

THE PORTHOLE

SUMMER, 2013

VOLUME XXX, # 7



CARNIVAL SPLENDOR – VENUE FOR A WSS PONY LUNCHEON ON JULY 28.



VICE CHAIR DAVID HUME WELCOMES 130 PONY MEMBERS THE DINING ROOM.



CARNIVAL WAITERS AND WATRESSES DANCE ON THE TABLETOPS!



THE THREE-DECK-HIGH SPLENDOR ATRIUM AND BAR, ABLAZE WITH LIGHTS.



SURPRISING POOLSIDE DECOR – A MODEL OF THE ORIGINAL QUEEN MARY.



CARNIVAL SPLENDOR'S BOW. JUST FEET FROM THE PIER ROADWAY. (Bob Allen)

NEXT EVENTS: PONY group cruise to Bermuda on the NORWEGIAN BREAKAWAY, September 1 – 8;
Friday, September 28: A Norwegian Coastal Voyage Aboard m.s. LOFOTEN by Greg Fitzgerald;
Friday, October 25: Ocean Travel from Charles Dickens' 1842 Transatlantic Crossing to Today by Anthony Cooke

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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.

SHIP'S LOG

Ship's Log will return in the September issue of The Porthole

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES: January, 2012 – August, 2013

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
RYNDAM	Dover	Dover	Norway / North Cape	Mario De Stefano & Carol Miles	06/13
CONSTELLATION	Dover	Dover	Norway / North Cape	Alan & Mary Borthwick	06/13
SAGA RUBY	Dover	Dover	Norwegian Fjords	Bob Allen & Rob Rothberg	07/13
LEGACY	Seattle	Juneau	Alaska	Ted and Sandy Scull	08/13

Where have you cruised to this summer? Please forward your travel itineraries to **The Porthole** for inclusion in September's **Arrivals & Departures**.

YOUR DAILY PROGRAMME

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org or 917-492-3379. Due to unresolvable financial challenges, South Street Seaport Museum's brief merger with The Museum of the City of New York has come to an end. Due to repairs required after Hurricane Sandy, the Galleries at 12 Fulton Street closed as of April 7. For additional information on the reopening of exhibits, ship visitation and other events, contact the museum.

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. **SEPTEMBER MEETING - Wednesday September 11; OCTOBER MEETING - Wednesday, October 9.** Programs TBD. Meetings are held at the Vancouver Maritime Museum at 1905 Ogden Avenue (Kitsilano Point).

NEW SOUTH WALES WSS: SEPTEMBER MEETING - 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 or liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org or 415-544-0100. 1275 Columbus Avenue, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94133-1315. See the SS JEREMIAH O'BRIEN at Pier 45 at Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco, CA, or join one of the day cruises under the Golden Gate Bridge and around San Francisco Bay. 2013 sailing dates are: October 12 – San Francisco Fleet Week Cruise and Parade of Ships; October 13 – San Francisco Fleet Week Cruise. Contact the museum for prices, sailing time and tickets.

PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP www.liberty-ship.com or 410-558-0164 On the East Coast, sail on the restored Liberty Ship JOHN W. BROWN from Baltimore on a cruise along the Chesapeake Bay, September 7 and October 5. Contact the museum for prices, sailing time and tickets.

NEW YORK HARBOR CRUISES

WORKING HARBOR COMMITTEE, www.workingharbor.com or 212-757-1600. Join the Hidden Harbor Newark Bay Boat Tour on Tuesday, September 10, 5:30 – 7:30 PM. The tour will be aboard the ZEPHYR, departing from Pier 16, South Street Seaport. WHC is also holding the 21st Annual Running of the Great North River Tugboat Race & Competition, Sunday September 1 at 10:00 AM, Pier 84, North River. Contact via website or telephone for additional details and prices.

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 44th 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. Contact via website or telephone for departure times and prices.

CIRCLE LINE, www.circleline42.com or 877-731-0064. Circle Manhattan and other harbor cruises, departing from pier 84 at West 44th Street. Contact via website or telephone for departure times and prices.

NEW YORK WATERWAY, www.nywaterway.com or 800-533-3779. Trans-Hudson ferry service and special-event cruises. Contact via website or telephone for departure times and prices.

