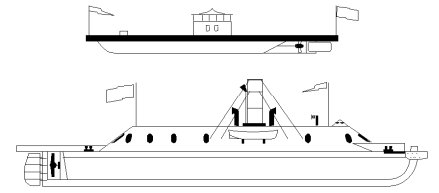


# Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

# Logbook

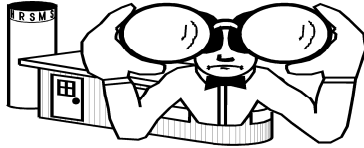


No. 247

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

JANUARY, 2007

## From the Pilothouse



After an initial "failure of communications," the Skipper managed to transmit a message a couple of weeks before Christmas announcing that he would be stepping down after the February 2007 meeting. It's definitely time for a change in the office. A request for volunteers for a nominating committee met with only one response. John Cheevers, however, has generously agreed to take over as Skipper for the 2007-2008 year, with the assent of the HRSMS membership, but we will be needing candidates for the First Mate position, with the candidates needing to be willing to run for the Skipper position next year. The election will be held at the February meeting.

Bob Comet's request for presentation topics from the membership has had a fine response, but more participation is still needed, especially for this spring and summer. Surely, all the members have at least one topic related to ship modeling or maritime affairs that would be of interest to the HRSMS. Public speaking skills are not necessarily needed, nor is a professional-quality set of graphics or props. Enthusiasm and interest should carry the day.

Also needed are nominations for the annual Founders' Award. A committee to manage the selection process will be formed at the January meeting at Bob and Karen Comet's house in Suffolk.

While we have places to meet for most of 2007, no one has stepped up yet to volunteer to hold the March meeting. Anyone able to hold the meeting at their home, church, or place of business please contact me.

Many thanks to Jack and Jeanne Bobbitt for their warm hospitality at the HRSMS December meeting. Thanks also to Alan Frazer for agreeing to investigate where the club might be able to hold a display of the members' models. Alan is checking with various libraries and museums to see if a venue can be obtained.

A reminder that the Mariners' Museum's new and highly impressive MONITOR Center wing will open early in March. If you've not yet had a chance to tour this work-in-progress, the Museum has done a superb job in its layout. On the final Saturday in December, the Mariners' Museum was open to

(Continued on page 2)

## Mystery Photo



Mystery Photo #246: "Black Douglas as a Fish and Wildlife Service ship on San Diego Bay, with view of Coronado Island and Point Loma in background;" or so the caption reads under the image gleaned from the NavSource web site. The same image, along with other more interesting views, is also available at the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) web site. (You'd think that the NOAA web site would spell out their name someplace on their web site, be glad I am old enough to remember what NOAA stands for.) The image, taken in San Diego, California, is credited to Mr. Steve Niklas (image ID #ship0310) and is dated 1962.

Much of the content in the next six or seven paragraphs comes from [History of the Schooner Black Douglas](#), written by Wainwright Ripley (Rip) Roebing found at the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography web site. I did not use quotes as most of it is paraphrased.

This rather ugly duckling of a Mystery vessel began life as a graceful swan when launched at Bath Iron Works on June 9, 1930. Constructed as the beautiful 3-masted schooner, *Black Douglas*, for Robert C. Roebing (then patriarch of the same Roebing family of the Brooklyn Bridge and Cincinnati's Suspension Bridge fame), she took the Roebings on an adventurous maiden voyage around the tip of South America, through the ice-laden Straits of Magellan. Afterward the schooner became a favorite landmark to Savannahians and yachtsmen while anchored at the family estate, Modena Plantation, on the northern end of Skidaway, a beautiful and isolated barrier island off the coast of Georgia. A hard working vessel, she carried construction materials used to build the estate and was seen on at least one occasion ferrying the beginnings of the estate's Black Angus herd.

Originally, she was to be named *Grenadier* because her owner wanted a name that was associated with strength and adventure. But, the yard foreman at Bath, who was closely involved with construction, suggested the name *Black Douglas*. Seems this man, a Mr. Main, was born and raised in Scotland. As a boy, he was fascinated with the stories of the Black Douglas and felt that it was a fitting name. Mr. Roebing loved it and immediately named her, *Black Douglas*. A helmeted wooden figurehead of the famous Scottish knight was carved and set in place on her bow. Did this association with Scottish strength and tenacity foretell this vessel's long service?

