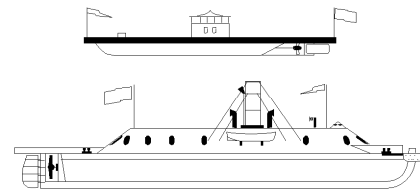


# Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

# Logbook



No. 209

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

NOVEMBER, 2003

## FROM THE PILOTHOUSE



## Mystery Photo



D'YOU HEAR THERE FORE AND AFT!

Many thanks to Greg Harrington for sponsoring our last meeting in his company's conference room. Such locales make good meeting sites, because there is a lot of room available to bring models and other things in and show them to the members. Greg's contest employing recognition models was a great idea. Hopefully we will find out the results at the next meeting.

One of our newer members asked a superb question: Are the more experienced members willing to give personal help to other members who may need help in mastering a new skill or improving an old one? The answer is most certainly YES! Frank Mastini has made a standing offer to help any member learn his method of building improved kit models and has helped a number of our members. I have worked with a number of members on particular projects. If any of our members needs help the need can be satisfied two ways: First, put out a general request for the help needed either in the Logbook or at a meeting. Second, approach one of the members who you think has the knowledge and skill you would like to tap into. If the individual cannot help you, he can probably recommend another member who can.

Speaking of help, if anyone who was not at the last meeting would like a copy of the hand out on making plexiglas cases, please let me know.

Bob Comet has been doing a great job managing our series of lectures on model ship building, but now he needs your help. He needs ideas for future subjects and that includes requests for a repeat of a subject that may have been given sometime ago but needs to be refreshed. Bob will pass out suggestion forms at our next meeting and ask the members to submit their requests. So start thinking of what subjects you would like to request.

December is getting ever closer, and at that meeting we plan to have our auction. Pat McCarthy has donated a

*(Continued on page 2)*

Answer to Mystery Photo No. 208: When Bill asked, I jokingly told him that the vessel was either HMS Perforation or USS Cheese Grater because the damn thing looks like it is built from expanded metal. And that's the point, really. With this Mystery, Bill is offering the group a chance to explore navy camouflage. Are (were) we up to the task?

Identifying the type of vessel is easy. I doubt there are many red-blooded Americans out there who can't identify the classic shape of the North American tugboat; even stylized toy caricatures don't deviate much from the recipe. But this special tugboat is presented with a unique disguise. If you look in the usual vessel listings for this boat, you will more than likely come away disappointed. Records of purpose built and acquired navy vessels from around the turn of the century are very spotty and finding an accompanying photographic image is more miss than hit.

Take a step back from the tugboat for a minute and look at the entire image. In addition to our camouflage subject, more rich, period detail begins to emerge. A close inspection reveals a second vessel in the left background. It appears to be a four-stack destroyer wearing a large pendant number that could read "55." Directly behind the tugboat is a derrick of some sort. Look at it carefully; it should be familiar. This derrick has been in the background of other mystery photos. These two items should help you place the image and considerably narrow the time frame.

As I indicated earlier, to solve this Mystery we have to bypass the regular ship listings and information sources to concentrate on material associated with camouflage. In this case, understanding the "how and why" of camouflage should provide the "who and what" of the vessel. From a layman's perspective, I can say that this pattern is consistent with examples of the very busy patterning usually seen on vessels in service during World War One (WWI.) And that's where I plan to begin my search.

I know of several recent publications dealing with the camouflage of ships and vessels. But not owning any of

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## HRSMS AUCTION

An auction to benefit the HRSMS will be held at the December meeting. Contact Dave Baker if you have items to donate.



(Continued from page 1)

model kit and John Cheevers has sent in a list of items he plans to offer, so keep pawing through your cabinets and closets. Proceeds will go to support the HRSMS treasury.

Late breaking news! I have just been informed that Clay Feldman has sold his interest in Seaways Publishing which published the magazine Seaways, Ships in Scale. I have no details, but this has evidently been a closely held secret for a while though Clay recently announced the event himself. Clay's new e-mail address is: [cafelman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cafelman@sbcglobal.net).

THAT IS ALL (for now).



(Continued from page 1)

them, I decided to find the two handouts on camouflage that I picked up at a symposium several years ago. I also scoured the Internet for related articles.

