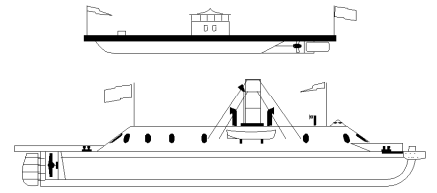


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook



No. 241

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

JULY, 2006

MINUTES



HRSMS Monthly Meeting
June 9, 2006
Host, Alan Frazer
Guest, Bill Westley

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper, Dave Baker at 2000 hours. The Skipper welcomed the guest, Bill Westly. The only correction to the minutes was that Dean Sword had “talked” about a book not “stalked” about it. The Skipper thanked John Cheevers for his Logbook contribution on his recently completed Monitor model. The Purser’s report was given by Eric Harfst. Eric had composed a letter to send to members who’s dues are in arrears. The Webmaster was absent. The Skipper gave notice that he would not be at the July meeting, The Skipper then thanked Bill Clarke for hosting the May meeting.

Old Business: Dave broached the subject of our participation in the International Plastic Model Society (IPMS) conference in October. We had previously discussed procuring table space at the conference to display HRSMS member’s models. Charles Landrum gave some information on the conference and the model competition. There was a motion made and passed to reserve two display tables. There was discussion of sponsoring a trophy for the competition. Dave asked for a show of hands of those who would be interested in manning a table. The Skipper received a favorable response. The issue of model security was addressed. A motion was made and passed to sponsor the award for the best ship model.

New Business: None.

Show & Tell: Dave talked about the Calder Craft group build. John Cheevers talked about a reception for those who worked on the *Monitor* project at the Mariners’ Museum and showed a *Monitor* replica that was give to the workers as a token of appreciation. Graham Horne showed a model pedestal made from plexiglass and described how he cut and polished the edges. Alan Frazer showed a pewter model of the *Hundley* and the magazine [Transfer](#).

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation “Steam Ship Photos” by, Alan Frazer.

Mystery Photo



Mystery Photo #240: I had just a touch of guilt over not providing an adequate column last month. At least I felt that way until Bill, in the “The Answer”, ’fessed up that the ship was unidentified. Now I don’t feel so bad. Besides, I’ve had a little time to rest and I’m raring to go again.

The current Mystery Photo shows a destroyer type warship running flat out through a small to moderate sea. At least I think it’s running flat out. Would it be fair to say she is running at flank speed or should I say full speed? Can you sailor types please tell me the difference? In my language (a mixed English/German dialect only spoken “up the crick” in Kentucky) I would say that the sailors are experiencing “Mr. Toad’s Wild Ride!” This ship seems to be be-bopping along at great speed, demonstrating all of the principle axes of motion and listing slightly to port as the hull seeks equilibrium. On second thought, the list might stem from an athwart ship force exerted on the hull; are we seeing the beginnings of a slight turn to starboard? So I’ll ask the question: Is the vessel in the initial stages of a turn or just rocking as she speeds through the sea?

Now, look at the ship. Does she present a familiar profile? She should! It’s a member of the famous ‘flush-decked’ Fletcher-class of destroyers. The US Navy only built about 170 of them for service during World War Two. So you ask yourself, how do I decide which of the 170 destroyers is this one? Simple really; just carefully study the features of this ship. The most unusual feature, a real anomaly to the standard class layout, will immediately narrow your list to three examples. Later you will see that a second, smaller feature is very unique as well.

Who defined the list? Apparently four of our readers did. Charles Landrum was the first to reply and he believes “The ship pictured is one of three FLETCHER Class destroyer built with a catapult to handle a float plane. The three ships were PRINGLE DD-477, STEVENS DD-479, and HALFORD DD-480. My guess is that this is HALFORD in July 1943.” His response was closely followed with one from Tim Woods who also refined the list to one choice and unknowingly started the first of several controversies for this month’s Mystery Photo: “The Mystery Photo for June is the *USS Stevens DD-479*. She was one of three Fletcher Class

(Continued on page 2)

Destroyers with a catapult.” Next, Dave Baker echoed Landrum’s choice with this reply: “The photo is of the FLETCHER-class destroyer U.S.S. HALFORD (DD-480) and was taken off Port Jefferson, Washington, on 24 April 1943 when she still carried her catapult.” And last but certainly not least we had a reply from Bob Comet. He says: “Anyone can tell at a glance that it’s a Fletcher Class destroyer in Dark WWII war paint, and in some pretty rough weather. The abnormality is that there’s no Mt 53.” And he adds the now familiar list: “Only three were completed, Pringle DD 477, Stevens DD 479 and Halford DD 480.” Finally, he makes his choice, evenly splitting the group, with this remark: “Went to wikipedia.org for more info on this, and found displayed the identical picture as the Logbook photo of the USS Stevens, DD479.”