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

the public for free, and well over 1,200 people turned out to tour the present exhibits. Quite a few dropped by the HRSMS-manned ship modeling demonstration booth, to the extent that the Skipper had lost his voice by about 3:30. Dennis Hobbs has become our newest demonstration booth volunteer and will be in the booth on Mondays; the booth now has model builders for every day of the week except Sunday, when the Museum is open only from none to 5:00 pm. If that day would be of interest to you, please contact me.

Happy New Year to all/Dave

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(Mystery Photo, Continued from page 1)

In September 1941, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service purchased the boat for use in seal research in the Aleutian Islands. After refitting at Mingledorff's shipyard in Savannah, the *Black Douglas* was en route to her new base in Seattle when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. A Japanese submarine fired on the *Black Douglas* off the coast of California, and the U.S. Navy responded. Guns replaced masts, sailors replaced scientists, and the rather ugly *Black Douglas* entered the service of her country as a patrol vessel under the 13th Naval District, guarding Seattle's vital Neah Bay. Originally classified as a *Miscellaneous Unclassified Auxiliary, IX-55*; she was placed in service as *USS Black Douglas (IX 55)* on April 18, 1942. Later she was reclassified a *Coastal Patrol Yacht, PYc-45* on April 8, April 1943. Her designation was changed one last time when she was commissioned as *USS Black Douglas (PYc 45)* on April 19, 1943. She left navy service when decommissioned on September 20, 1944 at Puget Sound Navy Yard.

From 1947-1948, with Dr. Victor Scheffer of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in charge, she fulfilled her original seal research mission. The government then assigned her to the comprehensive Scripps-Southwest Fisheries CalCOFI oceanic survey. For 18 years she plied the Pacific from Washington State to Baja, Mexico, as the flagship of their research fleet. (Anyone interested in learning what CalCOFI means? According to an entry at the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography (SkIO) web site, CalCOFI stands for the California Co-OP Sardine Research Program, later known as California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI).)

In 1960, *Black Douglas* was transferred to the Bureau of Fisheries as a research vessel. This placed the vessel under control of what was to become NOAA. *Black Douglas* carried the letters FWS before her name. FWS stands for Fish and Wildlife Service. This was her official designation in our 1962 Mystery Photo.

As the *Black Douglas* completed her scientific mission in the late 1960's, Robert Roebing initiated a scientific mission on the Georgia coast by donating his Modena Plantation to the state of Georgia for the establishment of a marine research institution, the

Skidaway Institute of Oceanography. As the young institute grew and diversified, the *Black Douglas* experienced exciting changes of pace and style herself. After having served as a luxury yacht and home for the Roebing family, a Navy war vessel, and a scientific research craft, in 1966 she found herself in the Caribbean, hunting for sunken treasure with her new owner. The story goes that the treasure she hunted was the bounty from the famed Spanish galleon, "*Atocha*." Would that make her new owner Mel Fisher? The record is unclear but the odds favor this.

By the early 1970's, however, the *Black Douglas* had begun to show her age. Years of constant use had left her scarred, weathered, and broken; her blackened hull a mockery of her once proud name. But the sturdy workmanship of the artisans who built her served her well. Her life was not over. In 1972, the Stoll family, owners of the Flint preparatory school based in Sarasota, Florida, bought, rebuilt, and renamed her. With her masts restored, she sailed, once again, under the new name *te Quest*, and with her partner ship the *te Vega*, serving as a sailing classroom for 85 students, who studied onboard as they learned to sail the ships to European ports and to historic sites along the Mediterranean coast. Tough gig!

In 1982, the Flint School disbanded and the *Black Douglas* was sold again. She was taken to Abeking and Rasmussen shipyard in Germany where she was extensively rebuilt and restored to become once more a proud and beautiful luxury schooner, sailing under the name *Aquarius*. A bottle of water from the Kennebec River, where she was originally christened, was flown to the re-christening ceremony. Excellent photos of her restoration can be found at [ww.enterpriseintegrators.com](http://ww.enterpriseintegrators.com).

