

Logbook!

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From The Bridge



Any YouTube users out there? If so, I'm sure you've noticed how they recommend new videos based on what you've watched in the past. It is therefore no surprise when I receive one related to ships. The most recent one is the inspiration for this month's column, along with the sudden loss and/or departure of several members. This is all about age, but to be clear, I am not making light of our members by combining them with ships in this column.

Though we've recently added some very young blood, it is no secret that our membership is aging. Two members have recently passed, rather unexpectedly. Two more have opted to leave the club, at least one of whom did so for health reasons. What does this have to do with YouTube ship videos? We don't record everyone's birth date, so we don't know who the 10 oldest members are. But this YouTube video answers the question of which are the 10 Oldest US Naval Vessels Still in Service. I'm betting everyone in the club knows the oldest. One of the others might surprise a few who are not trivia buffs.

The three eldest Nimitz-class aircraft carriers are in this list. It's no surprise the government wants to get as much life as possible out of a vessel that large, complex, and expensive. In tenth position is USS Carl Vinson, (CVN-70), commissioned in March 1982. The two previous Nimitz-class carriers were commissioned in October 1977 and May 1975. USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) is in spot #6 and USS Nimitz (CVN-68) herself in spot #5. Nimitz is scheduled to be decommissioned in 2026.

Meeting Notice

The July meeting will take place at 1000 hours
July 9, 2022



Another expensive, nuclear-powered, vessel is in the ninth spot. USS Ohio (SSGN-726) was converted from ballistic to guided missiles. She was commissioned in November 1981 and is scheduled to be decommissioned in 2026.

Two submarine tenders, USS Frank Cable (AS-40) and USS Emory S. Land (AS-39) are next in spots #8 and #7. They are in the same class, Emory C. Land being the lead. They were commissioned in October and July of 1979. Frank Cable is named in honor of the trial captain of USS Holland, SS-1. USS Frank Cable began decommissioning way back in 1996, but got a second lease on life to replace USS Holland (AS-32), an odd coincidence.

Prior to the aircraft carriers previously mentioned are two amphibious command ships. USS Mount Whitney (LCC-20) is #4, having been commissioned in January 1971. Before her in spot #3 is USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19), lead ship of the class in which Mount Whitney is a member. Blue Ridge is the oldest "deployed" ship in the navy, and despite this is reportedly scheduled to remain in service for another 17 years.

The second-oldest was a surprise to me, but I'm not that great with trivia. The spy ship USS Pueblo (AGER-2) was captured by North Korea in 1968 and is still on display. She remains a commissioned ship of the US Navy 54 years later.



And of course the eldest commissioned ship is the venerable USS Constitution, one of the original 6 frigates of the United States.

Well, that wraps up the trivia portion. I'll leave you with the wish that you (like these ships) remain healthy, active, and sharp for as long as possible, and that you recover from any necessary "refits" quickly. And if you can't stay young, stay young at heart. Now that this article is over, I'm going to go stretch in an attempt to relieve some of this back pain...

Mañana Man

P.S.

I've also worked some of my backlog as Webmaster. In the spirit of this article, I've added a post for our 2005 annual banquet. You'll see pictures of several of our dearly departed members (and/or their wives), including Tom.



Bizarro By Dan Pirraro



And, of course, this arrived with the correct salutation and the proper amount of groveling:

Mr. HRSMS Editor,

Should you be in need of filler material for the upcoming Logbook I submit to you, for your consideration, one cartoon of nautical theme. If you find the aforementioned item suitable, subject to your critical scrutiny, you can thank me later for contributing to the cause....

Sincerely,

HRSMS Secretary (in training)

Minutes



Held at the Mariners' Museum War Room

Meeting Called: 10:05 by Skipper Greg Harrington

Meeting Adjourned: 12.00

Guest: Rob Napier, 1st

Treasurer's Report: A comprehensive report was given by Ryland Craze

Members: 20 in person and via zoom.

Additions or Corrections: None

Web Master's Report: The webmaster mentioned that he is working on a backlog of member's model photos and hopes to be caught up soon. He mentioned an idea to post a highlight on the website of who's/who in the model shop.