What an excellent start toward unraveling this Mystery Photo! I’ll address the above mentioned controversy on which ship is it later, because we need to work up to it.

Obviously, we have a Fletcher –class destroyer modified to carry a catapult. That much we see. What is less obvious, and according to Charles Landrum a feature unique to “catapult-modified” destroyers, is “the single 20mm on centerline above the bridge and the 20mm in the tub just forward and below the bridge.” All I can say is that this feature presented one of those serendipitous moments when you say “now that you mention it, he’s right!” The gun is so obvious; it, along with the ready serve magazine, is reflecting full sun and stands out very clearly against the overall dark gray paint—must be painted a lighter shade of gray! Notice how the lower 20-MM in the tub, the one painted dark gray, blends in and nearly disappears from view. A second telling feature concerns what is not present—the main mast, there isn’t one.

Have you noticed how three of the four responses focus on the size of this classes sub-set? Everyone except Dave says that three ships were converted to carry a catapult. Bob and Charles went so far as to mention that six vessels were in the group slated to receive catapults. While Tim abstains from further comment, Dave claims that five of the six were known to receive the catapult. What gives? Most contemporary, second source history and reference texts usually limit their remarks to say something like ‘the program was slated for six ships while only three were completed with the catapult.’ What an oversimplification of the facts. It would be far more accurate and telling to say that only three ships were in commissioned service with the catapult. What gives?

Dave Baker shines a very bright light on the matter with his remarks. “HALFORD was one of five FLETCHERS configured with a catapult abaft the after stack. The others in the series were the HUTCHINS (DD 476), the STANLEY (DD 478), and the STEVENS (DD 479). Although some of the standard naval reference books indicate that only three of the ships ever got the catapults, I have photos that prove that all but HUTCHINS had it; although she may have had it as commissioned on 17 November 1942, it was gone by 24 January 1943.” This revelation changes the generally held conception of how many ships actually carried the catapult—pictures are worth thousands of words. Try placing a model of

one of the other three in a contest and see what controversy you generate.

To accommodate the catapult and service crane (from Dave: “The catapult was served by a boom to port, stepped to a simple kingpost on the main deck to retrieve the ship’s Kingfisher floatplane.”), the after quadruple torpedo mount as well as the third (in line counting from the bow) 5-inch 38 single enclosed mount were removed. Also, the raised AA gun tub between 5-inch mounts three and four was deleted, the weapons were located elsewhere. This provided just enough deck and swing space to adequately handle and launch the Kingfisher floatplane. The plane was carried and stored on the catapult, an arrangement that was constantly exposed to the weather and sea spray. I would expect that servicing the aircraft would have been a difficult and risky proposition in anything but a dead calm. I wonder if green water could reach the installation.

The ship was just large enough to handle the weight and moment of the apparatus but not large enough to adequately operate it except in the better weather states. I doubt the plane was operable in the sea state we find in the Mystery Photo. If the plane is in the image, it looks to have its wings removed and fuselage covered by a canvas bag. According to Dave, there is a recorded instance where the plane was used as designed. He states: “With the exception of the PRINGLE (DD 477), which launched her Kingfisher while escorting a UK-origin convoy from mid-Atlantic to Halifax during January 1943, none of the ships ever employed their catapults operationally.”

Charles, Dave, and Bob all mention that the idea was not successful. Charles says that the “[ships] were not in service long, before the catapult was removed and more AAW armament added.” Dave adds more detail: “[Halford] was sent to Pearl Harbor during July 1943 for 3.5 months of trials in local waters with the catapult and Kingfisher floatplanes that convinced the Navy that it was ultimately not suitable for combat conditions. The catapult was removed during October 1943 at Mare Island Navy Yard, and the ship, rearmed more or less to standard FLETCHER configuration for that period...” Lending further evidence to the more-than-three argument, Dave adds: “STANLEY’s was removed by 30 December 1942 at Charleston, S.C., PRINGLE’s was gone by 25 April 1943, and STEVENS’s by July 1943.” Bringing up the rear, Bob cites from his experience: “All three ships were eventually restored to the standard Fletcher configuration as the seaplane idea didn’t work out. Having served as a catapult and seaplane recovery officer on a Baltimore class cruiser, I can understand why...” Nothing beats eyes on target!

