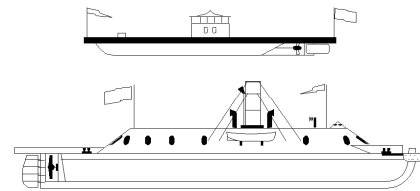


# Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

# Logbook



No. 192

JUNE, 2002

## MINUTES



## Mystery Photo



### Minutes of Hampton Roads Ship Model Society May 10, 2002

Held at the home of Bill Clarke, Poquoson, Virginia  
Hosted by Bill Clarke

Meeting Called: 20:10  
Meeting Adjourned: 21:25

**Treasurer's Report:** Report was given. Notice was made that several members were still outstanding with 2002 dues and three were late with 2001 dues.

**Members:** 23 present. With the promise of another legendary Clarke Strawberry-bacchanal, the crew mustered in force. Several of the more rare attendees are approaching prodigal status.

**Additions or Corrections:** Two! Bob Baycar wanted the record to reflect that he did not bring and present a model at the previous meeting and wants credit to go where it should. After several minutes of discussion, where it seemed no one could remember the model or the presenter, better memories prevailed and the matter was made right. Alan Frazer noted that the logbook reflected the wrong date—April verses May.

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## June Meeting

The Mariners' Museum Library will sponsor a special night for the HRSMS on Friday 14 June 2002, from 8:00PM to 10:00PM. The library will open at 7:30PM for those who arrive early. Joe McCleary will be the HRSMS sponsor for this meeting.

HRSMS members should enter through the library main door on that evening located at the far right hand end of the building as viewed from the parking lot (about 20 yards to the right of the "Business Entrance"). We will have a short business meeting, followed by presentations from archivists Gregg Cina and Josh Graml.

(see article "June Meeting" in the April issue of the Logbook)

Welcome to Mystery Photo, *Logbook* No. 191. This was a fun month for our Mystery Photo. Two very interesting things happened. One, we ran the most popular photograph--ever! Responses far outstripped those for any other photograph. Last count put the total at eight. And two, Clarke moved very quickly to disavowal ownership of it, and he also didn't play. What do you suppose this means? There's a story here, but maybe one better left for another time. As for the rest of us, replies came by phone, E-mail, and spoken word. Replies arrived over a 2-week period. Should make for an interesting column.

This column is a lot of fun to write especially when the task is assembling many differing viewpoints and opinions about a vessel's identity and career. Sometimes, the challenge is conveying the emotion in the respondent's calls and letters. Other times, it's little more than compiling their thoughts into interesting prose. But uniting these responses into a cohesive whole and capturing that emotion is the point of this column and so we shall proceed.

Harvey Williams called the same day my logbook arrived and is credited as the first to reply. He had a very personal story to share about our Mystery Vessel--two stories actually. It seems that as a young lad he was lucky enough to attend the christening of the luxury liner *America* at Newport News Shipbuilding. He recalled looking on as the ship's sponsor, Ethel Roosevelt, broke the champagne on the bow and watching as she slid into the James River. And then the following year as he and some friends were enjoying the surf on the north shore of Princes Anne County, now Virginia Beach, they paused long enough to see that same ship steam past on her way to her builders trials. Harvey could recall as if it were yesterday how the ship threw huge breakers on shore and how he and his pals rolled in them. Harvey mentioned that this liner was the largest ship he had ever seen go by.

Alan Frazer lost out on top honors by only minutes. His call came in not ten minutes after Harvey's. Alan, too, named our Mystery vessel the liner *America*, but was quick to point out that she was the troop ship *West Point* in our photograph. Alan then described an incident from long ago where he was asked to identify and comment on a ship model that purported to be the *United States*. After he finished his study, he concluded that the model was actuality of the liner *America*. To the uninitiated I suppose that near sisters could

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be difficult to tell apart especially when they are wearing the same dress. The task allowed Alan the opportunity to identify, list, and catalog the differences between the two, and it was an experience he never forgot, and the same lesson we impart with this column.

