

SUMMER, 2016 VOLUME XXXIII, # 7



Two iconic ocean liners of the 1950's were in the headlines this summer. Top, Italia's beautiful but tragic ANDREA DORIA was remembered on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her loss after a collision with Swedish America Line's STOCKHOLM in July 1956. Crystal Cruises announced on August 5 that they would not exercise their option to purchase the UNITED STATES, below at her New York pier, due to insurmountable financial, design and regulatory obstacles to her restoration for cruise service.

(top: Italia/Bob Allen collection; below: USL/Bob Allen collection)

**NEXT EVENTS:** Membership Programs: Friday, September 30 – "Journey to Monkey Bay: 2,000 Miles Across East Africa by Land and Lake" by Tom Rinaldi; Friday, October 28 – "Airing Views on the Remastered QUEEN MARY 2" by a panel of PONY members; Friday, November 18 – program TBA. Ocean Liner Bazaar, Saturday, October 1.

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## MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Ponant's LE BOREAL at Tallinn, Estonia on June 29, 2016.

(Bob Allen)

### MUSEUMS, LECTURES AND HARBOR CRUISES

#### **CONTACT THESE INSTITUTIONS BY EMAIL OR PHONE FOR CURRENT EVENTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM** [www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org](http://www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org) or 212-748-8600.

**MYSTIC SEAPORT** [www.mysticseaport.org](http://www.mysticseaport.org) or 860-572-0711.

**VANCOUVER WSS & VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM** [www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca](http://www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca) for information or if you visit, contact Glenn Smith: 604-684-1240, email [glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca](mailto:glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca) Per their website, monthly meetings have been eliminated for the foreseeable future.

**NEW SOUTH WALES WSS:** Meetings are held at the Uniting Church Complex in Lord Street, Roseville. Contact the branch at PO Box 215, Strathfield, New South Wales 2135, Australia for additional information.

**THE NATIONAL LIBERTY SHIP MEMORIAL, INC.** [www.ssjeremiahobrien.org](http://www.ssjeremiahobrien.org) or [liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org](mailto:liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org) or 415-544-0100. 1275 Columbus Avenue, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94133-1315.

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

**NEW YORK WATER TAXI**, [www.nywatertaxi.com](http://www.nywatertaxi.com) or 866-989-2542. Harbor cruises departing from both South Street Seaport Pier 17 and Pier 84 at West 44 Street. Hop on – hop off service throughout New York Harbor is offered as well. Contact via website or telephone for departure times and prices.

**CIRCLE LINE DOWNTOWN**, [www.circlelinedowntown.com](http://www.circlelinedowntown.com) or 866-989-2542. Harbor cruises on the ZEPHYR from April to December, and aboard New York Water Taxi from January to March, departing from Pier 17, South Street Seaport.

**CIRCLE LINE**, [www.circleline42.com](http://www.circleline42.com) or 877-731-0064. Circle Manhattan and other harbor cruises, departing from pier 84 at West 44 Street.

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

**THE NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM** [www.lighthousemuseum.org](http://www.lighthousemuseum.org) or 855-656-7469. Contact for schedule of cruises and events.

**THE WORKING HARBOR COMMITTEE** [www.workingharbor.com](http://www.workingharbor.com) or 212-757-1600. Cruises to both remote and well-travelled parts of New York Harbor - the Hudson River to view tugboat races, Gowanus Bay and Erie Basin in Brooklyn, and a circumnavigation of Staten Island.

**THE NOBLE MARITIME COLLECTION**, [www.noblemaritime.org](http://www.noblemaritime.org) or 718-447-6490. Maritime lectures and art exhibits at the Sailor's Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island, NY.



## ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

<b>SHIP</b>	<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>	<b>VOYAGE</b>	<b>PASSENGER(S)</b>	<b>DATE</b>
GRAND CELEBRATION	Palm Beach	Palm Beach	Bahamas Cruise	Charles & Catherine Crawford	10/15
OOSTERDAM	Ft. Lauderdale	Rome	Transatlantic	Dr. Stephen & Joyanne Shoeman	03/16
KONINGS DAM	Rome	Rome	East Mediterranean	Dr. Stephen & Joyanne Shoeman	04/16
KONINGS DAM	Rome	Rome	East Mediterranean	Dorothy Lippincott	04/16
REGAL PRINCESS	St. Petersburg	St. Petersburg	Baltic Cruise	Robert Riggs	05/16
AMERICA	New Orleans	New Orleans	Mississippi River	Polly Guerin	05/16
NAT. GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER	Longyearbyen	Longyearbyen	Svalbard	George Chandler & Dan Amatuzzo	06/16
CARNIVAL VISTA	Barcelona	Barcelona	East Mediterranean	Mary & Larry Levine	06/16
MARINA	Copenhagen	Stockholm	Baltic Cruise	Bob Allen & Rob Rothberg	06/16
CELEBRITY SUMMIT	Bayonne	Bayonne	Bermuda Cruise	Charles & Catherine Crawford	07/16
CELEBRITY SUMMIT	Bayonne	Bayonne	Bermuda Cruise	Bill & Laura Donal	07/16
QUEEN MARY 2	New York	New York	New Eng. & Canada	Mario De Stefano & Carol Miles	07/16
QUEEN VICTORIA	Venice	Athens	Greek Islands	Mario De Stefano & Carol Miles	08/16