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THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 240:
U.S.S. Stevens (DD-479) Date, 1943
Photo No. 80G-299546

This brings us back to our initial conundrum, which ship is it? Charles and Dave both insist the Mystery Photo shows the USS Halford, while Tim and Bob think the image shows the USS Stevens. Who is right? Charles' response offers no proof to support his claim of Halford, so with him being a Naval Academy grad, we'll take him at his word. Dave supports Landrum's claim with this: "Oddly, I don't have the view of HALFORD that appears in the LOGBOOK, but I've got the others in the aerial series." Perhaps the markings on the Mystery Photo contain a negative number or something and we can use to match it to the images in Dave series. That would be conclusive enough evidence for me provided the images in Dave's collection support the feature that I will discuss to support the theory which I will share in a moment.

In contrast to Charles and Dave, Tim and Bob of course chose USS Stevens as the ship appearing in the Mystery Photo. Again, while Tim does not provide supporting documentation, Bob provides the site mentioned previously which he claims has the very same image. That's hard evidence to ignore. I went to wikipedia.org to double check facts, as I always do when I can, and saw the image credited as USS Stevens just as Bob states. I also looked into other sites for images of the big three (Pringle, Stevens, and Halford) and found a second site containing the same image.

It too, is credited as USS Stevens. (Image, caption, and source provided.)

Who is right?

In order to break the tie, I looked hard at images of the three commissioned destroyers. (I should have excluded *Pringle* from further study, but I didn't in order to be as thorough as possible.) While studying these images, I happened upon a feature that is arranged the same in Pringle and Halford but differently in Stevens. This arrangement is consistent in every image I found. I think this is the conclusive proof that the image in our Mystery Photo is Stevens and not Halford or Pringle. If you look at the Mystery Photo again, you will notice two Carley floats located just below the starboard bridge wing. In all of the images I found of Halford and Pringle, there is only one float and it is stowed in the horizontal position. Only Stevens carried two floats in this area; both stowed vertically. I think this is the smoking gun that nails the identification. Here is a rather clear profile of Stevens as proof of the arrangement.

Guys, job well done! We await Bill's answer.
John Cheevers



USS Stevens DD-479 www.destroyerhistory.org



USS *Stevens* (DD-479), 1943. A catapult for launching an observation plane is mounted aft of the stacks in place of the fifth 5-inch gun mount normally installed in this class.

From: navy.history.mil



(Continued from page 6)

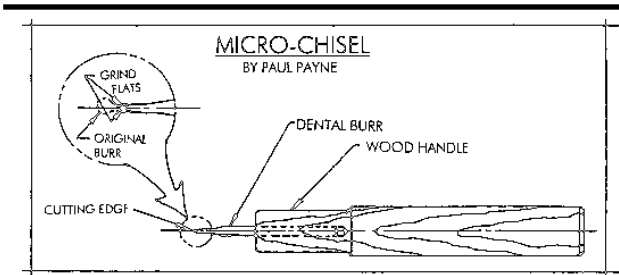
(Food Lion is at the intersection.) Do NOT turn at the first light and follow signs to Smithfield. Charles - you are warned.

Now everyone should be on Smith's Neck Road. Continue approximately 0.6 miles, then Left onto Rte 669 (Reynolds Drive). Continue 0.7 Miles, then Right onto Rte 669 (Nike Park Road). That's Nike as in the surface to air missile. You will pass an abandoned Nike site on the left - 'Carrollton Nike Park'. Cover a total of 1.6 miles on Nike Park Road until it ends at a traffic light / T-intersection. Turn Right onto Battery Park Road (Rte 706) and continue for 0.6 miles, the Right onto Gatling Pointe Parkway South. Continue straight exactly one mile - road changes name to Creekside Drive at 0.7 miles. Right onto Captain's Walk to #20566.