Purely by coincidence, the author of the handouts, honorary member Bob Sumrall, weighed in with our first reply. Nothing more than a short, two-sentence reply, he had this to say: "The photo is of *USS Narkeeta* (YT-3) in an experimental "Brush" camouflage measure. RE: my article in USNI Proceedings, July 1971." In the article Bob refers to another image of *Narkeeta* that shows the port side. Later, Dave Baker responded with a shorter-than-usual memo: "I believe the mystery ship from the latest newsletter is the U.S. Navy *Wahneta*-class tugboat *Narkeeta* (YT-3), which was used for deceptive camouflage trials during 1917." With identification in hand, I pursued the "how and why" with more vigor.

Well, it took two days of digging to find the handouts, but I found them. Titled "Ship Camouflage (WWI): Deceptive Art and Ship Camouflage (WWII): Deceptive Art," they appear in the July 1971 and February 1973 issues of the United States Naval Institute Proceedings (USNI Proceedings) respectively. The WWI article explains the how and why behind our Mystery Photo. Together, these articles and Alan Raven's fine piece: The Development of Naval Camouflage 1914 – 1945, a multi part article, which I found on the Internet, gave me enough information to proceed.

To begin developing an understanding of camouflage, we need to appreciate what Sumrall says: "As employed by man, camouflage – that oldest of nature's protective measures – is the technique of disguising equipment or installations with paint, nets, foliage, or other protective devices." Raven agrees, but adds: "The successful camouflaging of mobile objects is substantially more difficult a task for the obvious reason that movement attracts the eye." As the steel navy era dawned, operating and engagement ranges grew exponentially. No longer did commanders wait to see "the white's of their eyes" or plan to fight an enemy in hand-to-hand combat. Atmospheric conditions began to play a part in naval tactics. A method was needed to trick the eye

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# MINUTES



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HRSMS Monthly Meeting  
October 10, 2003  
Host, Greg Harrington  
Guest, Clint Phillips, 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

There were no corrections to the minutes.

An informal Purser's report was given.

Old Business: Tim Wood presented the final version of the HRSMS flier. The Skipper thanked him for his effort and said that he would have the printing done. The Clerk was directed to make distribution of the revised HRSMS Bylaws. Joe read a letter to the NRG regarding the 2005 Conference. There was a discussion of the 2005 Ship Model Competition.

New Business: John Cheevers made a motion that was passed to make a donation to the MTS Society in the name of Bill Clarke's grand daughter, Mackenzie Clarke. Ulrich Guenther sent examples of laser engraving.

Show & Tell: Greg Harrington showed Intelliship, integrated shipbuilding design software. Bob Comet showed fixtures for cutting the shear and camber of solid hulls. John Cheevers showed a Danish book of ships and plans. Joe McCleary blessed us with a plethora of catalogs.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation on "Making Plexiglass Cases", by Joe McCleary.

and help conceal vessels at sea. Realizing that complete invisibility was not physically possible, navy officials sought the best compromise.

With origins dating as far back as the American Revolution, the modern concept of camouflage was not formally recognized by the Navy Department until 1899. What we think of as ship camouflage was pioneered by Robert DeForest Brush, an artist known at that time for his studies of protective coloration in nature. Sumrall states that Brush suggested a "scheme of 'protective coloration' that was intended to reduce the undesirable visibility factor that existed in the standard ship-painting system." However, nothing of consequence was accomplished and interest was sidelined until the threat of war in 1914. Sumrall's article also points out an interesting fact: "It was at this time [1914] that the technique was first referred to as 'camouflage.'"

As the science evolved, two distinct themes for camouflage emerged: "dynamic" and "static." Dynamic camouflage involves physically altering or disguising the appearance of an object through temporary or permanent

(Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 2)

structural changes or by use of an appliqué. Our mystery photo from Logbook No. 196 introduced us to the dynamic method when we explored the hidden armament of the “Q” ship *USS Big Horn*. The “Static” form of camouflage, which is intended to reduce visibility or confuse the observer, is most often achieved by paint.

The credit for reviving “Static” painted-on camouflage and permanently etching the idea in our naval lore should go to the British Admiralty. As the Great War erupted in Europe, the English began to protect their shipping from the German submarine threat by painting their vessels in a variety of camouflage schemes. Sensing some value in camouflage, the US Treasury Department’s Bureau of War Risk considered it “essential for US vessels entering the war or submarine danger zone to be camouflaged.” In fact, an insurance discount of up to ½-percent was offered to shippers that painted (camouflaged) their vessels entering into conflicted areas.