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

### SHIP'S LOG – MAY



LILAC at her berth on the west side of Manhattan

(Mario DeStefano)

In introducing our May program, Program Chairman Greg Fitzgerald mentioned that one of his aims was to redirect the branch's attention back to New York Harbor. One of the local items of maritime interest is the restored 1933-built, steam-powered Coast Guard cutter LILAC, and our May speaker was Mary Habstritt, the LILAC's museum director and president of the Lilac Preservation Project. Also in attendance was Jerry Weinstein, the project's founder and steam expert.

Starting her talk by describing her professional background, the personable Ms. Habstritt then gave us a brief sketch of LILAC, now the oldest lighthouse tender in existence, and one of a class of vessels named after flowers.

Armed with a plethora of facts, anecdotes and archival photos, Ms. Habstritt presented a history of the Coast Guard, of which the lighthouse tenders are a part, and then of the LILAC. This was followed by a description of the LILAC's work during her 40-year career, which consisted mainly of servicing and supplying lighthouses and buoys on the lower Delaware River. The vessel also saw service during World War II, for which she was armed and camouflaged.

We saw photos of the results of the LILAC's various renovations, as well as of the dangers of her work (pictures of crumpled lighthouses), which included aiding ships in distress (pictures of burning vessels), and bad weather (pictures of bad weather). Of particular interest were some of 8mm color movies showing the tender at work, lifting buoys aboard and replacing those moved off by ice or other weather problems.

Decommissioned in Maryland in 1972, as the last tender with a steam reciprocating engine, LILAC hosted the Steamship Historical Society for a farewell tour from Philadelphia. After her decommissioning, the tender was donated to the SIU for training purposes. While some of her history after that is vague, she was privately owned on the James River from 1884 to 2003, when she was acquired for preservation.

Part of the tale was how the LILAC acquired her berth on the north side of pier 25, which she rents for \$1 a year, and where the Lilac Preservation Project has been working to restore and maintain the vessel, and from which the project plans to have her

steaming once again. We were given an idea of what exhibits and activities visitors will find aboard. And we heard how some missing original artifacts found their way back on board.

Ms. Habstritt ended her interesting presentation with a picture of herself and Captain Kevin Oprey of the QUEEN MARY 2 exchanging gifts.

The LILAC officially opened to the public on June 8<sup>th</sup>, and starting on June 9<sup>th</sup> has been open regularly on Thursdays through Sundays. Since the engine room will not be open to visitors, the color photo we saw will have to do.

Marge Dovman

### **ALL ABOARD THE ANTHEM**



Shopping mall at sea: the Royal Promenade on ANTHEM OF THE SEAS.

(Bob Allen)

Saturday, June 11 was a beautiful spring day, perfect for journeying into the wilds of New Jersey for a tour and luncheon aboard Royal Caribbean's year-old ANTHEM OF THE SEAS. Port Liberty, in Liberty State Park, has come a long way since our first excursion there. Instead of tents and an old building, there is a modern terminal. In an odd juxtaposition, the port is right next to a small park that is home to New Jersey's September 11<sup>th</sup> memorial. 39 of the 85 members and friends arrived by a comfortable chartered bus, with the remainder using their own vehicles.

Each of us was given a six-page stapled "brochure" containing pertinent statistics and other useful information. At the appointed time, we were divided into groups and taken on tours, which included occasionally colliding with other groups, or arriving passengers. The vessel, which made its maiden voyage in April of last year, is BIG! It is 168,666 GRT, 1,141 feet long, 136 feet wide, with 18 decks in all that accommodate 4,180 passengers (double occupancy). All these hungry voyagers may eat freestyle in any of the 18 (total) restaurants, or in traditional fashion in one of six main dining rooms. Among the wonders of modern seafaring carried aboard is a glass-walled observation tower attached to a 135-foot-long crane that can transport up to 14 passengers 300 feet over the water. It was not demonstrated.