Approximate travel time: From Newport News - fifteen minutes; Ghent - thirty minutes; Great Bridge - Forty-five minutes; Williamsburg - forty minutes, VA Beach Oceanfront

- one hour. For those from Williamsburg who might prefer the ferry, call or e-mail and I'll provide those directions. It's shorter in distance but at a more sedate pace.
Phone: 365-0369. **If able, bring a few folding chairs.**

John Wyld



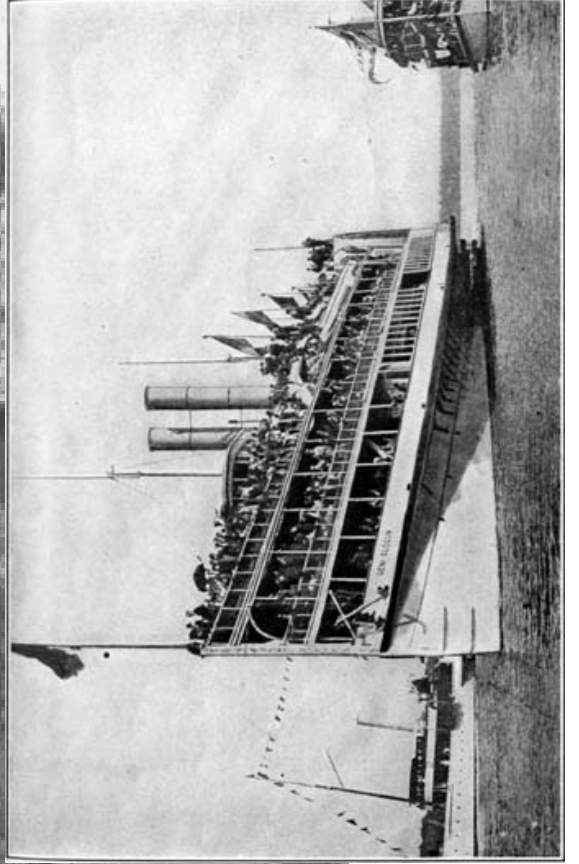
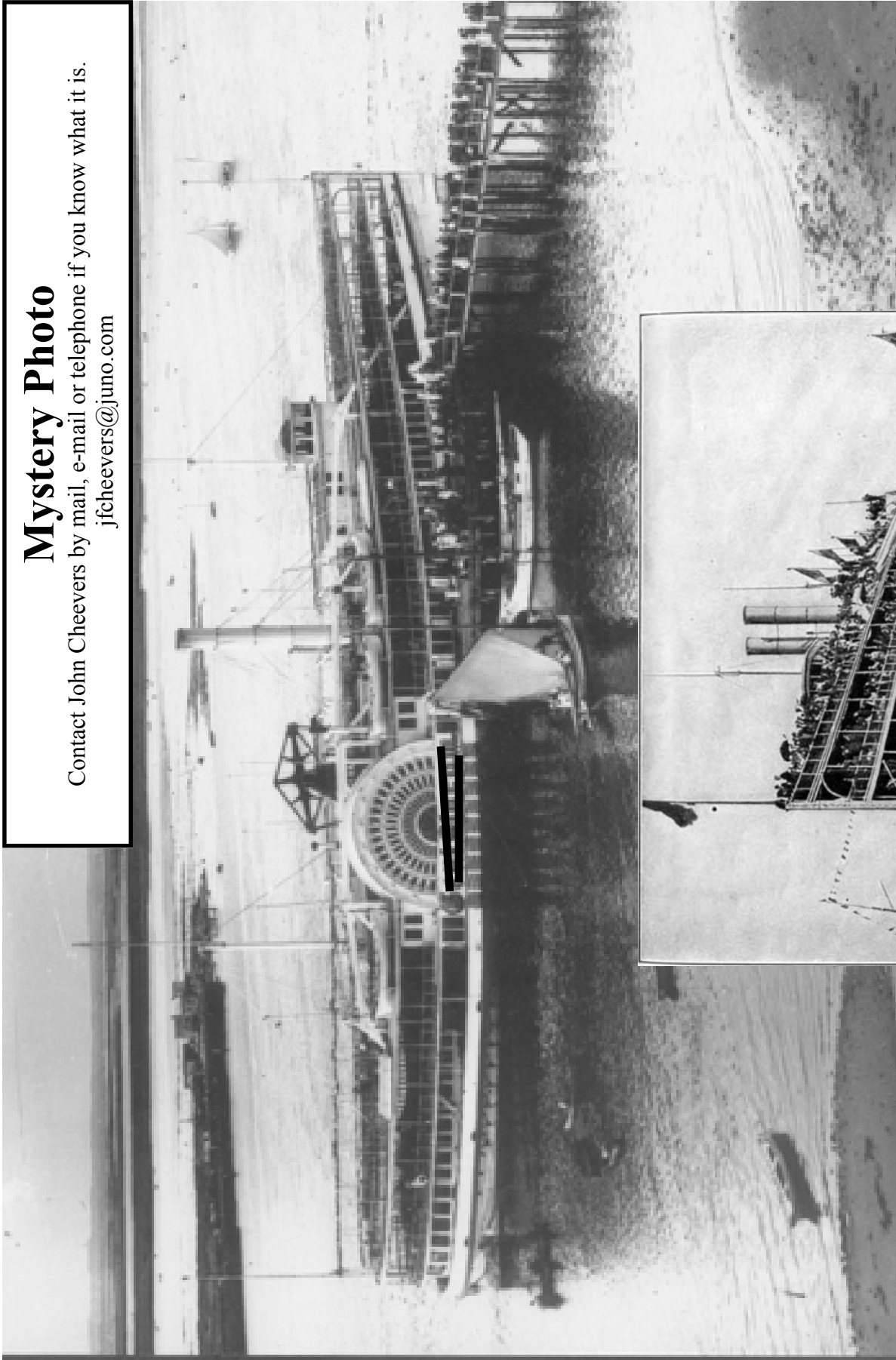
- Find an old dental burr
- Grind cutting edge at desired size and angle (this can be done by hand honing on a flat diamond abrasive surface.)
- Turn a wood handle on your lathe

