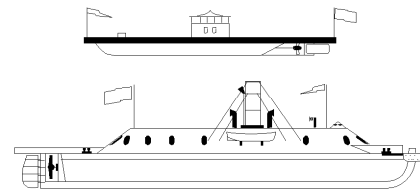


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook



No. 203

MAY, 2003

MINUTES



HRSMS Monthly Meeting
April 11, 2003

The meeting was called to order by the skipper at 2000 hours.

A Purser's report was given.

Tim Wood was attending his third meeting. He was asked if he desired to join the HRSMS. He was asked to leave the room while the ritual was executed. Tim returned and was welcomed as a new member. He was promptly asked to pay his dues.

The Skipper thanked Bill Clarke And John Cheevers for their efforts toward the annual banquet. Tom Saunders was congratulated for receiving the 2003 Founders Award.

An announcement that August and September still needed hosts. Eric Harfst said that he would host the August meeting.

The HRSMS Bylaws were discussed. Several changes or clarifications were proposed. There will be a second reading and vote on adoption at the May meeting of the following:

ARTICLE II addition of;

C. Participate with other nautical societies in joint meetings related to shipmodeling and nautical research.

ARTICLE V, Section 2 in part will be amended to read;
Candidates shall be nominated from the floor and/or by a nominating committee appointed by the skipper and published in the next newsletter.

ARTICLE V, Section 3 will be amended to read;
Term of office shall be one year, and the Skipper and the Mate shall serve no more than three consecutive terms.

Joe McCleary passed out the minutes of the

(Continued on page 3)

Thanks

The members would like to thank Dean Sword and his wife for hosting the March meeting.

Mystery Photo



Answer to Mystery Photo #202: With Bill off visiting the old country, it's ironic that our photo supplier also reached to the other side of the pond for this month's submission—another image designed to wet the model maker's appetite. Must be some sort of synergism there. Also, me thinks the editor must be getting sensitive. After last month's written bashing over errant hull numbers, he seems to have carefully doctored this vessel's flags and he may have obscured a hull feature or two as well. Or did he?

As I have written in this column many times, naval vessels in service with particular nations tend to carry distinctive design cues that identify their country of origin. In this case, if there is one thing that British cruisers are known for it's their bow knuckle. While it's true that not all British cruiser designs had it, it is true that all new building after and including the E-class of 1926 carried it; except for one exception! Who can tell me the name of that vessel?

OK, with that big hint what does the membership have to say about our latest mystery? Plenty! Tim Woods begins benchmarking the vessel by specifying a country of origin and a class type when he suggests the vessel was a light cruiser of the British *Southampton*-class. Bob Comet and a recently returned Bill "just call me Lefty" Clarke echo Woods choice and reduce the pick list to *HMS Birmingham* itself—the only vessel under consideration built without a hull knuckle. Rob Napier responded, with misgivings, wondering if the vessel might be a Royal Navy *Fiji*-class cruiser. His concerns center on the absence of a knuckle in the bow shell plating and "on the slightly curving, overhanging stern." As Napier puts it, "It is not at all like the distinctive reverse-raked transoms in the Fiji class." Both Comet and Napier make mention of the strange flags. While Napier mentions that they [and a bow knuckle] may be doctored by, what he calls, a "nefarious image-monkier," Comet says this: "Since I don't believe the flags are those of the United Kingdom, I presume she was sold to someone else, corresponding to the flags shown flying."

Let's look closely at the image and see if we can define other benchmarks for the specific class and eliminate any interference from that "nefarious image-monkier." (I had to repeat the phrase, its rich!)

We are presented with a large warship at anchor. The hull has a raised forecastle that extends nearly half the length of main deck. The vessel carries twin superposed triple turrets forward, a tall rounded bridge, twin stacks, a lattice foremast

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

and tripod main mast, and various secondary armaments, directors, and radars. Four flags are evident, and they do indeed appear to be doctored and will not offer much help. (Tom: you should never have bought that box of “Sharpies.”) And the forward half of the hull is in shadow; you can see a shadow line right near the bow.