Now, an apology goes to Bob Krumpen who probably deserves the top spot for responding first. But my E-mail does not record send and arrival times, and since I didn't retrieve my mail until after Harvey and Alan called, I think it only fair that I list him third. Bob's response correctly states: "The vessel in the Mystery Photo in Logbook No. 191 appears to be the *USS WEST POINT* (ex *SS AMERICA*)." Citing a source I don't have (don't act so shocked,) Bob found this same photo. As he states: "The photo of the *USS WEST POINT* in Howard F. Balison's Newport News Ships (facing page 298) matches this Mystery Photo. Note the similarity of the camouflage painting, the curved shape of the forward edge of the top of the funnel, and the shape of the fins on the funnel." Maybe Bob will bring the book to the June meeting, our maybe we can ask the librarian to search for it in the Library's stacks.

Following Bob's e-mail, I received a cornucopia of responses! "The vessel in the Mystery Photo in Logbook No. 191 appears to be the *USS WEST POINT* (ex *SS AMERICA*.) (begun as Maritime Commission Hull #1) whose model graces the Great Hall at the Mariner's Museum." argues Dave Baker. Bill Fox makes this claim: "Obviously *USS West Point*, ex-*America*, arguably the most historic ship ever built by NNS!" Rob Napier checked in next and as part of his commentary he introduces the second new resource of this month's column (another that I don't have.) This is what he has to say: "Well, those little fins on the forward funnel hand deliver the identity as a United States Lines's vessel. The subject that initially popped into my mind was the liner *America*. First I went to Arnold Kludas's *Great Passenger Ships of the World*, Volume 4, and looked for *America*. There I discovered a hard to read image of a very similar vessel that had been launched from Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock [Company] in 1939. The text reported that for duty in World War Two, *America* had been renamed *West Point*." Bob Comet was next and makes this claim: "Who could mistake those stately, shapely lines. The *USS West Point*, fast troop transport, ex *SS America*, of the United States Lines built in Newport [News] Shipbuilding and Drydock Co." And finally, Marc Heilenday sent this: "Had never seen the photo of *WEST POINT* before. Angle of pic is not great, but [I] don't think ID will elude many members!" And that about sums up this identification.

The vessel data and history that follows is a compilation of operational data contained in Dave Baker's response, but with a nod to Bob and Rob's responses. Dave provides most of the statistical measures of *West Point's* career by citing *The Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* (*DANFS*) our usual source for these things. According to Dave and *DANFS*: "*WEST POINT* at the end of World War II was rated as displacing 35,440 tons full load; she was 723 ft

overall (600 ft waterline) by 93 ft 3-in beam and had a limiting draft of 32 ft. 9 in. (110 tons per inch of immersion). Rob's source lists her displacement this way: "An interesting aspect of vessel measurement can be noted in the two books cited above. Kludas's figure for *America* is 26,454 gross tons, while the *DANFS* lists *West Point*, the same vessel, at 35,400 displacement tons." Dave continues: "The ship was listed as having made only 17.5 kts on trials after conversion as a transport, but ONI 222 for 1 September 1945 rated her as good for 22 knots maximum and 15 knots at economical speed. Her two sets of Newport News-made double reduction geared steam turbines produced a total of 34,000 shaft horsepower (less than I would have thought), and she had six Babcock and Wilcox "A" boilers, which operated at 450 p.s.i. and 725 degrees superheat. Fuel capacity was 4,380 tons of bunker and 525 tons of diesel. There were four 600 kw generators providing 100 and 240 volts d.c. The crew consisted of 57 officers and 912 enlisted, and she could accommodate 587 troop officers and 7,001 troop enlisted. Krumpen add to this by stating, "During the war she carried at least 505,020 passengers and steamed 436,144 miles." Dave's numbers were slightly different. His source listed this: "At any rate, the *WEST POINT* did yeoman service, carrying some 350,000 U.S. troops during her Navy service and, per *DANFS*, having no less than 9,305 (including ship's company) aboard during one 1944 voyage."

Dave was the only respondent brave enough to offer a time and place for the photograph. Says he, "Her camouflage did not change much during her wartime service, and so I am unable to pinpoint the date or location of the photo, but it might have been taken in San Francisco in June 1944 at the conclusion of a short refit."