And the swan was reborn. Today, she continues to sail as a sail charter out of French ports along the Mediterranean Sea.

Two people sent responses: Rob Napier and Alan Frazer. Rob, while not knowing the vessel's identity, was fairly certain the image was made using San Diego's Ryan Field as a backdrop. Ryan Field was the old name of the airport while Rob was there, coincidentally, also in the 1960s. As he says; "Nearer the mouth of San Diego Bay is another large complex of gov't-style buildings, Navy I think. The buildings in the [Mystery Photo] could be these. The abrupt highland behind is typical of the cliffs around San Diego. [She] looks like an old sailing vessel or steam yacht cut down and converted for some sort of research work. She does not seem to be pictured in Stewartt B. Nelson, "Oceanographic Ships Fore & Aft" (1971). The port reminds me of San Diego; perhaps a vessels from Scripps Institute?" Now that's what I call getting the most from a photograph. I had a similar assumption, but I was centering my search on the Anacostia Naval Air Station near Washington, DC. Anyway, Rob's location was spot on.

Alan's response was so close it's a shame he chose a different vessel. Here is his response and an image of *Vema* for your comparison:

(Continued on page 3)

(Mystery Photo, Continued from page 2)

“My first reaction: Surely no powered ship was ever built with that lovely sheer, clipper bow, upswept counter, mated with homely utilitarian superstructure and working gear on the fantail.

My second reaction: I’ve seen her somewhere; that’s *Vema*! And it turns out I’ve seen her more than once, over several decades.

So I headed for that treasure house, the Mariners’ Museum Library, and looked first at the photo catalog, hoping I might find this photo — with *Vema* written on its back. Not so simple. Two images cataloged under that name. One could not be found. The other (#PN-5474) carried the name on its’ hull and on the back. The back also bore identification that it was owned by Columbia University, Lamont-Doherty Geological Laboratory. That agreed with the *Vema* of memory, but the image did not. It had some flare, but not the projecting clipper beakhead. It also had raised spirketing plate around the bow (instead of pipe railing on a raised forecastle deck), a more enclosed superstructure, and far more masting and working gear aft. If this was the Mystery Ship, it sure had changed! And not for the better.

After checking several scattered years (in 1960s – 1970s) of *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, I decided to check whether *Vema* might be foreign, or have a naval background, arbitrarily starting with *Jane’s Fighting Ships* for 1944-45. Pay dirt! Under “U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliaries” I found some yachts used on patrol duty. The only photo was of *Sea Cloud*, ex-*Hussar* of 1931. Just below were three more entries: the middle one was 3-masted schooner *Vema*, ex-*Hussar* of 1923! Double Pay Dirt!! I saw and photographed both of those yachts when Jane and I disembarked from *Sea Cloud* at Antigua in 2004, a three-masted topsail schooner named *Mandalay* was moored just ahead of *Sea Cloud*. An info board on the pier identified her as having originally been *Hussar* of 1923! The two had been the last of five sailing *Hussars* built for Edward F. Hutton! He lost #5 (*Sea Cloud*) when his marriage to Marjorie Merriwether Post failed; Marjorie enjoyed the yacht along with several more husbands.

To fill in the holes regarding *Vema*, I checked various editions of *The Record* of American Bureau of Shipping and *Lloyd’s Register*. ABS 1948 listed *Vema* as ex-*Hussar* (4), official number 13554, a 3-masted training ship of 533 gross tons, dimensions 202.5 x 33 x 14-1/2 feet, built by Burmeister & Wain of Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1923; owned in 1948 by U.S. Maritime Commission and still “on loan” to U. S. Coast Guard. She then had a 6-cylinder “oil engine” by GM Cleveland Diesel Division, 1945. In 1949–1950 she bore the same name and particulars while serving as a 3-masted training ship for the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings’ Point, New York. In 1951, again as *Hussar*, she was a private yacht owned by John J. Withers of Hillside, New Jersey.