As the European war played out, German submarine activities began to take a toll of American shipping. By 1917 relations with Germany were very strained. America was slowly being pulled into the war. The breaking point came on April 1, 1917 when the US merchant ship *Aztec* was torpedoed and sunk. Five days later the United States formally entered into hostilities with Germany and her Axis allies.

Now at war, the US Navy Department assigned responsibility for control and implementation of camouflage for vessels to the newly formed Camouflage Section in the Maintenance Division of the Bureau of Construction and Repair. (You can just see the layers of bureaucracy forming.) Prominent artists were invited to propose “systems of camouflage.” From those submitted, five early war systems were approved for immediate use and named after their originator:

1. Jerome Brush. A system of countershading, by which lighter surfaces were treated with darker tones, and those appearing darker or in shadow were painted white or very light tones. It was intended to merge all sharp structural lines and bring the object to a flat, even mass blending with the horizon. Colors: black, white, and grays.

2. Louis Herzog. This scheme used broad color bands applied as arcs and circular forms frequently interrupted by change in direction, and avoiding straight lines. It was designed to produce a shimmering effect, like heat waves, on the reasoning that the eye is more confused by the use of irregular curves. Colors: blue, green, and violet/gray base.

3. William Mackay. This low visibility system employed either regular or disrupted patches of two colors on a base color. The theory was based on proper proportion of the colors exciting the optic nerves to interpret gray. The base color was dependent on local conditions of the horizon. Patches were proportioned so as to cause structural lines to blend at a specific distance, making the vessel difficult to observe. Colors: red, green, and violet.

4. Maximilian Toch. Using contrasting colors in

large diagonal streaks, reverse-curving forward, vertical and horizontal lines were broken up. Dark colors were concentrated near the water, which tended to reduce visibility at extreme ranges. A slight dazzle effect was produced at intermediate ranges. Colors: light blue gray, dark blue gray, dark green, and light pink purple.

5. Everett Warner. Various large, irregular patterns were applied in strongly contrasting colors and shades. The intent was of the system was to destroy the regular contours of the ship and dazzle the observer. No attempt was made to reduce visibility. Colors: red, blue, green, and white, or contrasting grays.

In addition to these five camouflage systems, two other early systems were developed:

1. Dazzle Camouflage. According to Raven, an Englishman, Norman Wilkinson, is credited as the inventor of Dazzle camouflage. He came to the United States in order to promote his ideas. “Dazzle camouflage had been adopted on a widespread basis throughout the British Merchant Fleet and by many warships of the patrol and escort type. So successful was he in convincing the U.S. authorities of the value of Dazzle camouflage that they immediately authorized all ocean going merchant ships to be so painted. The camouflage section of the Shipping Board prepared a total of 495 Dazzle designs, of these 302 were applied to merchant ships, 193 were applied to warships from cruisers down to patrol vessels and minesweepers. In addition to the above, 36 U.S. destroyers serving in British waters were painted in Dazzle patterns” prepared by the inventor.

2. Anti-Range-finding Camouflage also known as the Watson/Norfolk system. This system is intended to dazzle the eye and interfere with accurate range finding. A paint scheme consisting of large, regular shapes, of at least three dark colors, broke up all vertical and horizontal lines.

It wasn’t long before most merchant vessels discarded the early five systems and replaced them with the British Dazzle system. Again, according to Raven, by “1918 more than 1200 U.S. vessels were given Dazzle patterns, and only one percent were lost to torpedo attack.” It’s hard to say, and not clear in Raven’s the article, whether all the credit goes to this system or if other factors such as convoying, ASDIC, or ebb and flow played a part in this amazing statistic.

Raven’s article continues with the development of ship painting schemes: As the science associated with painting vessels to reduce their visibility evolved, “tests resulted in the adoption of a new gray color, one that was lighter, and this became the standard light gray from 1919 to 1941. The new light gray, (know during the inter-war period

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## NOTICE

Dave Baker will not be able to host the February meeting. If you would be willing to host the February meeting, please contact one of the HRSMS Officers.