There are several items that offer much to our quest, the slight rake of the stacks, for instance; the flat, bugle shaped ventilation plenum that exits the ship just at the break of the upper deck adjacent to “B” turret; and the mixed-type masts. The stacks and vent will define the ship class while the masts will help define the time frame of this image.

Our players are correct in suggesting that this vessel’s design most closely fits that of a British light cruiser of the Second World War era. Using completion dates as a guide, it is easy to learn that between 1937 and 1942 Britain built four very similar groups of light cruisers: the *Southampton*, *Edinburgh*, *Fiji*, and *Uganda* classes, the group in aggregate comprising some 21 vessels. We can immediately discount the *Edinburgh* type because of the elongated hull section between the deckhouse and the forward stack. That leaves 19 vessels for our consideration. Of these, only the eight *Southampton*’s have angled raking stacks. And of these eight, only five survived the war and really are the only ships that comprise our search group. All five went to the ship breakers between 1957 and 1960. This limits our window of time to a period between 1946 and 1960.

To repeat and paraphrase Comet and Clarke, one of these five--*HMS Birmingham*--was built without the distinctive hull knuckle. It seems safe to assume that she is our mystery vessel. But what if Napier is right when he suggests that a "nefarious image-monkier" might be at work? What if, as he suggests, “the knuckle is all but invisible because of lighting conditions?” He spotted several images of *Fiji*-class cruisers with this condition in M. J. Whitley’s book, *Cruisers of World War Two an International Encyclopedia*. I would hasten to include several of the *Southampton* images in this group as well.

Setting aside the raking stacks for the moment, what can we mine from the literature that will help in our search? The best nuggets come from the post war issues of *Jane’s fighting ships*. I used the 1957 edition of *Jane’s* and found these: Under General Notes for the *Southampton* class, “In all ships of [the] class, special ventilating trunks have been installed, with openings on either side of the hull at break of deck level abreast of “B” turret;” under Appearance notes, “*Birmingham* differs from remainder of class in having plain bow without knuckle;” under Reconstruction notes, “*Birmingham* and *Newcastle* reconstructed and modernized, 1950-52, modifications including new bridge structures rebuilt with round front...new lattice foremast, but tripod mainmast retained.” Pretty damning stuff! And that’s the point I want to make. Of all the features we found; the vent plenum, mast arrangement and round front bridge are our best clues. They aren’t obscured by the “nefarious image moniker” or lighting conditions.

The list of candidates, hull knuckle notwithstanding, is reduced to two vessels-- *Birmingham* and *Newcastle*. For

kicks, I looked at the portholes in the forward bows of each vessel to see if there were differences in number or groupings. And I was rewarded for the effort! Images of *Birmingham* and *Newcastle* on page 26 of the 1957 issue of *Jane’s*, dated 1955 and 1952 respectively, show where *Newcastle* carried far more portholes in the upper row than *Birmingham*. Furthermore, the pattern in the *Jane’s* photo matched that in our Mystery Photo.

With our time window now reduced to the years 1952 through 1960, can we more accurately date this image of *HMS Birmingham*? Comet thinks the image was made after her 1950-52 re-fit. Clarke, noting the absence of other ships in the vicinity, wonders if the image was made during the Naval Review at Spithead in 1953. Napier and Woods don’t say, and I don’t have a clue.

I was intrigued by Napier’s comments concerning the appearance and shape of the stern. The *Southampton* class displaced 9,100-tons and enjoyed a finely sculptured and narrow cruiser stern. The Second London Naval Treaty of 1937 limited all new built cruisers to 8,000 tons. As a result, British designers introduced the transom shaped stern with the *Fiji*-class cruiser program as one of many weight saving measures. Simply put, they already had a tried and true hull form and merely added the transom as a cheater. This type stern fools the wake into thinking the vessel is much longer which helps to reduce drag.

Lastly, one has to wonder at the graciousness of the British admiralty for having the foresight to build the *Southampton*’s with two different bows. That way even modelers who cannot master the distinctive knuckle shape can still model one from the class. Bravo!

John Cheevers

THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 202.