After being shown various grades of cabins, some of the public areas and the upper decks, we were directed to Chic, one of those main dining rooms, which was decorated in restful neutral shades. Here, as our feet recuperated, we were served a three-course meal, with choices of shrimp cocktail or insalata caprese appetizers, and as entrees there were seared Atlantic salmon, beef stroganoff or cheese ravioli. Dessert was apple pie a la mode. All were tasty, in manageable portions, well served and accompanied by the usual beverages. And lots of wine.



Towards the end of our meal, we were greeted by a staff member who mistook us for travel agents and welcomed us accordingly. Following this, our chairman, Marjorieann Matuszek (who knew who we were), gave a brief talk thanking us for coming.

After lunch, there was a very short exploration period before our disembarkation time of 2:30, which some of us actually observed.

We thank our vice chairman, David Hume, and Royal Caribbean's April Piazza, for arranging this visit.

Marge Dovman

## **AMERICA: A Mississippi Riverboat Cruise**

By Polly Guerin



The AMERICA Christening Ceremony

I'm an old-fashioned gal who waxes nostalgic when it comes to sentimental journeys. So when I decided on a riverboat cruise this year, I fondly remembered the 1927 musical "Showboat" and opted for a cruise right here in the good old USA.

Although I have taken riverboat cruises on the Volga in Russia and the Rhone in France I decided it was time to travel through the land of the bayous and Southern Belles, where the culture of the Old South would emanate throughout the trip. I took an eight-day/seven-night round-trip cruise from New Orleans, Louisiana, May 28<sup>th</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup>, on American Cruise Lines' newest ship, AMERICA. An overnight stay on May 27<sup>th</sup> at the AC Hotel by Marriott in New Orleans, included in the package, insured that guests could embark early the next day.

Festive events were woven into the cruise with ports of call along the Mississippi: Houmas House, Baton Rouge, St. Francisville, Natchez, Vicksburg and Oak Alley. In addition to visits to antebellum mansions/plantations, we enjoyed lectures by river historian Bill Wiemuth, the Mississippi songbird Laura Sable and other showboat entertainments, daily afternoon tea and tours of the Pilot House and the amazing kitchen galley.

The capstone of the festivities was the christening ceremony of the brand new AMERICA. As Bill Wiemuth said, "It is so exciting to see riverboat cruising have a vibrant future. The new riverboat AMERICA keeps alive the tradition of Mississippi riverboat travel that dates back more than two centuries. The 2016 launch of AMERICA is the second riverboat built in the past twenty years to ply the Mississippi River system."



### The Newest Paddlewheeler

AMERICA, American Cruise Lines' largest ship with a capacity of 185 guests, maintains the intimacy and personalization of small ship travel. The ship brings never-before-seen features to the Mississippi including advanced engineering for faster yet quieter travel, allowing guests to spend more time at the ports of call and enjoy higher levels of comfort. The ship has two 1,600-horsepower Z-drives for a total of 3,200 horsepower. This new paddlewheeler was built at Chesapeake Shipbuilding in Salisbury, Maryland. Like its fleetmates, AMERICA flies the United States flag and carries an all-American crew. With the launch of AMERICA, American Cruise Lines, which is based in Guilford, Connecticut, now has four authentic paddlewheelers and four coastal cruisers. ([www.americancruiselines.com](http://www.americancruiselines.com))

AMERICA is adorned with gleaming woodwork and brass fixtures and features historic décor throughout. The cabins, public spaces and lounges are designed with a traditional Southern-inspired flair that elegantly blends a traditional appearance with modern features and amenities. Every cabin has a balcony. I especially enjoyed taking breakfast on my balcony each morning. My room had tasteful Southern charm with exquisite textiles, pillows, a comfortable bed, an upholstered swivel chair and dressers. My bathroom had a perfectly adequate shower stall.

### Personal Observations

Although I traveled alone on this cruise, as I always do, I found that that the dining salon, with its open seating arrangement and tables that accommodate four, six, eight or twelve people, provided ample opportunity for conversations with my fellow passengers. The ship's cuisine had gourmet flair. College student-waiters were efficient, prompt and especially polite.

On the welcome-aboard day, guests were invited to meet Bill Wiemuth, who provided a fascinating introduction to the significance of the Mississippi, entitled "The Mississippi River, Then and Now." If you were inclined not to venture out of your cabin, Bill's daily lectures and commentary were broadcast each day on the ship's "Narration" channel.