## 2003 NRG CONFERENCE

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The following is excerpted from a detailed report from Alan Frazer.

The Radisson was very pleasant, clean, comfortable, and well-maintained. Rooms, at the conference rate, were a reasonable \$80 (including free airport shuttle). The banquet was \$40. There were sufficient restaurants in the area to provide alternatives to the hotel dining room. The hotel food at the reception and banquet was excellent, served efficiently, and the bartenders were pouring generous, unmeasured shots.

There was a good assortment of vendors. They shared two rooms with an impressive array of models, especially the miniatures by Gus Agustin and Tim Riggs (Gus donated a lovely little royal barge that was raffled off for \$5 a ticket or 5 for \$20, with the proceeds going to conference expenses

Choice between two tours each on Thursday and Friday (information on the other tours can be found by following the links at

[www.naut-res-guild.org/services/conferences](http://www.naut-res-guild.org/services/conferences)).

On Thursday we took a bus to Lockport, Illinois, to see the original Lock #1 of the Illinois & Michigan Canal, with a very interesting National Trust welcome center in an old mercantile building; The nearby I&M Canal Museum was not open, though we were there during posted hours. It was a charming area, with a neat, old-fashioned and still-active Main Street. Then out to the Lockport Dam and Lock on the current Illinois Waterway, where we lucked out and saw the lock in operation. There we boarded a working towboat of Egan Marine, Inc. and headed upstream (toward Chicago) through a mostly industrial landscape of railroads, refineries, factories, and bulk facilities for handling coal, sand and gravel, mulch and steel. Good box lunches en route, with some hi-jinks by the very friendly boat crew. Arriving at Egan's headquarters in Lemont, we got to see not only more of their towboats and barges but also—in the air-conditioned hold of a steel deck barge—Pacific Cigar Company (wrapping and packing what are reportedly very good Filipino cigars) and Pacific Tall Ships, which imports models, mostly European kits assembled in the Philippines. Over 300 models in stock. Kurt Van Dahm is a partner with one of the Egan's in the model venture.

Friday's tour took us to the great Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. They are going great guns since my last visit about 6–7 years back. The Burlington Zephyr is in the middle of an underground garage, steam locomotive 999 in a gallery with other locomotives, a brand new, spectacular model railroad, a 727 hanging from the ceiling and accessible from the balcony above, and construction in progress to put U-505 in another underground gallery. These very large artifacts were formerly outdoors but less accessible (and less protected) than they now are or will soon be. The ship models

gallery appears unchanged since my last visit; some magnificent, large models, my favorite being the splendid 1:48 *Pamir* (4-masted bark) built at the Museum in the 1930s. Bruce Hoff's elegant *Prince de Neufchatel* is a relatively recent addition.

Saturday there were six speakers. The presenters were varied and good:

1. Theodore Karamanski spoke on the smaller sailing ships of the Great Lakes. Some very nice images from old photos.
2. Ted Paris and Jon Warneke, partners in Commander Series Models, made a very useful and interesting presentation on resin castings and mold-making..
3. Christine Östling, Head of Collections at the Vasa Museet in Stockholm. Very interesting and informative talk on the *Vasa* and the sulfuric-acid problem that has surfaced in recent years, threatening to destroy the ship.
4. Kent Lund, collector of antique (pre-WWII) model power boats.
5. Keith Gill, Curator of U-505 and Transportation at Museum of Science and Industry. Very interesting and professional Power-Point presentation on the sub and other stuff, its history, acquisition by the museum, and current activities toward “burying” her.
6. Jim Griffiths, a very fine marine painter whose early inspiration was box art for Revell; he bought the kits for the boxes! He has since painted many for them. His slides were gorgeous.

The after-banquet speaker was Bryan Healy, an Iowan, who along with his wife, sat behind us on the bus from the museum. He and I had quite a chat about Western Rivers steamboat engines and she was often taking notes on a laptop. His “talk” was a very good impersonation of Mark Twain, complete with cigar, white wig and white suit, telling stories as he strolled around the room.

Our flight schedule precluded our attendance at the roundtables and r/c demos on Sunday morning.

The hosts also published a fine 21-page booklet including names and addresses of all conference staff, program and tour schedules, speakers, vendors, nearby restaurants, attendees, and lots of other stuff in a single convenient package instead of many loose handouts. I think this is the best preparation I have seen at any NRG conference. And the conference souvenir is both elegant and gorgeous.