From the caption on the photo:

“U. K. CL Birmingham - - 1952”

The answer to Mystery Photo 201:

From the caption on the photo:

1688-45, Puget Sound Navy Yard, 2 April 1945.

DD367 – Broadside view, starboard side.

Notes on the back of the photo:

U.S.S. Lamson (DD367) – Mahan Class

Unique configuration – 2 quad 40 mm AA, 1 good

TT set



(Continued from page 1)

NRG Conference Committee. The following is an excerpt:

The following subcommittees were formed to oversee the indicated activities:

Treasurer/Registrar - Cheevers

Publicity/Fliers - Wine

Hotel - Clarke/McCleary (McCleary will be live-in representative) Museum/Friday Reception - McCleary/Baker

Vendors - Cheevers/Baker

NRG liaison - McCleary

Cruise boat - Clarke/Cheevers

It was agreed that only the above designated committee members will deal with the indicated venue/activity in order to avoid confusion.

Jack Bobbitt noted tha the Mariners' Museum would be taking measurements of the Monitor engine in the April 15 timeframe.

There was discussion of a HRSMS Flier that could be handed out at the Mariners' Museum model shipbuilding area (The Taco Stand). Tim Wood said that he would be willing to compose the flier and would bring a digital camera to the next meeting and would take pictures of models for inclusion in the flier.

Show & Tell: Jack Bobbitt showed a Scale Model Engineering catalog. Dean Sword showed two books American PT Boats in World War II and The Worlds Worst Boats. John Cheevers displayed a newley acquired push drill and a Grizzly Catalog. Joe McCleary showed some clamps and sang the praises of a miniture Buck Brothers block plane.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation, "Casting" , by Joe McCleary.

BILGEWATER

**ALL THAT IS FIT TO PRINT
AND SOME THAT IS NOT**

Several weeks ago I was reading an article in the Virginian Pilot that the *Skipjack Norfolk* was being put up for repairs. Originally the *George C. Collier*, she was built around the turn of the last century on Deal Island Maryland. The Boat was given to the City of Norfolk. In 1978 and was used for various purposes.

One afternoon I decided to go have a look. I found her at the Norfolk Boat Works off Brambleton Avenue, near downtown. It is not often that I would get the chance to see a skipjack out of the water. It was kind of like looking at an aged movie star, pretty rough but her beauty shinning through. There was some rot, mainly topside, around the sternpost and stem. The bottom and sides were in fair shape. Books and drawings describe boat construction, but there is

nothing like seeing the real deal. Every builder has their own method of construction. So, it is very interesting to observe the details such as, the rail, rudder fittings, bowsprit with its hardware and the mast rigging. The bottom was planked all the way forward instead of using a hewn chunk at the bow as described by Ben Lankford in the construction of the *Willie Bennett*.

I spent a couple of hours poking around and talking to folks working on nearby boats. A return visit will take place when time permits. If you have an interest in Skipjacks, the short trip to Norfolk is worth the effort.