AMERICA's Paddlewheel Lounge

After a day of sightseeing and plantation visits, activities got into full swing aboard the ship at 5:30 p.m. when cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were served in the Magnolia Lounge on Deck 2. While Bill Wiemuth and Laura Sable were the entertainment headliners on this riverboat, other entertainers included the Victory Belles, with an evening of songs and stories from the Andrews Sisters and a salute to our military men and women, musicians Osgood and Blaque, comedian Judy David, and Old New Orleans jazz musicians Tom Hook and Wendell Brunious. In addition to his historical lectures, Bill Wiemuth provided a program entitled "10 Amazing Card Tricks Anyone Can Do."

AMERICA's christening ceremony was a major highlight of the cruise. Passengers gathered on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>-deck bows to watch Mrs. Barbara Suttles christen the ship by smashing the requisite champagne bottle against its railing. We all sang "God Bless America" and sipped champagne as our voices rang out with pride.

### Plantation Visits

Plantation/mansion visits at ports of call were easily facilitated. When AMERICA docked, its passengers could walk directly from the riverboat to a plantation. The ship line provided golf carts for anyone with special needs.

The first welcome mat opened to the Southern splendor of Houmas House, once a massive sugar plantation and aptly called "The Sugar Palace." The tour featured sixteen rooms filled with period antiques and furnishings. There was time to explore thirty-eight lush acres of exquisite gardens. A charming docent in period costume evoked a memorable experience of Southern plantation life.

In St. Francisville, Louisiana, we visited Rosedown Plantation and Gardens State Historic Site where we gained additional insight into Southern culture and hospitality. Rosedown is considered to be one of the most beautiful plantations in the South. As Keats wrote, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

A passageway of 300-year-old oak trees leads from Oak Alley, "The Grand Dame of the Great River Road," to the Mississippi River. The history of the home, the restored slave quarters and the magnificent grounds could provide inspiration for an American sequel to *Downton Abbey*.

Editor's Note: Polly Guerin, a long-time member of the WSS-PONY Branch, is a New York-based poet and author of 10 books, including 2 recent historical monographs sold on Amazon. Her blog, [pollytalkfromnewyork](http://pollytalkfromnewyork.com), has been around for 30 years, first in newspapers and radio and

now on the internet. If you are interested in reading in-depth reports on some of the plantations in Polly's write-up, visit her blog at [www.pollytalkfromnewyork.blogspot.com](http://www.pollytalkfromnewyork.blogspot.com).

## **BAZAAR HAPPENINGS**

Mark your calendar for the annual Ocean Liner Bazaar! This year's event will take place on Saturday, October 1; details will follow in the September Porthole.

## **SHIP NEWS**

**UNITED STATES WILL NOT SAIL AGAIN:** The announcement that Crystal Cruises will not take up their option to purchase the derelict s.s. UNITED STATES was greeted with mixed emotions in the ocean liner world. There was little surprise when Crystal's team of experts determined that the cost of reconstructing the 64-year-old ocean liner was well beyond financial feasibility. It was estimated that 25% of her hull would have to be completely rebuilt to accommodate a modern propulsion system, and that stability problems could be an issue. Another factor in the decision was the Jones Act, preventing a foreign-flagged vessel (Crystal Cruises is owned by Genting Hong Kong) to operate between US ports, which was part of Crystal's planned deployment for the UNITED STATES. The team did conclude that the vessel's hull and general structure is in relatively good condition, and could support conversion to a permanently moored attraction. The S.S. United States Conservancy, with a generous donation of \$350,000 from Crystal, will continue seeking development partners in an effort to reach that goal.

**ANDREA DORIA IS REMEMBERED:** It was a balmy summer night off the Nantucket coast 60 years ago when two ocean liners collided in dense fog, with the tragic loss of 52 passengers and crew. Italian Line's ANDREA DORIA, a glamorous 3-1/2 year-old luxury vessel, was a favorite of movie stars and business people travelling to the Mediterranean and Italy. She was designed and decorated by renowned architects and artists, and the maritime world was shocked and saddened when she sank 11 hours after a collision with the 8-year-old STOCKHOLM, a smaller, mostly Tourist-Class liner belonging to the Swedish America Line. Among other commemorations in the US and Italy was a symposium at the SUNY Maritime Academy at Ft. Schuyler, NY on Saturday, July 30. In attendance were survivors, relatives of survivors, divers who have explored the wreck, and some ocean liner buffs. The Academy recently restored the ANDREA DORIA's lifeboat # 1, and rides were offered to those who wished to understand what it might have felt like to be rescued at sea during the summer of 1956. Remarkably, the STOCKHOLM, completely rebuilt as a deluxe cruise ship in the early 1990's, is still in service for British operator Cruise and Maritime Voyages. At the age of 68, she is now the oldest active passenger liner afloat.