SHIP NEWS

TRAGIC END FOR A PRINCESS: PACIFIC PRINCESS, best known for her nine-year run as star of the wildly successful TV series "The Love Boat," has arrived at a ship breaker's yard in Aliaga, Turkey. Having taken on water during a rough journey from her 5-year layup in Genoa, the 20,000-ton vessel approached Aliaga listing precariously to starboard, and will have to be righted before demolition can begin. Towards that goal, a 10-man team boarded to pump water out of the flooded engine room, only to be overcome by toxic exhaust - tragically, two died. It's an extremely sad demise for a ship that helped usher in the era of modern luxury cruising. She was built as SEA VENTURE (followed by a sister ship ISLAND VENTURE) in Emden, West Germany for established Norwegian cargo and tanker operators, Oivind Lorentzen and Fearnley & Eger, who created Flagship Cruises to manage and operate their new fleet. The shipowners obtained the Bermuda government contract to operate service from New York, which began with SEA VENTURE's maiden voyage in June, 1971. An instant success, SEA VENTURE became a fixture on the New York waterfront, sailing the 7-day Bermuda run every

Saturday afternoon, spring through fall. With her sleek lines, glowing white hull and superstructure, and stylish winged funnel painted deep turquoise and white, she was a memorable sight. Yet the oil crisis of 1973-74 reversed her fortunes, and both ships were sold to P&O Lines' US subsidiary Princess Cruises for delivery in 1975. The sisters, renamed PACIFIC PRINCESS and ISLAND PRINCESS were deployed in the fast-growing West Coast cruise market, where they again gained a loyal following. Two years later, PACIFIC PRINCESS became synonymous with "The Love Boat," a TV show that helped popularize cruising around the world. Princess kept her in service until 2002, on the 7-day Bermuda run during her last years, an ironic bookend to her early service as SEA VENTURE. She was then sold to Pullmantur and renamed PACIFIC, operating in Mediterranean and South American waters until 2007. In 2008 she was purchased by Brazilian company CVC and chartered to Quail Cruises, operating in the Mediterranean. Subsequently sold to Quail Cruises, she began a much-needed renovation in 2008 at Genoa but her owners ran out of funds, and the ship was arrested. Her next and final voyage was to Aliaga under the name ACIF, an undeserved last act for a ship that was known to millions around the world as the Love Boat.



A 1971 postcard rendering of Flagship Cruises' new SEA VENTURE. Prominent in this aerial view are her amidships pool with sliding glass dome, and aft pool on a spacious deck featuring a docking bridge and twin observation decks above.

(Flagship Cruises / Bob Allen collection)



PACIFIC PRINCESS at New York in 2000, late in her 27-year career with Princess Cruises

(Bob Allen)

PHILLIPPINE FERRY DISASTER: The 1973-built Philippine passenger ferry ST. THOMAS OF AQUINAS (ex-SUPERFERRY 2) sank after a collision with the cargo ship SULPICIO EXPRESS 7 near the port of Cebu on August 16. The ferry had 715 passengers on board, 31 of whom are confirmed dead and 170 of whom are missing. The cargo ship sustained serious bow damage, but no injuries or loss of life were reported.

A CRUISE WITHOUT PORTS: Electrical problems kept Celebrity Cruises' 2000-built MILLENIUM at dock in Seward, Alaska for repairs instead of heading south for an early August cruise along Alaska's inside passage. The 91,000-ton vessel finally departed Seward and headed straight for Vancouver, where the next cruise northward began. All passengers, whether they remained with the ship or chose to fly home, were given full refunds and generous future cruise credits.

THESE SHIPS WILL BE FIT: Major refits are in the works for diverse ships in the world's cruise fleet. P&O's ARCADIA will receive an additional deckhouse deck with 23 new cabins, and will undergo structural and mechanical maintenance. Lloyd Werft in Bremerhaven, Germany will carry out the work on the 8-year-old, 82,505-ton ship. Princess Cruises' SUN PRINCESS of 1995, also part of the P&O fleet, is being renovated under a \$30 million contract at Sembawang Shipyard in Singapore. The 1996-built vessel is receiving a major interior redesign, in advance of deployment on cruises from Australia and Japan. She will receive Asian-themed décor, as well as signature Princess restaurants and venues as part of the renovation. Also in preparation for Australian deployment, Carnival Cruises' CARNIVAL LEGEND will undergo improvements dubbed "Fun Ship 2.0" in summer, 2014. The LEGEND will receive a Water Works Aqua Park along with new restaurants and shops before heading across the Pacific for Sydney, Australia next September. Oceania Cruises has announced a \$50 million upgrade of their REGATTA, INSIGNIA and NAUTICA. Their goal is to make these smaller, older vessels more compatible with their lavish new fleet mates MARINA and RIVIERA. Significant portions of their public rooms and all passenger cabins will receive upgrades to décor and furnishings, along with other onboard improvements. The contracts for INSIGNIA and NAUTICA were awarded to a shipyard in Marseilles, France, while the REGATTA will be refurbished in Vancouver, BC, Canada - all work will be done in the first half of 2014.