From: <http://www.ship-modelers-assn.org/tps9707a.htm>

This is a good web site. (Ed.)

Mystery Photo

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



NOTABLE EVENTS

JULY

14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, John Wyld
Presentation "Restoring a Clipper Ship Model", Brad Granum

AUGUST

11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Dean Sword
Presentation, "Resin Hulls", Charles Landrum

SEPTEMBER

8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Tim Wood
30 HRSMS Picnic, Newport News Park

OCTOBER

13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Greg Harrington
Presentation "Airbrushing", Bill Altice
21-22 IPMS Region 2 Convention, Virginia Beach, Va.

NOVEMBER

10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Heinz Schiller

DECEMBER

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

JANUARY

12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bob Comet
Nomination of Officers

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

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

APRIL

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

MAY

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

JUNE

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

WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: Dave Baker (757) 565-7991
Mate: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Purser: Eric Harfst (757) 221-8181
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Historian: Vacant
Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Bill Clarke (757) 868-6809
Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 930-4615

Thanks

The members would like to thank Alan Frazer and his wife, Jane for hosting the June meeting.

Next Meeting

Date: July 14, 2006

Time: 2000 Hours

Place: 20566 Captain's Walk, Smithfield, Virginia

Host: John Wyld

Phone: (757) 363-0369



To all -

Since this is the first time I've hosted, you are all ranked novices. Herewith are the driving directions. Please note that I do not live in the town of Smithfield proper, but actually closer to Battery Park, in the Gatling Pointe South development east of Smithfield.

General directions: You will need to arrive at the intersection of Rte. 17 and Smith's Neck Road which is about 1.2 miles west of the James River Bridge (JRB) on Rte. 17.

You can get to that intersection **from Newport News, Williamsburg, or Ocean View to name a few** by crossing the bridge (JRB) southbound. After crossing the bridge, the intersection is at the second traffic light, 1.2 miles after the bridge. There is a Food Lion on the corner.

Alternatively it may be reached by taking Rte. 17 North toward JRB. **From Norfolk or VA Beach** you can reach 17 North by taking the Midtown Tunnel (first choice) or Downtown Tunnel to Rte. 164 West which merges with 17 North at I-664. **From Chesapeake** you can reach 17 North by taking I-64 East to the end, then take I-664 North toward the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge Tunnel exiting at Exit 9A for 17 North. From either city, once on 17 North you will cross three bridges: over Bennett's Creek, the Nansemond River, and Chuckatuck Creek. About two miles after the last bridge, pass the Carrollton Volunteer Fire Dept (on your left), then turn left at the SECOND traffic light onto Smith's Neck Road.

(Continued on page 4)