No account of this vessel would be complete if we didn't mention her post military service and subsequent

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## Report on Greg Harrington

Got a post card last Friday from Greg, who is enjoying the Cheevers' tour of Denmark, and decided it needed to be shared with the club. The post card has 6 photos depicting the Danish Frigate *Jylland* in her permanent dry-dock at Ebeltoft, Denmark. Besides other remarks Greg has this to say: "On one of the many days I have worked, while Denmark enjoyed one of their many national holidays, I went and had coffee at the house of your friend Frank Jorgensen. Very nice man, and some excellent models. A great shop he has in the basement." He finishes by asking me to say "hi" to everyone for him. I will bring to card to the meeting.

As for Frank, well you can see his work on his web site: <http://www.fj-shipmodels.dk/>



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**Minutes:** The meeting got off to a quick start and looked to set a record for shortest elapsed time. The members were obviously intent on getting to the strawberries. Matters coming under the Old and New business headings were quickly dispatched.

**Old Business:**

- Skipper formally thanked Joe McCleary and Bill Clarke for arranging the yearly Wives’ Banquet. It was a success. The food was good and the company enjoyable. After dinner the skipper had several remarks for the crowd before announcing the 2002 Founder’s award winner, this year Alan Frazer. We extended a special thank you to Heinz and Mareke Schiller for the social hour.
- Len Wine distributed the last of the new club shirts to those who ordered them. He mentioned that he has several extras. If you don’t have the new shirt, better get one while we got them!

**New Business:**

- Bill Altice mentioned that he has photographs of a model he either is or has restored for a client that graphically illustrate what happens to lead fittings on a model: They turn to powder. He also made a call for modelers interested in making half-hull models for fun and profit. If you’re interested get in touch with Bill.
- Skipper Bob Comet and Graham Horne reviewed the speaker list and topics for up-coming presentations of our to-build-a-ship-model series.
- A report was made on Joe McCleary’s condition following his recent surgery (he was not in attendance.) Those who attended the banquet saw first hand the

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demise. Dave sums her civilian career best: “Decommissioned on 28 February 1946, *WEST POINT* was stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on 12 March 1946 and returned to United States Lines on 31 October of that year. She operated until 1964 for U.S. Lines until sold that year to the Greek Chandris Shipping Line, which renamed her *AUSTRALIS*; for Chandris, she operated into 1977 before sale for conversion to a cruise liner, which never was completed.” *America* languished at Piraeus, Greece from 1977 until being sold to the Chaophraya Development Transport Company in October 1992 and renamed *American Star*. She was to be towed to Phuket, Thailand for use as a five-star floating hotel. She left Piraeus on Christmas Eve on a journey she would never complete. On January 18, *American Star* parted her tow and went aground on the West Coast of Fuerteventura Island, and almost 48-hours later, she broke in two. I will bring an account of her last voyage to the meeting.

And finally, Rob brings an interesting observation to the forefront; something that we need to understand if we are to truly appreciate the size and complexity of ships. Rob writes: “An interesting aspect of vessel measurement can be noted in the two books cited above. Kludas’s figure for *America* is 26,454 gross tons, while the *DANFS* lists West Point, the same vessel, at 35,400 displacement tons. Kludas writes about vessels as civilian merchant ships. As such, he includes figures for tonnage as gross tonnage. (Incidentally, gross and registered tonnage is the same thing.) It is important to understand that gross tons are not a measurement of the weight of anything. Rather, they are a measurement of a vessel’s enclosed volume at so many cubic feet per ton. Gross tonnage is used to determine taxes, tariffs, and other bureaucratic aspects of a vessel’s life. Net tonnage is what you get when you subtract the non-revenue-producing volume of a vessel from the volume that determines the gross tonnage. In other words, net tonnage is a merchant vessel’s income-producing volume, such as cargo holds, passenger accommodations, and the like. The volumes used for machinery spaces, fuel, crew accommodations, and so forth, are not part of the net tonnage.

On the other hand, the *DANFS* talks about vessels as military entities, and, thus, uses displacement tonnage as its measurement standard. Military vessels are not used to generate income and are not taxed the same as merchant vessels. It is not important -- except to people like Cheevers who have to cram as much stuff as possible into a hull -- how much volume they enclose; what is important is how much they weigh for engineering purposes. This is measured in actual tons of the weight of water they displace when afloat.”