I did not check all the intervening years, but in 1969, still as *Vema*, she made her first appearance under

## MINUTES



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HRSMS Monthly Meeting  
December 8, 2006  
Host, Jack Bobbitt

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper, Dave Baker at 2000 hours. Dave polled the group for visitors. None were found. Dave next called for corrections to the minutes. Alan Frazer noted that his name was misspelled at least twice by the inclusion of an “ I ”. (After convincing the Editor not to throw himself under a train, he swore that he would do a better job of reviewing material from outside sources. The errors were not in the minutes, but in an article where material was taken from the net.) Eric Harfst Gave the Purser’s report.

Old Business: Bob Comet again asked for presenters to come forward and volunteer to be put on the schedule. Dave passed a Christmas card to Helen Bryant for the members to sign.

New Business: Greg Harrington broached the subject of a bulletin board on the HRSMS web site. The members were asked to consider this proposal. It will be discussed at a later date. Alan Frazer for the members to consider an exhibition of their work. He suggested a location such as a library or museum. After some discussion a motion was made and passed to have Alan explore venues for an exhibition of the members models.

Show & Tell: Bob Comet showed a 1/32 inch planking sample from Heinz Schiller. He said that Heinz would explain his process at a later date. John Cheevers showed a book on the Nottoway, Blackwater, and another river. Charles Landrum talked about research on colors of the ships at Pearl Harbor. Dave Baker talked about parts missing in his Artesania Latina kit. Charles Landrum said that he had several pieces of peach wood to give away. Graham Horne said that he had some pear wood to give away.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation, “Worldwide Submarine Threat Situation”, by Dave Baker.

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ownership of Columbia University, Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory, Piermont, New York, flying the Panamanian flag. Those were the years of my involvement around New York Harbor and its ships. In 1984 she was no longer listed, and I did not try to trace to her emergence as *Mandalay*. Enough that she is here after 86 years.

I have been unable to find the origins or meaning of “*Vema*,” but in all this looking I found no other vessel of that name! And in fact the name, which I had thought

(Continued on page 4)



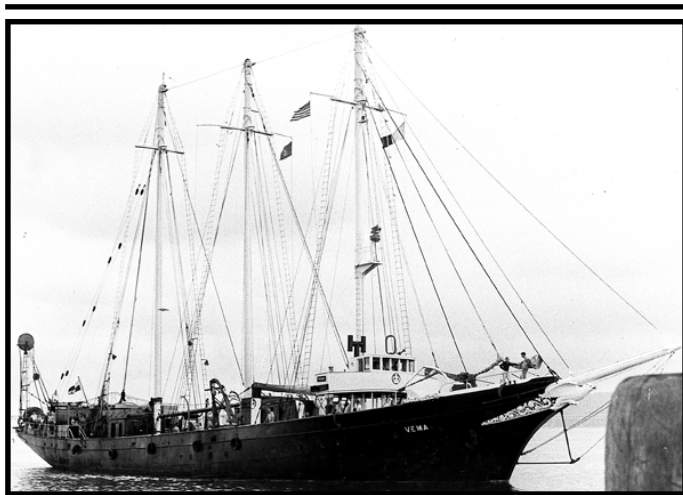
might be some ancient goddess, does not appear in either the *Encyclopedia Britannica* or *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*! No wonder spell-check red-lines it!

The final "official" word is in the latest *Lloyd's Register*, 2006-2007: She appears as *Mandalay*, a) *Hussar* (1923) b) *Vema* (1981) c) *Mandalay* (1983), Lloyd's number 7738383, currently owned by Mandalay Ltd. of Grenada as a sailing cruise schooner with 72 passenger berths. I'll ignore the discrepancies of name sequence and dates, most notably Lloyd's ignorance of her WWII Coast Guard service as *Vema* in 1941 rather than 1981!"

Rob and Alan didn't identify the vessel, so how did we find this *Black Douglas*? Luck really, and a whole lot of searching. After innumerable Google searches I finally hit on one that led me to the Naval Institute's web site. There I found an image of (*IX-55*) taken March 20, 1943. It looked a lot like our Mystery ship and it had a name I could run down. After that the doors kept opening for me. I found images at the NavSource site, the NOAA site, and several others previously mentioned. Simple Google searches should get the reader to the original articles.



The U.S. Navy unclassified misc. ship USS Black Douglas (IX-55) taken March 20, 1943.



R/V Vema approaches the Piermont Pier, ca. 1960.