PORTUSCALE REVIVAL: Portuscale Cruises, the new Lisbon-based company that is reviving the former Classic International Cruises fleet, has begun operations. PORTO (ex-ISTRA, 1965) is now cruising the Greek Islands, while FUNCHAL of 1961 has been totally rebuilt and ran sea trials off Portugal in mid-August. She is soon due to depart for Norway on her first voyage for Portuscale. LISBOA of 1955 (ex-PRINCESS DANAE, DANAE, PORT MELBOURNE) will be dedicated to the French market when she begins service in 2014. AZORES (ex-ITALIA PRIMA, VALTUR PRIMA, VOLKERFREUNDSCHAFT, STOCKHOLM) was built in 1948, and will take the title of the world's oldest active passenger ship when she enters Portuscale Cruises service in 2014.

MAJOR INVESTMENT IN BAYONNE: Royal Caribbean Cruises announced plans to upgrade their Cape Liberty Cruise Port in Bayonne, NJ. The \$70 million dollar project will include a new terminal with luggage area and a parking deck, along with improvements to the berths. Formerly the Military Ocean Terminal, the port area is owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and is situated on 131-acres in Upper New York Bay. Annual passenger traffic, which was 393,000 in 2010, is expected to reach 600,000 after the new facilities are completed in 2014.

THE PINNACLE OF FAR EASTERN CRUISING?: A new start-up cruise line, Pinnacle Cruises, Ltd., is in development by private Hong Kong interests. According to CEO Kelvin Chua, the line will cater to the upscale Chinese vacationer in the 30 to 55-year-old age group seeking cultural and destination-intensive itineraries. Chua also states that "our aim is to be a destination in itself." Although an unnamed 70,000-ton vessel has been designed, prospective itineraries or an actual start-up date have not yet been announced.

Voyage of the Midnight Sun Aboard ms RYNDAM

By Carol Miles

As recently as this past March my husband, Mario De Stefano, and I had no thoughts whatsoever of cruising to the Land of the Midnight Sun. We instead were committed to a Black Sea Cruise aboard *Azamara Journey*. However, when we tried to book five months in advance, we were shocked, not to mention disappointed, to discover that it was totally sold out. As we began scrambling to make an alternative plan, I remembered that I had wanted to sail to Norway ever since seeing my aunt off on a North Cape cruise aboard Moore-McCormack Line's *SS Argentina* some fifty years ago. (I eventually sailed on that same vessel to Bermuda roughly twenty years later in its reincarnation as Holland America's *SS Veendam*.) Mario, however, was far less enthusiastic, having previously traveled to Oslo on business and being skeptical of the weather in Norway. Ultimately, however, having succeeded in booking the Black Sea cruise for 2014, he succumbed to my wishes and I set about planning a Norwegian Fjords & North Cape cruise.

It didn't take long to discover that a plethora of options was available, and virtually all of them had their attractions. How to choose? I decided to do a comparative analysis of about a dozen options on variables including size of the ship, specific characteristics of the ship and line, cruise length, departure/arrival port, departure date, statistical likelihood of rain during the cruise, the specific itinerary, length of time in ports, etc. For instance, we would have loved to sail from Rotterdam and thus have been able to visit or stay on board *SS Rotterdam*, but *MS Rotterdam's* departure date was in May when we had other commitments. Likewise, the opportunity to enjoy Norway from the decks of *Saga Ruby*, the former *SS Vistafjord* of Norwegian America Line,

was a great temptation, but her cruise was relatively short and didn't include the North Cape. The *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Victoria* were hard to resist, but both seemed so large that they risked overwhelming the environment. One of Hurtigruten's legendary Norwegian Coastal Voyage ships might have been another obvious choice because of their history, small size, and daily departures. However, although these vessels visited far more ports than any of the others, including the scenic Lofoten Islands, they didn't stay long anywhere and didn't explore the fjords in depth.

Thus it was that we sailed June 15th from Dover on a 14-night cruise aboard Holland America's *MS Ryndam*. Although not our first choice of departure port, we were able to enjoy a day and night in Canterbury, plus a visit to Dover Castle before embarkation, and two nights in London afterward, including a day each in Windsor and Cambridge. May and June are the most rain-free months in Norway statistically, and in fact we never used the rain gear or long silk underwear we had in our luggage. Some days were overcast, but the sun always broke through, and we did indeed see the Midnight Sun off the North Cape at 12:00 a.m. on June 22nd. The *Ryndam*, with a capacity of 1,258 passengers but not full, was a comfortable mid-sized ship for viewing the exceptional natural wonders of Norway, of which there are many. We tendered in both Flam and Geiranger, villages far up two of the most spectacular fjords, and we had no wait for a tender at either place. Probably the deciding factor for us, however, was the well-spaced itinerary and selection and scheduling of ports, with generous amounts of time at each. We had a day at sea before visiting Stavanger, Flam and Geiranger, followed by another day at sea as we crossed the Arctic Circle before calling at Tromso, Honningsvåg (from which we traveled overland to the North Cape) and Hammerfest, the northernmost city in continental Europe. Another day at sea took us back across the Arctic Circle before we called at Trondheim, Alesund and finally Bergen before enjoying a fourth and final sea day enroute back to Dover.