Old Business:

Mention was made that the lot of "coat Engineering" ship plans has been moved to John Cheevers' shop. A list of these plans is on the website. They won't remain there much longer as soon the lot will be donated to the Mariners' Museum. Ron Lewis agreed to inventory the ship models on display in the Shop Model Maker's booth. The skipper read a 12 point policy on how we will maintain a rotating exhibit of member's models that agrees with the Museum's mission for our use of the Booth as an interpretive tool for Museum guests. The skipper has shelved for now the idea on having an exhibition of our models, citing the low response to the exhibition survey. A revised Brochure was presented and will be procured to replace the present one when stock runs out. The brochure is similar to the existing one except for a few tweaks to the prose and the substitution of a few photos. Josh made a plea for members and guests to visit Modelcon on the decks of the USS New Jersey next month.

New Business:

Gene Berger was elected to be the new clerk giving him 2 hats to wear on the bridge. John Cheevers was appointed new Logbook editor. Ron Lewis invited everyone to attend the upcoming Museum event Sips and Trips. This event replaces her annual Bronze Door Society's Wine Classic. It's a chance to try some very good wine and a decent price. Mention was made if you're in the America's Cup Gallery to look for the builder's half model of the original yacht America.

Show and Tell:

Don Goode showed progress of his ½"-1' scale Chesapeake deadrise. This is Don's first deadrise to feature the Smith Island rounded stern. My sharp eye noted that he correctly used vertical staves at the stern. Model is coming along nicely.

Sean Maloon showed the progress he's making on his kit model of the brig Syren. Deck planking is in and some deck furniture is arriving. Sean plugged the Micro Mark detail sander saying how it made sanding in the tight spaces very easy. Next up on his plate is coppering the bottom. Now comments were made about the voluptuous endowment of a figurehead.

Joe Lorenzo showed progress on his restoration of a Florida sharpie model. In answering his query as to what boat it was Dave Chelmo identified it as the Florida sharpie from plans in Howard Chappell's book on watercraft.

Charles Landrum showed of a Trumpeter 1/350 scale kit of the Russian cruiser Slava (re: Moskva). The real ship has been in the news lately and Charles plans to model the ship in its death throws. He also brought a very nice kit of a "Lake" freighter. The original caricature freighter.

Gene Berger showed his progress on making the gazillion ship's boats for his ¼"-1' waterline USS Olympia. He brought along 6 examples of the 18 or so needed. They feature a lot of his signature photo-etched parts.

Program: To Build A Ship Model

Charles Landrum treated us to a program on making and painting realistic bases that look like water.

The Scene



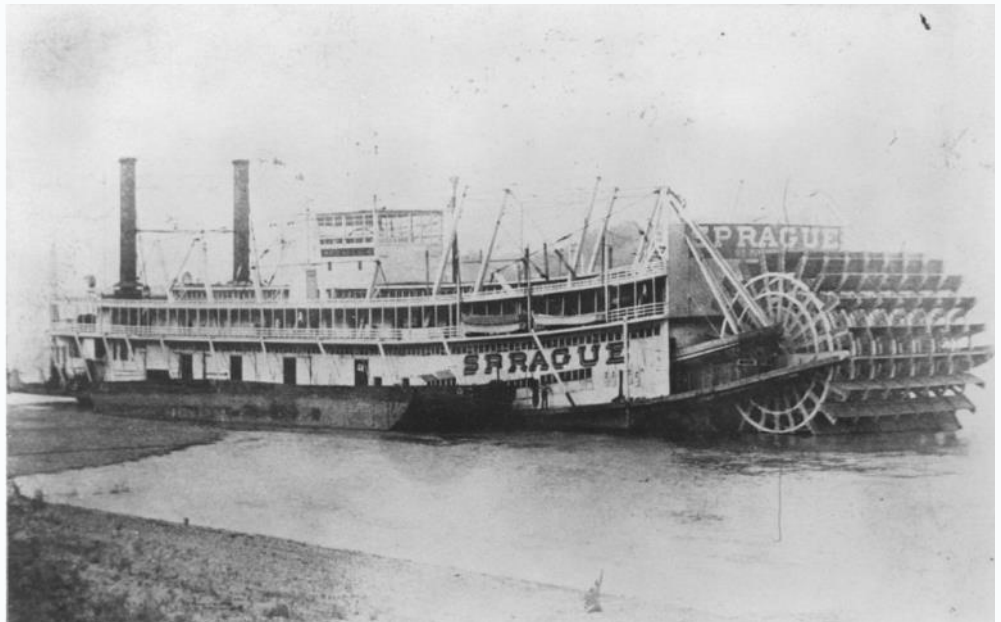
Last month I presented an image of a western river towboat and told you that the Mystery Photo was under review. Well I decided to retire that long running feature of the Logbook and replace it with something new that I want to call The Scene. Each month, but it may be random, I plan to offer a new scene for your enjoyment. Then, in the succeeding Logbook, I plan to offer a light hearted essay on that scene focusing on what you see, what historical significance it may offer, and anything else that comes to mind. You are encouraged to comment on The Scene and all comments will be included in the essay.