Rob is correct! Naval vessels are designed with much narrower weight margins and operating margins. The difference between design displacement and full load displacement determines what material (shells, bombs, missiles, gas, food, and future systems) can be loaded on board. But it is more important to note where the weight goes than how much weight is involved. A vessel’s performance is directly related to these weights.

Thanks to all who contributed this month.

John Cheevers

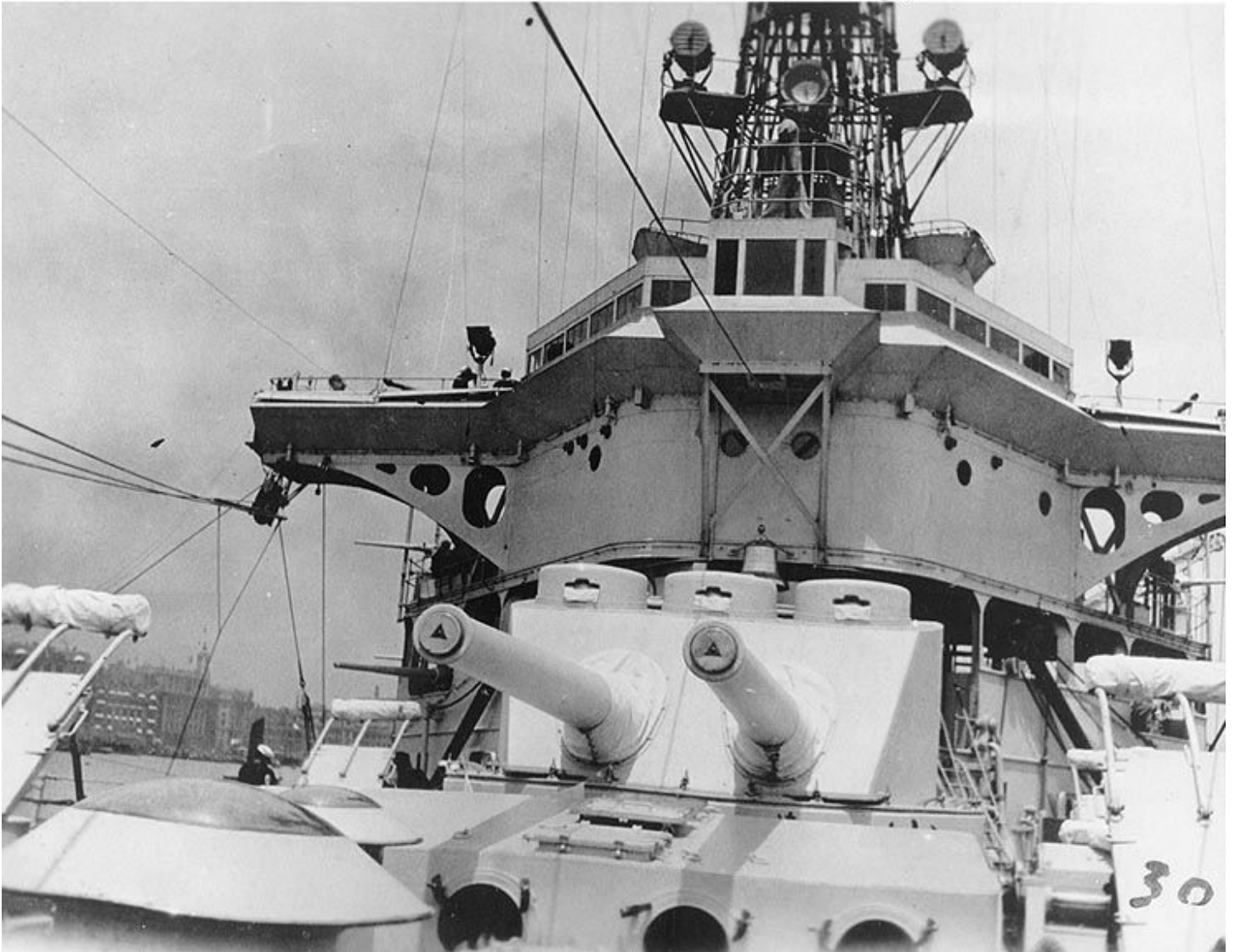
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## Shop Note From Joe McCleary