We look forward to Alan's full report at the November meeting. Ed.

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### HRSMS NAMETAGS

Orders are now being taken for HRSMS nametags. If you need one, please contact Len Wine



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as Standard Navy Gray #5), was selected because of the following:

- 1) That the ship be as invisible as possible to an observer on a surface ship and on a submarine.
- 2) The weather be mostly overcast, or hazy or foggy, as in the North Sea area.
- 3) That the chosen gray was the best color under the above weather conditions.”

The adoption of the new color moves us past the time frame associated with our Mystery Photo and is included here to formally break our involvement with the study of camouflage and to whet your appetite to further pursue the topic. To that end, Dave Baker’s response lists a reference you might want to investigate: Naval Camouflage 1914-1945: A Complete [actually not at all complete] Visual Reference Guide, by David Williams, Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, Md., 2001

So, how does all of this “how and why” relate to the “who and what” of our Mystery Photo? Easy! As Sumrall has already pointed out, our vessel is painted in an experimental Brush camouflage system. He refers to another image of *Narkeeta* that does indeed confirm our mystery vessel’s identity. Baker says that another photo of *Narkeeta* (Naval Historical Center NH45637) appears on pg. 71 of the reference cited above. I wonder if these images are the same or if we have three images of *Narkeeta* to enjoy.

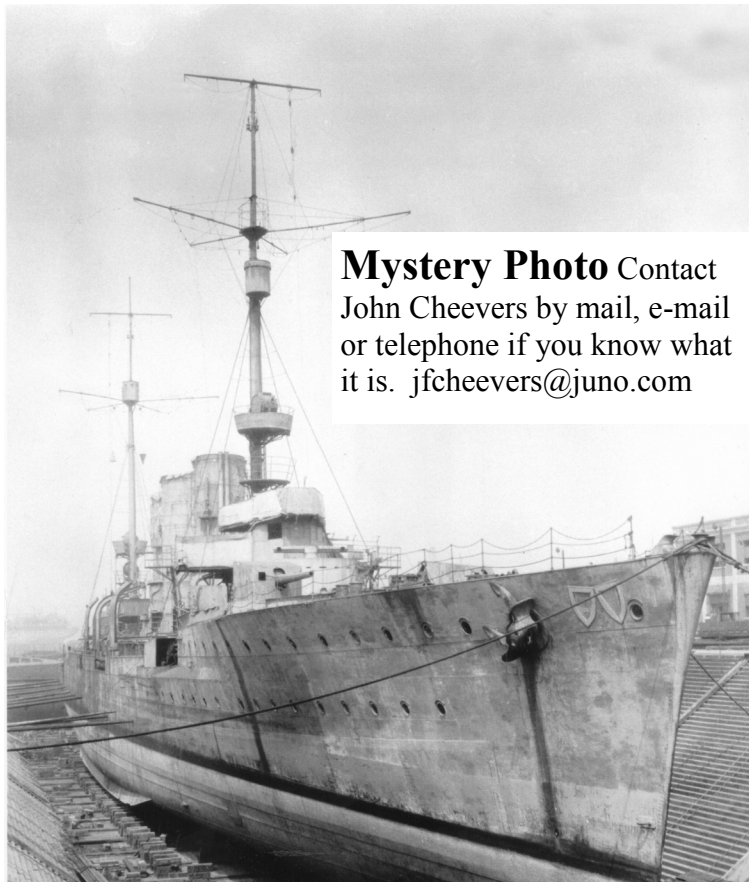
Bake provides these statistics on *Narkeeta* and her

naval service: “According to DANFS, Vol. V, and SHIPS' DATA, U.S. NAVAL VESSELS, July 1 1922, the *Narkeeta*, named for a tribe in the Choctaw Nation, was authorized on 2 March 1889, laid down in April 1891 by the City Point Iron Works, Boston, Mass., launched on 11 Feb. 1892, delivered on 12 March 1892, and commissioned on 14 April 1892. She lasted in service until decommissioned during April 1923 and was sold for scrap on 28 April 1926. The ship spent most of her service operating for the 3rd Naval District from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, which is probably where the photo was taken and where the camouflage tests were carried out. *Narkeeta* was of 192 tons displacement, 92-ft. 6-in. long, 20-ft.11.5-in. in beam, and with a draft of 8-ft. mean. Capable of 11.5 kts, she was coal fired. The other two ships in the Navy's first yard tug class were the *Wahneta* YT-1 (for sale as of 1922) and the *Iwana* (YT-2).”