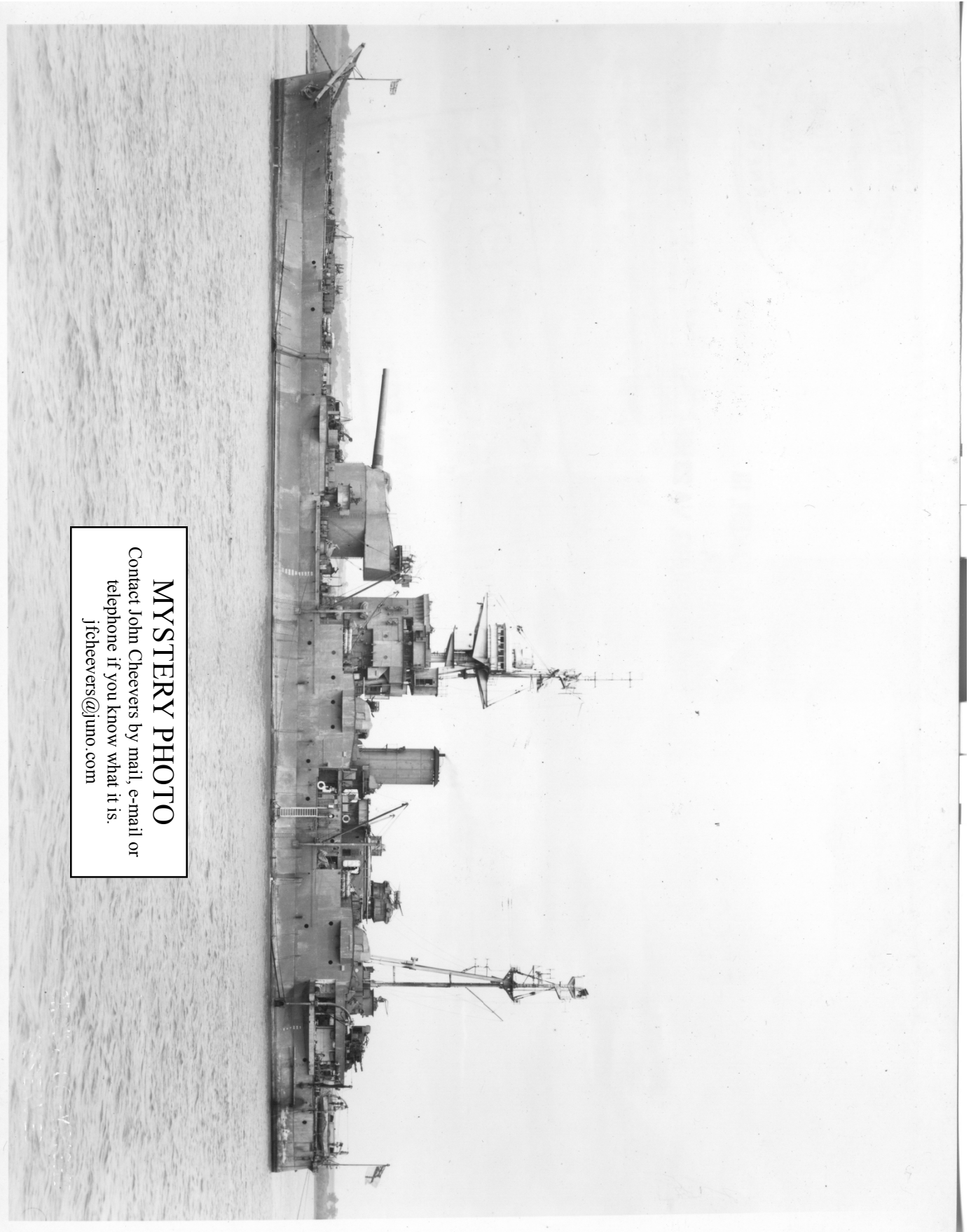
The repair is going to cost around \$170,000. A group of Norfolk businessmen is exploring the possibility of starting a foundation to raise money for the repair and upkeep of the *Norfolk* as the City funds only \$20,000 per year. If the foundation becomes a reality, think about giving a little support to help this treasure from meeting an unlady-like end.

Cabin Boy



The Skipjack Norfolk at the Norfolk Boat Works





MYSTERY PHOTO
Contact John Cheevers by mail, e-mail or
telephone if you know what it is.
jfcheevers@juno.com

The photographs show the removal of the lifting spider from the Monitor turret and the turret in the conservation tank.

Photographs by Greg Vicik from the Museum's Photography Department



A Note from Alan Frazer

Some of you may find this, from John Fryant, to be of interest. John is a good source for some unusual steamboat plans.

John Fryant's Paddlewheels & Props plans catalog now has its

In the News

The Virginian Pilot

Published: April 16, 2003 in BUSINESS section, page D1
HISTORIC SHIP GETS NEW LEASE ON LIFE

Taking the maritime industry by surprise, Norwegian Cruise Lines announced Monday that it has bought the storied superliner United States –

TITANIC ARTIFACTS : COLLECTION MAY BE DONATED TO THE MARINERS' MUSEUM

The Virginian Pilot

Published: April 15, 2003 in LOCAL section, page B1

Six thousand artifacts salvaged from the shipwreck Titanic since 1987 may be donated to the Mariners' Museum in Newport News. -