The scene in last month's logbook captures a vessel that was not as funny as Thelma Harper from Mama's Family, a skit from the old Carol Burnett Show. The vessel was not as "overbearing, harsh, and paranoid" as Momma from Throw Momma from the Train. And the vessel was definitely was not as wimpy as a mama's boy. But they nicknamed this massive vessel "Big Mama". A term of endearment certainly, but one not intended to be offensive. She was big; no doubt about it.

No need to go searching for her identification, its plainly visible on the stern. According to documentation, Sprague was "the world's largest steam powered sternwheeler towboat". She was built at Dubuque, Iowa's Iowa Iron Works in 1901 by Captain Peter Sprague for the Monongahela River Consolidated Coal and Coke Company". "Capable of pushing 56 coal barges at once, Sprague set a world's all-time record for towing in 1907: 60 barges of coal, weighing 67,307 tons, covering an area of 6-1/2 acres, and measuring 925 feet (282 m) by 312 feet (95 m)." To put this into perspective, a modern Aircraft Carrier has a flight deck covering

something like 4-1/2 acres. So the tow was huge.

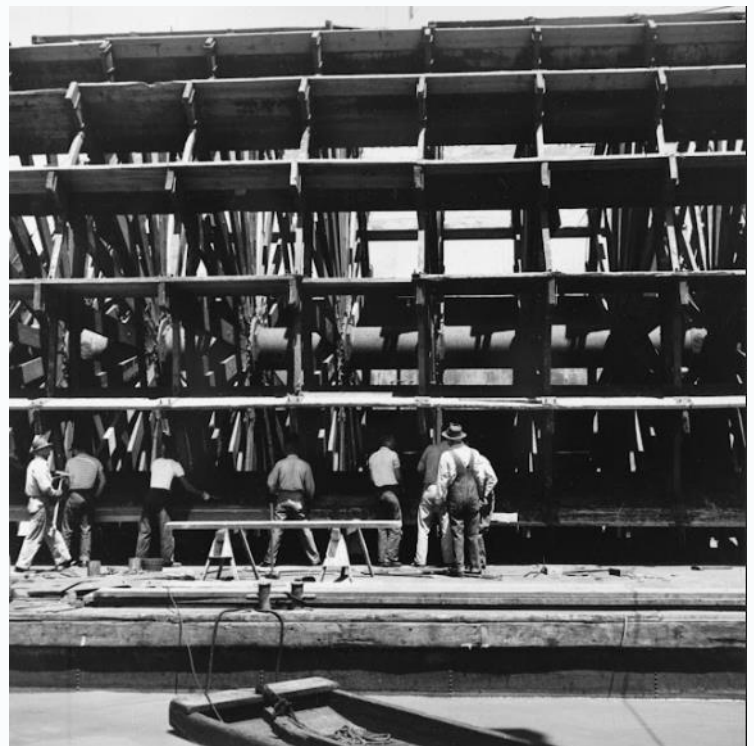
Sprague operated on the western rivers until she was decommissioned in 1948. The Scene we provide shows Sprague pushing a 6 barge consist up the Ohio River at Cincinnati. She is getting ready to pass under the Roebling suspension bridge. The caption reads: "She will unload those six barges of autos from St. Louis at the Greene Line wharfboat just above that bridge pier." Who saw the automobiles? Who wants to attempt to identify make and model?



She easily dwarfed many of her contemporaries. Her specifications say she had a coal-fired steam plant driving that huge paddle wheel. “The paddle wheel was 38 feet in diameter and 40 feet wide with 21 buckets (a river term for paddles).” The paddle weighed 160-tons and is said to have made a 4 foot dip on her trials. Installed power is listed at 2,079 hp which doesn’t sound like a lot but the torque required to drive that huge wheel must have been tremendous. And speaking of power, she was fitted with power steering—all the power you wished to put into her huge 13-1/2 foot diameter pilotwheel.

And Sprague was physically big. Her hull length was 276 feet, with a beam of 61 feet, and a modest (in today’s standards) draft of 7/1/2 feet. Her overall length which includes that giant paddle is listed at 318 feet. Her size and power made her ideally suited for work on the lower Mississippi which was not hampered by too shallow water levels. Writings indicate that “[she] spent the later half of [her] career pushing oil from Baton Rouge to Memphis for Standard Oil where it did not have to worry about fitting into locks.”

dams that were in place did not have locks so tows could only navigate past the weir when the water was high. As a result, towboats and tows were limited in size and range and some remained in the pools where they were built. The same limitations plagues shipping on the upper Mississippi. This was not a great inconvenience in the early days of river travel as the ships and tows were not that large, but something that needed to be addressed.