There is a company in Rhode Island called the Thurston Company that supplies a wide range of small (three to four inch diameter) circular saw blades in a wide variety of styles that are very useful to ship model builders, as these saws will fit most of the small table saws commonly used by ship model builders, such as Dremel, Microlux and Preac. Effective the 3rd of June, Thurston is moving to new, larger quarters. Their new address is:

Thurston Manufacturing Company  
14 Thurber Blvd  
Smithfield, Rhode Island 02917  
Phone: 401 232 9100  
Fax: 401 232 9101  
E-mail: info@thurstonmfg.com  
Website: www.thurstonmfg.com

Photo # NH 71964 View on the foredeck of USS Pittsburgh, 1930





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excellent progress he is making. It's reported he is to get off the crutches shortly. Well Joe, that's one less crutch you'll have to lean on!

- There was no other business.

#### **Show and tell:**

We went around the room giving everyone an opportunity to present their items of interest:

- Bob Comet showed a real nifty sanding tool that a friend of his, Chuck Loer, made. It's about 6-inches long constructed from a flat aluminum plate, two wooden blocks or phenolic blocks, and a turnbuckle, this sanding tool can smooth concave, convex, and flat surfaces simply by tightening or loosening the turnbuckle. What say ye skipper; any chance of getting some for the crew?
- Dean Sword made a call for sources selling band saw blades. He was amply rewarded with many sources both local and mail order. One tip: If you have the ability to silver solder, you can buy blade material in bulk rolls and save a few bucks.
- Graham Horne demonstrated the sliding cut off table, or shooting board as he called it, which he made to work with his Preac table saw. The work was up to Graham's usual standards. Along with Roger Cole's endorsement, Graham recommends using Weldbond brand glue. He mentioned that there is a traveling exhibit of models, art work, and nautical items from the Musee De La Marine that is currently on display in Wilmington, Delaware. It is a must see if you can arrange it. See Graham for more details.
- Dave Baker mentioned that the National Geographic Society has an exhibit of model ships called 'Icons From The Sea: The Artistry of Ship Models.' It seems that most or all of the models on display are from the Fine Art Models Company. It's reported that these models are made by Russian, Latvian, and South Korean artisans. The exhibit will last through September 2, 2002. Dave also circulated a book titled Modeling the Late Victorian Battleships, by noted British model maker Brian King. Excellent model building photographs, and Brian, being a Brit, R/C's his stuff!
- Alan Frazer has the latest copy of Transfer, issue #34, from the Rail Marine Information Group specializing in matters where railroads meet water. This issue has lots of data about waterborne railway matters right here in Hampton Roads. The photographs are superb, especially those of the tug *Louisville*.
- Frank Mastini passed around a copy of Franco Gay's instruction booklet for building a model of the Italian sail-training vessel *Amerigo Vespucci*. Although written in Italian, if you contact Frank he can hook you up with an English language translation. Once again the photographs in the book are superb.
- And last but not least Bill Clarke regaled us with an interesting and funny report on his recent trip to the Old

Country. This time when he met with his British buddies they went to the continent on nautical related matters.

- Although not discussed during the meeting this information can into my possession during the meeting and I feel it is appropriate to mention here: Kudos to the Shiller family for having their company, Shiller International, voted one of the "Fantastic 50" in Virginia business for 2002. A unique and distinguished honor indeed!

#### **Program: To Build A Ship Model**

- Graham Horne had the program for May and he gave an encore presentation of his program for sharpening tools. Instead of using a leather strap or wheel to strop the tool, Graham recommends using a lamb's wool wheel. See Graham for sources, I failed to write them down.

The meeting was adjourned and a herd mentality ensued as the members raced to be first in line for strawberries. Quite a few members, who shall remain nameless, were spotted in line more than once. Everyone enjoyed fellowship with club members and the fine fare provided by our gracious host. Thanks go to Bill for providing another gracious and fun evening.