The ANDREA DORIA possessed a wealth of stunning public areas in all three classes. According to a 1953 Italian Line brochure, "The First Class Main Lounge, fantastically decorated by Salvatore Fiume, is a representation of Italy throughout the Masterpieces which are, the world over, a true testimony of one of the most resplendent history of civilization." The English is somewhat mangled, but the Italian Line was justifiably proud of their elegant new ship.

**TRAGIC BREAKAWAY FROM THE BREAKAWAY:** NCL's New York-based NORWEGIAN BREAKAWAY suffered a deadly accident while on a Bermuda Cruise in July. The accident occurred during a routine lifeboat drill while the ship was moored at the Royal Naval Dockyard. Reports from Bermudian sources stated that four crewmen were in a small rescue boat, which somehow separated from the lowering equipment and crashed into the sea. Three were taken to a local hospital; the fourth, a 41-year-old Pilipino crewmember, perished. Norwegian Cruise Line is working with local authorities to determine the cause of the accident, and is providing support to the injured and dead and their families.



**TERRORIZING THE CRUISE INDUSTRY:** A summer of terror attacks and political instability in Europe has caused cruise lines to make major schedule changes, and has eroded profits as well. The Istanbul airport attack followed by the near-overthrow of the current government resulted in most cruise lines cancelling port calls in the beautiful city of Istanbul. In typical years past, dozens of cruise ships visited or made multiple turnarounds in the port; the Cruise Timetables 2017 schedule shows only 5 Istanbul departures, and less than 40 port-of-call visits. Much of the business has shifted to Athens, Greece and Kusadasi, (Ephesus) Turkey.

**A ROYAL REVIVAL?:** In the year of her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, the fortunes of the QUEEN MARY may finally be turning around. In July, Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia announced a plan by real estate and investment firm Urban Commons to renovate the world-famous liner, and to develop the 45 acres adjacent to the legendary ex-Cunarder. The hotel portion of the ship will receive all-new soft furnishings (bedding, carpeting, window treatments), as well as upgraded lighting, bathroom fixtures and other improvements. New furniture will be introduced throughout the vessel, while the QUEEN MARY's historic woodwork and decorative metal will be restored. The budget for the cosmetic work is estimated at \$15 million, with completion scheduled for late 2017. Their goal is to replace the ship's current budget lodging atmosphere with a boutique hotel feel worthy of the QUEEN. Urban Commons is planning to develop the vastly underutilized land adjacent the liner with a carousel, an amphitheater, a five-star hotel and other amenities. Transportation to the QUEEN MARY from downtown Long Beach is also being studied. The Queen Mary Land Development Task Force, an entity created last year to guide the Long Beach City Council through the redevelopment process has approved the plan, which is estimated to take two to four years to implement. Nearly 50 years have passed since the arrival of the QUEEN at her Long Beach, California home. It is high time that she be part of a first-class development.

For those who want to learn more about the remarkable QUEEN MARY, tune in to The Smithsonian Channel's "Mighty Ship at War: The Queen Mary," which will premiere on August 21 at 8:00 PM. Despite the title, the one-hour program, commemorating the ship's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, will cover the QUEEN MARY's entire career.



50 years after her arrival in Long Beach, California, the QUEEN MARY is scheduled to receive a major cosmetic overhaul.

(Bob Allen)

**FORMER PONY MEMBER JACQUELINE DREXEL, 1925-2016**

Jacqueline Drexel of Branford, Connecticut, and formerly of Stamford, died Thursday June 16, 2016 at the Shoreline Medical Center in Guilford, CT.

Born Jacqueline Mulock in New York City in 1925, she worked for the British Information Service in New York during World War II, and later had a long career as a travel agent with several agencies in Stamford, including Duveen Travel, and with Pitney Bowes.

She was a lover of all things British, of train travel, and of cruising. She had the good fortune to sail aboard many classic ships, including the Queen of Bermuda, Canberra, Rotterdam (V), and Empress of Canada, but her all-time favorite was the QE2, on which she made many transatlantic crossings. In the course of her travels Jackie made lasting friendships all over the world.

Her sons, David J. Drexel of Branford, and John Drexel and daughter-in-law Maureen of Glen Ridge, NJ and her sister Phyllis Watt of Lynden, WA, survive her. She was predeceased by her husband, Frederick Drexel, who had been an executive with Furness Bermuda Line and with North German Lloyd.

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