NOTABLE EVENTS

MAY

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bill Clarke
Presentation, Gratings, windows and sky lights,
Joe McCleary
- 17 International Small Craft Center Opening,
Mariners' Museum

JUNE

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Alan Frazer
Presentation, Lofting for Modelmakers, Jack Bobbitt

JULY

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: McCleary, Wine
Presentation, Rigging III, Bob Comet

AUGUST

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host Eric Harfst

SEPTEMBER

- 6 Mid-Atlantic Maritime Festival
- 6 2003 Sship Model Regatta & Display
Independance Seaport Museum, Philidelphia, Pa.
- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:
- 20 Festival in the Park, Mariners' Museum
- 27 Scientific & Navigational Instrument Exhibition
Opening, Mariners' Museum

OCTOBER

- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Greg
Harrington

NOVEMBER

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host; Heinz Schiller

DECEMBER

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Jack Bobbitt

JANUARY

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host: Bob Comet

FEBRUARY

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Election of Officers

MARCH

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

APRIL

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

**WATCH, QUARTER
AND
STATION BILL**



Skipper: Joe McCleary (757) 253-1802
 Mate: Dave Baker (757) 565-7991
 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

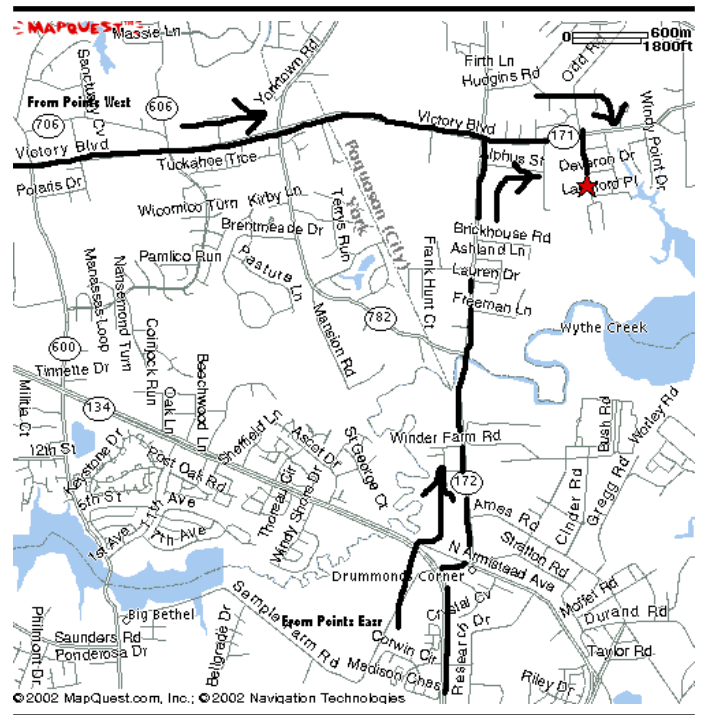
Date: May 9, 2003
 Place: 190 Odd Rd Poquoson, VA 23662-2035
 Time: 2000 Hours
 Host: Bill Clarke

From Points West:

Take I-64 E. 65.88 miles : Take the VICTORY BLVD EAST exit- exit number 256B- towards POQUOSON. 0.30 miles : Merge onto VICTORY BLVD. 5.02 miles : VICTORY BLVD becomes VA-171/LITTLE FLORIDA RD. 0.49 miles : Turn RIGHT onto ODD RD. . 0.25 miles

From Points East:

Take I-64 W. : Take the VA-134 N/MAGRUDER BLVD exit - exit number 262B- towards NASA/POQUOSON. 0.25 miles: Merge onto VA-134 N/MAGRUDER BLVD. 2.92 miles: Turn RIGHT onto SEMPLE FARM RD. 0.14 miles: Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto N ARMISTEAD AVE. 0.02 miles: Turn LEFT onto VA-172/WYTHE CREEK RD. 2.10 miles: Turn RIGHT onto VA-171/LITTLE FLORIDA RD. 0.49 miles: Turn RIGHT onto ODD RD. 0.25 miles



We still need a host for the September monthly meeting. If you can help, contact the Skipper.