A note about draft and size: Prior to the canalization of the Ohio River which began in 1910 the level of the river fluctuated greatly. Prior to that, many of the

After the civil war “The amount of coal transported down river from Pittsburgh jumped greatly. The size of the tows also grew with the amount of coal hauled. Due to the escalating coal trade, the US Army Corps of Engineers began studying methods to produce a reliable navigation depth on the Ohio. The Corps launched an international study to analyze other navigation projects worldwide. They determined

Each dam has two adjoining locks, one 600-foot by 110-foot chamber, and a 1,200-foot by 110-foot chamber to accommodate fifteen barges that can lock through in one maneuver.”

Day late and a dollar short. Now that navigation was robust enough to accommodate what Sprague could do, there was no Sprague as “she was de-



that building a system of locks and dams to form pools was the best solution to the problem.”

“Following the opening of the lock and dam at Davis Island in 1885, the venture proved to be worthy. In 1910, the Rivers and Harbors Act was authorized by Congress. The Act allowed the production of a system of locks and dams along the Ohio. In 1929, the canalization project on the Ohio River was finished. The project produced 51 wooden wicket dams and 600 foot by 110 foot lock chambers along the length of the river.”

And here was Sprague, operating near the top of that range. “During the 1940s, a shift from steam propelled to diesel powered towboats allowed for tows longer than the 600 foot locks on the river. This meant barges had to be locked in two phases. This operation was dangerous and time-consuming. It backed up river traffic and increased expenses for the towing industry. The Corps initiated the Ohio River Navigation Modernization Program in the 1950s. The program's purpose was to replace the system of outdated wicket dams and small locks. The new dams were non-navigable and made of concrete and steel.

commissioned as a towboat in 1948.” The efficiency of the diesel and the screw propeller had taken over the tow business. “Sprague became a museum on the Vicksburg, Mississippi, waterfront. For many years the long-running melodrama Gold in the Hills was performed there.”

For almost 30 years “Big Mama”, tied to the banks of the Yazoo River, adorned the Vicksburg waterfront. It is said that “The big vessel was freshly painted on the shoreward side; the rest of her was peeling and rusty.” But that pretty façade wouldn't last. “On the night of April 15, 1974, the Sprague was ravaged by fire, allegedly set by an arsonist. The charred hulk was moved up the Yazoo and beached while rebuilding plans languished; later it was refloated and returned to the Vicksburg city front. Although funding was appropriated for the project, the hull cracked just forward of the engine room and the boat sank, eventually being scrapped.”

Today, if you visit Vicksburg, various reminders of Sprague can be found. You just have to look.

John Cheevers

Over the Bar

Dennis attended St. Mary's Academy, Norfolk, Va. where he was an Altar Boy and played Basketball. From there he attended High School at Norfolk Catholic on Granby St. Just before graduation, he married his childhood friend, Jane. He enlisted in the US Navy. The Navy sent him to Purdue University where he received a degree in Electrical Engineering. He went on to Flight School. He received many Commendations during his 33 year Naval Career. After retiring, he became the Director of Operations for Habitat for Humanity, Norfolk, where he had volunteered for years. Once he was fully retired, he and



his wife, Jane, traveled the world.

He was predeceased by his brother, Bruce, and his son Christopher. He is survived by his wife, Jane, and his daughters, Denise and Heather, and their families to include 8 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.

He was proud of his membership in the Ship Modelers Society and volunteered at the Newport News Mariners Museum every Monday. He is a past President of the Tidewater Anglers Club. He enjoyed getting together with his Reprobate Buddies on Thursday's, particularly Bruce Doyle, with whom he went on many successful fishing adventures. He also looked forward to his investment meeting buddies. He was a kind, gentle man, never arrogant or pushy. He will be greatly missed.