Besides the magnificent scenery, highlights of this itinerary included four spectacular hilltop vistas, reached, respectively, on foot (Hammerfest), by mini-train (Alesund), by cable car (Tromso) and by funicular (Bergen) and UNESCO World Heritage sites such as Geiranger Fjord and Bergen's wooden Bryggen waterfront buildings. Several memorable churches included the 12th century Stavanger Dom Kirke, Tromso's contemporary Arctic Cathedral, Trondheim's 12th century Nidaros Dom Kirke and the well-preserved Borgund Stave Church of 1180, reached overland from Flam. Various unusual museums ranged from Stavanger's Cannery and Norwegian Petroleum Museums to Bergen's Hanseatic Museum, Tromso's Polar Museum, Alesund's Apotek Art Nouveau and Sunnmore Open Air Museums, the latter showcasing old wooden buildings and boats, and Flam's Flamsbana Museum, visited before taking the famous Flam Railway itself. Viewing other ships in port was also a delight: Fred Olsen's *Braemar* and P&O ferries in Dover; *Queen Victoria* and *Celebrity Infinity* in Stavanger; *MSC Opera* and *Serenissima* (ex-*Andrea*, ex-Hurtigruten *Harald Jarl*) in Flam; *Seven Seas Voyager*, *Costa Romantica* and Hurtigruten *Trollfjord* in Geiranger; *MV Hamburg* (ex-Hapag-Lloyd *Columbus*) and Hurtigruten *Finnmarken* in Tromso; *Costa Romantica* and Hurtigruten *Finnmarken* in Honningsvåg; Hurtigruten *Trollfjord* and Hurtigruten *Richard With* in Hammerfest; Hurtigruten *Nordkapp* in Trondheim; Fred.Olsen's *Boudicca* and Hurtigruten *Polarlys* in Alesund; and *Costa Pacifica*, *Celebrity Constellation*, and Hurtigruten *Richard With* in Bergen.

MS Ryndam (and her sister ships *MS Statendam*, *MS Maasdam* and *MS Veendam*) are well suited to a cruise of this sort where the scenery is paramount, not only because of their moderate size but also because of their on-deck viewing options. In addition to a wooden wrap-around Boat Deck, aka Deck 6 or Lower Promenade Deck, complete with wooden deck chairs, there is a staircase at the bow leading up to Deck 7 (Promenade Deck) which provides access to the bow itself, weather permitting. Standing alongside the ship's 1994 bell is a glorious place from which to revel in the beauties of the Norwegian Fjords, the Inside Passage and glaciers of Alaska, and the fjords and glaciers of Patagonia south to Cape Horn, all of which we have been privileged to experience in this way. There is also an unobstructed view over the bow from Deck 11 (Lido Deck), accessible through the Greenhouse Spa and Gym. An outside staircase from there takes one down to Deck 10 (Navigation Deck) and the Bridge. Of course access is no longer permitted, but large windows at the landing allow for a decent peek inside. Continuing down the outside staircase, one reaches yet another deck with a view over the bow and eventually the access to the bow itself on Deck 7. There are also several appealing open deck spaces on the ship's stern.

Other pleasures included a wonderful table for six, shared with two compatible couples from Oregon and Minnesota, respectively, on the stern of the top level of the Rotterdam Dining Room. The food was excellent, the service outstanding, and the views in the never-ending daylight spectacular. Finally, the refreshing sense of humor of Captain Werner Timmers must be noted. We had the opportunity to chat with him for twenty minutes following the Captain's Cocktail Party, making us late to the gala dinner, but it was well worth it. Among other pleasures, he hosted a session on how to make his grandmother's Dutch apple pie, decked out in a white chef's uniform, no less! It would seem my analysis of Norwegian cruise options paid off, at least for us.



A model of Norwegian America Line's STAVANGERFJORD (1913) at the Stavanger Maritime Museum, with the reflection of the docked QUEEN ELIZABETH (2010) in the background. (Mario De Stefano)

MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Hurtigruten's NORDKAPP at Trondheim, Norway, June 2013

(Mario De Stefano)

SHIP OF THE MONTH

Ship of the Month will return with the September issue of The Porthole.

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