Submitted by John Cheevers (silent partner)

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From: *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Vol.V - p 166

#### **Orchid**

Any plant of the family *Orchidaceae*. A former Coast Guard name retained.

(WAGL-240: dp. 677; l. 174'; b. 30'; dr. 13'; s. 12 k.; cpl. 33)

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## NOTABLE EVENTS

- JUNE**
- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation: Library Tour
- JULY**
- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: McCleary - Wine  
Presentation: Dave Baker, 1/1200 Sacle
- AUGUST**
- 3 2002 Model Ship Regatta, Philadelphia, Pa.
- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host Alan Frazer  
Presentation: Alan Frazer, Subject TBD
- SEPTEMBER**
- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:  
Presentation: Bob Comet, Sail Making
- OCTOBER**
- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:
- NOVEMBER**
- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:
- DECEMBER**
- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host: Jack Bobbitt
- JANUARY**
- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:
- FEBRUARY**
- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:
- MARCH**
- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:
- APRIL**
- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:
- MAY**
- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

## Thanks

The members would like to thank Bill Clarke for hosting the May meeting.

## WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL

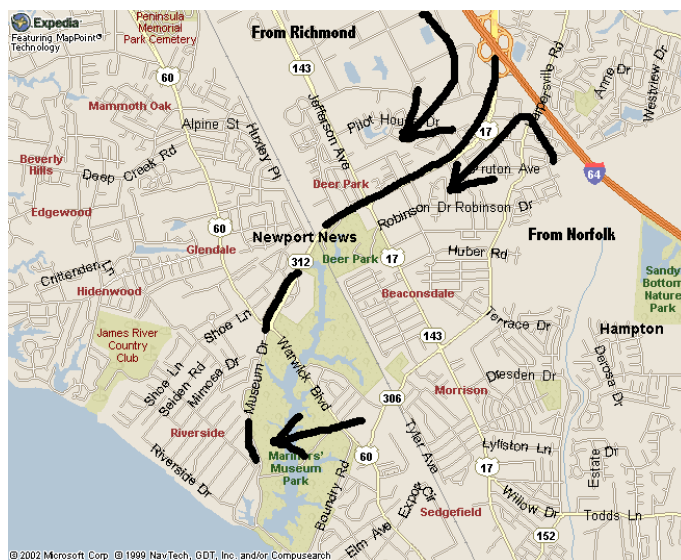


Skipper:	Bob Comet	(757) 934-1279
1 <sup>st</sup> Mate:	Len Wine	(757) 566-8597
Purser:	John Cheevers	(757) 591-8955
Clerk:	Tom Saunders	(757) 850-0580
Historian:	Len Wine	(757) 566-8597
Editors:	John Cheevers	(757) 591-8955
	Bill Clarke	(757) 868-6809
	Tom Saunders	(757)-850-0580

## Next Meeting

Date: June 14, 2002  
Place: 100 Museum Dr, Newport News, VA 23606-3757  
Time: 2000 Hours  
Host: Joe McCleary  
FFrom Points West  
Take **I-64 EAST**  
Take the **US-17 SOUTH** exit towards **J CLYDE MORRIS BOULEVARD**, exit **#258A** 0.3 Continue on **J CLYDE MORRIS BLVD** 2.5, Continue on **MUSEUM DR** 0.4

From Points East  
Take **I-64 WEST**  
Take the **US-17 SOUTH** exit towards **J CLYDE MORRIS BOULEVARD**, exit **#258A**  
Proceed as above



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*Orchid* was built in 1908 by American Brown Boveri Electrical Corp., Camden, N. J. as a Lighthouse Service tender. Assigned permanent station at Baltimore, Md., she operated through most of her career in Chesapeake Bay waters. She performed tender operations out of Baltimore through 1935, when she transferred to Norfolk, Va.

When the Lighthouse Service became part of the Coast Guard in 1939, *Orchid* was one of the older service craft that made the change. She continued active service as a buoy tender out of Norfolk through the war. In early December 1945 she decommissioned and was sold to the Philippine government.

## NOTICE

Dave Blanchard, the editor of the Nautical Research Journal has changed his e-mail address. He can now be reached at <windrose@adelphia.net>.

Joe McCleary