If this was a game of Clue, I would have to say, “*Narkeeta*, wearing a Brush system of camouflage, tied to a pier at New York Navy Yard, in 1917.”

I leave you with this final thought from Raven’s article: “Theoretically the Brush system of counter-shading appears to be the correct solution for low visibility but was proven impractical due to the impossibility of removing the large black shadows such as cast by deckhouses and large top hamper, which indicate a ship’s position and course.”

John Cheevers



**Mystery Photo** Contact  
John Cheevers by mail, e-mail  
or telephone if you know what  
it is. [jfcheevers@juno.com](mailto:jfcheevers@juno.com)

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## NOTABLE EVENTS

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### NOVEMBER

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host; Heinz Schiller  
Cast Resin Models, Dave Baker

### DECEMBER

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Jack Bobbitt  
Auction, Dave Baker, Coordinator and auctioneer

### JANUARY

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host: Bob Comet  
Tips on Rigging and Block Rounding machine, Jack Bobbitt

### FEBRUARY

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Dave Baker  
Election of Officers

How to make art work and other tips on ordering brass etchings, John Cheevers

- 29 Cabin Boy's Birthday

### MARCH

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host: Bob Krumpen

### APRIL

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Southside Bunch  
30-May 2 Western Ship Model Conference

### MAY

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bill Clarke

### JUNE

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

### JULY

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

### AUGUST

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

### SEPTEMBER

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

### OCTOBER

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

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## The Answer

The caption on Mystery Photo 208

Narkeeta

Navy Yard, New York

Apr. 7 1917

Brush Paint Test for Invisibility 3281

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## Thanks

The members would like to thank Greg Harrington for hosting the October meeting.

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## Next Meeting

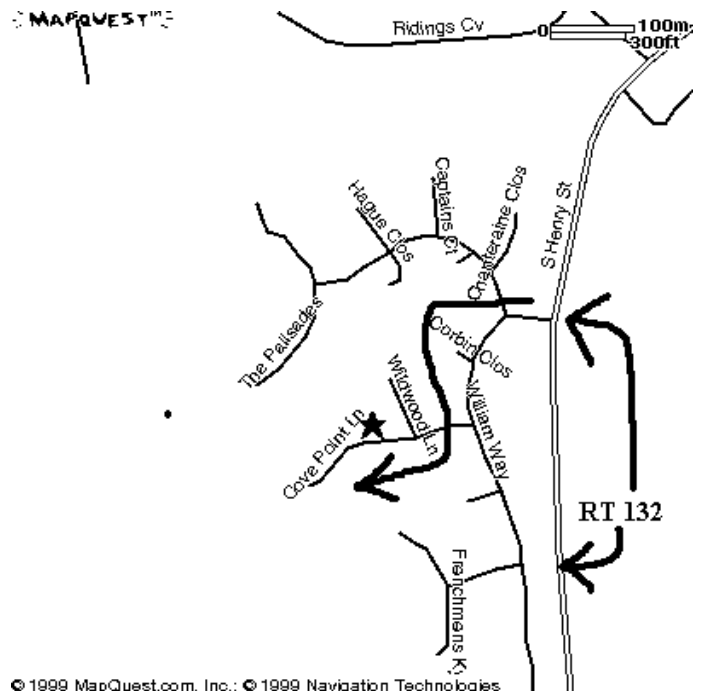
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The November meeting will be held on November 14, 2003, at 2000 hours. The meeting will be hosted by Heinz and Mareke Schiller, 133 Cove Point Lane, Williamsburg, VA 23185. Phone:757.564.6471

### Directions;

From points East: I-64 W, Take the VA-199 WEST exit 0.4, Merge onto VA-199 W. 3.0, Turn RIGHT onto S HENRY ST/VA-132. 0.9, Turn LEFT onto WILLIAM WAY. 0.1, Turn RIGHT onto COVE POINT LN. 0.1

From Points West: I-64 E., Take the VA-199 WEST exit and proceed as above.



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## 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  
Webmaster: Greg Harrington