The Scene



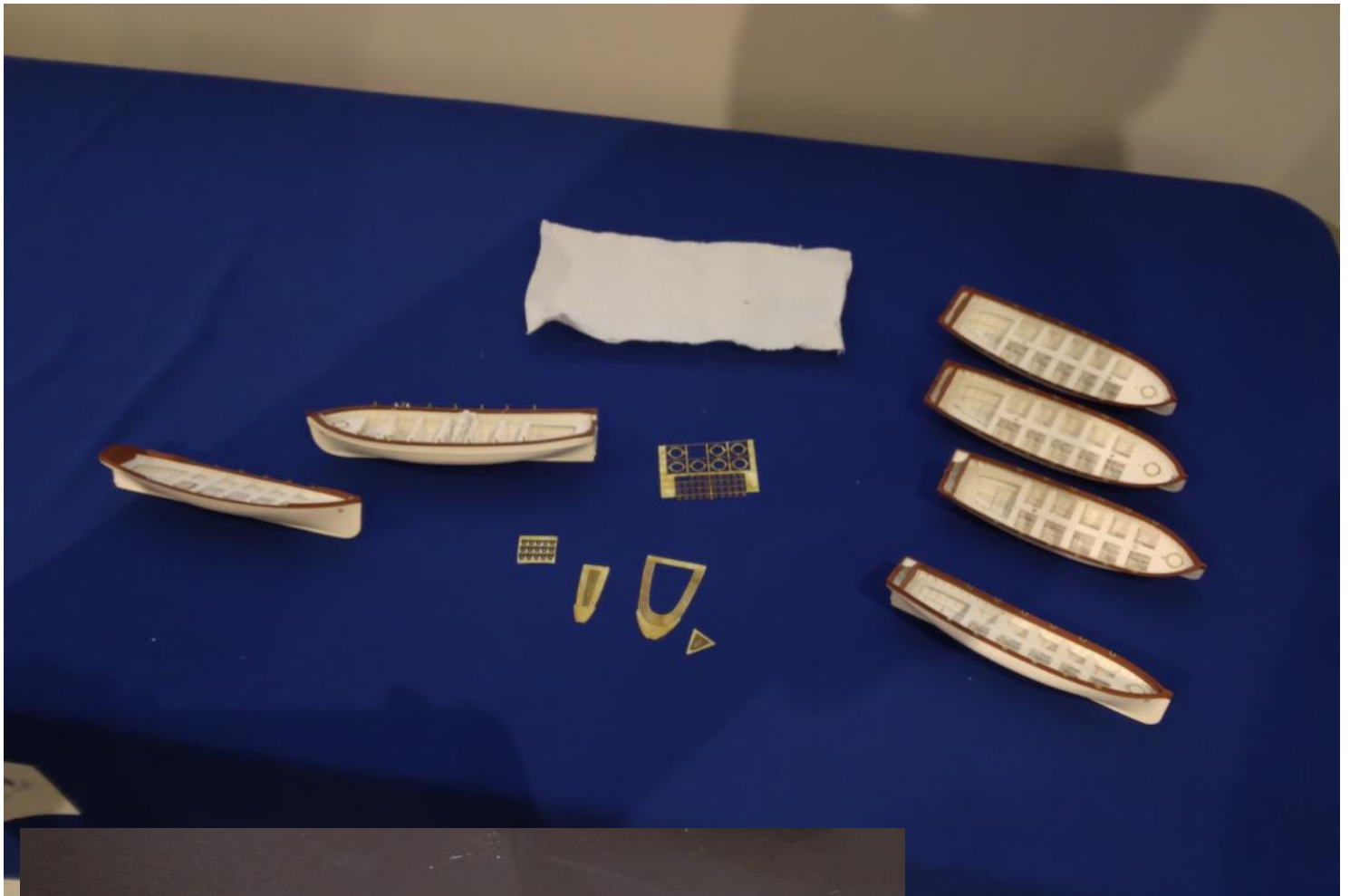
This Scene for July....something to ponder



MEMBER MODELS



MEMBER MODELS





One last image of Sprague beached and burned out.

Event Schedule

JULY

9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Hank Ghittino will present "Making and Serving Your Own Cordage" Using the ropewalk and serving device

AUGUST

6 Modelcon, Philadelphia, Pa.
13 HRSMS Monthly meeting:
Presentation: Ryland Review of Modelcon 2022

SEPTEMBER

10 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Picnic Newport News City Park
19 Talk like a Pirate Day
Presentation: Picnic

OCTOBER

9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: "The Intricacies of Card Stock construction",
By Dave Baker 13 US Navy birthday

NOVEMBER

12 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: John Cheevers Carving the Perfect Hull

DECEMBER

10 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Gene Berger High Tech; the Photo Etching Process

JANUARY 2024

14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Nomination of officers

FEBRUARY

11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Election of officers
Presentation: TBD

MARCH

11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

WATCH, QUARTER, AND STATION BILL



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Photographer: Marty Gromovsky