largest theater ever constructed on a liner at the time ship was built), also looking good, even with the original seating removed in the orchestra area. There were removable chairs lined up in their place. (I suspect that this will enable them to use the room for a variety of events.) Then up to the balcony (for first class) where the original seats are beautifully restored.

Still no locked doors . . . so on we went. Next was the Ambassador Room. I couldn't believe how perfect this room was, as original as I remember (albeit with some former Smoking Room/Library chairs long ago added). Wow . . . snap, snap, snap. We sat, we relaxed, we pressed on. We saw a few people on what must have been a self-guided tour with hand-held phones, but they never entered any of the main lounges. Then on to my favorite room ever at sea, the first class Smoking Room. They were preparing for a small buffet, and we were told that we couldn't enter. I promised that we would just take a few photos and be on our way, and we got the OK. Whew.

I have to say that they did a very nice job. The room looks fine, but not what I would have loved. In the original, the carpeting was incredible thick and the different colors were echoed in the backs of the chairs and sofas. The original furniture was less massive and 1950s perfection. They have recreated the carpet colors and the design runs in the proper direction. But the furniture is the bulky replacement design, but looking much better in the present colors. The ceiling and reversible benches with their sea views are restored beautifully. Snap snap snap snap.

Then on through the Tropic Bar (a bit crowded with some catering paraphernalia) with its mural restored, and on to the former Ritz Carlton Room. Another perfect restoration. The original furniture color was applied, with the velour replaced by leather in the seating areas. The room was empty and so . . . snap snap snap. Great views from the balcony, of course. From here we headed back through the Smoking Room and were tempted by the lovely food display. We took the lift down to the former dining rooms, which were in use as cocktail and lecture halls. Took a few pictures. Ceiling and murals look great, but too many people milling about for good photos. We then headed down to the pool, lockers and sauna (unrestored) and chatted with the guard there who knew next to nothing about the history of the ship or what else was aboard. We peeked at the entrance to the engine room, but having seen it

before, decided not to explore. I remember that it was at the pool level that one could switch elevators to sneak into another class, which I did constantly.

We then went up to the hotel check-in area. We told them that we would love to stay aboard at some future time and would it be possible to see a room, possibly an original one. Lucked out again. We met a gentleman, Gideon, who was the Maître d' aboard the ship in the 1980s and who clearly loved her. He took us under his wing and showed us many rooms on many decks. I would stay in any of them. Again, not original, but shiplike and well designed. After touring rooms below, we went up to Boat Deck, where I had had a first class single #007 at a time when James Bond was very new and popular. These cabins are now gone and replaced with small, modern conference rooms. There is a plethora of these aboard and hopefully they will earn euros for the ship. There are four original cabins forward on this deck with views over the bow . . . quite lovely.

Armed with key card and codes, Gideon then took us up to the Sun Deck, where there are more conference rooms. These are the deluxe rooms with wonderful furniture and a lounge that has a carpet based on the Smoking Room carpet, but done in black, white and shades of gray. This looks quite contemporary and stylish. We toured the Sky Room, which was another catering venue. This room never quite made up its mind what it should be, having so many different purposes in its day. We toured the outside decks and spent a few moments at the front of the boat deck, portside, where Ted Scull and I spent about 10 hours during a force 11 storm in 1997. A highlight of my life.

Gideon left us at the small museum on board, which showed some wonderful period photos and a great model. Adjacent to this area was another shop, although locked and only open a couple of days a week. Peeking, we saw a duplication of items that were in the Lynbaan shop . . . but also a delft plate made especially for "de Rotterdam." I collect these things and was hopeful that they would sell it at the other shop. So we went back and, sure enough, they do not sell it. It seems that it is operated by a different firm. Well, I asked in my nicest way if there was anyone who could help. They made some calls and, voila, a man arrived with the plate, which I quickly bought along with a number of Dutch liner books.

Marjorie and I then had a lovely and tasty (very) late lunch in the Lido Restaurant. We did a little more exploring, picked up a goody bag of deck plans and printed matter that Gideon had assembled for us and called a water taxi to take us back to the pier. It was a perfect day and turned out far better than I had expected. And the icing on the cake was the sailaway. As we pulled out, we had views of first the Hotel New York and then, incredible views of ss ROTTERDAM from port, stern and then starboard. Snap snap snap snap snap.

Two days later we were in Hamburg and met Jonathan Boonzaier aboard CAP SAN DIEGO. It was great seeing him and having breakfast together on board. We had the use of the friend's apartment in Hamburg for a couple of days. It is an incredible maritime city and a delight to visit. Not only are there museum ships and lots of harbor action, but also wonderful maritime bookstores, shops and the finest Maritime Museum, by far, that I have visited. And of course a lot more to see in Germany's second-largest city.

All in all, it was a ship lover's dream

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