Black Douglas in her Fishery and Wildlife guise.

**"Cabin Fever Expo"**  
**Model Engineering Show & Auction**  
**The Show for the Metal Working Hobby**  
 January 20th & 21st, 2007  
 York, Pennsylvania

**December**  
**Crossword Answer**

O	R	A	T	O	R	S		A	L	I	A	S		
C	O	R	O	N	E	T		L	E	N	I	N		
T	O	R	P	E	D	O		L	I	V	R	E		
A	M	A	S				P	P	R	O	F	I	L	E
L	Y	S	I	S			G	U	Y		T	A	R	
					D	O	J	O	S			E	N	E
C	H	E	E	S	E			S	E	E	D	E	D	
R	A	M				E	B	O	N	Y				
E	B	B			T	R	Y			D	E	B	A	R
S	I	A	M	E	S	E				B	O	R	E	
S	T	R	O	P				L	I	V	O	N	I	A
E	A	G	L	E				A	M	A	L	G	A	M
S	T	O	L	E				W	O	N	T	O	N	S

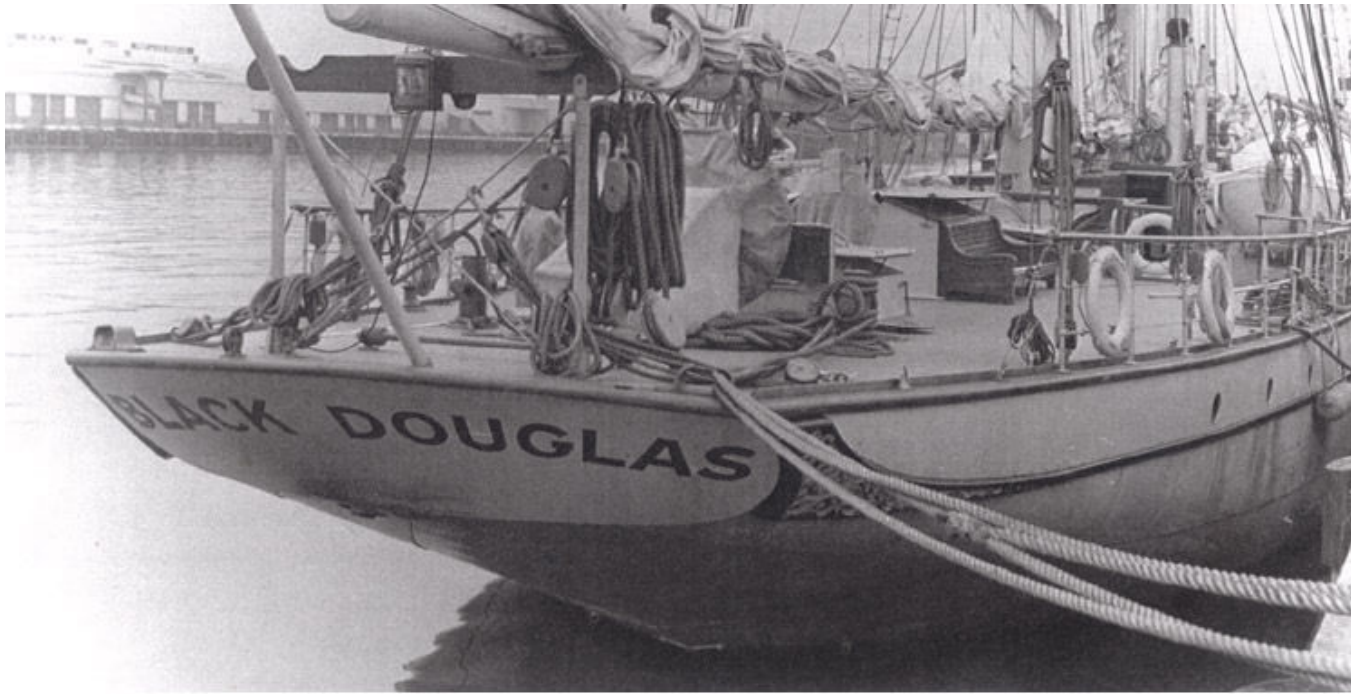


Photo courtesy of W. R. Roebing



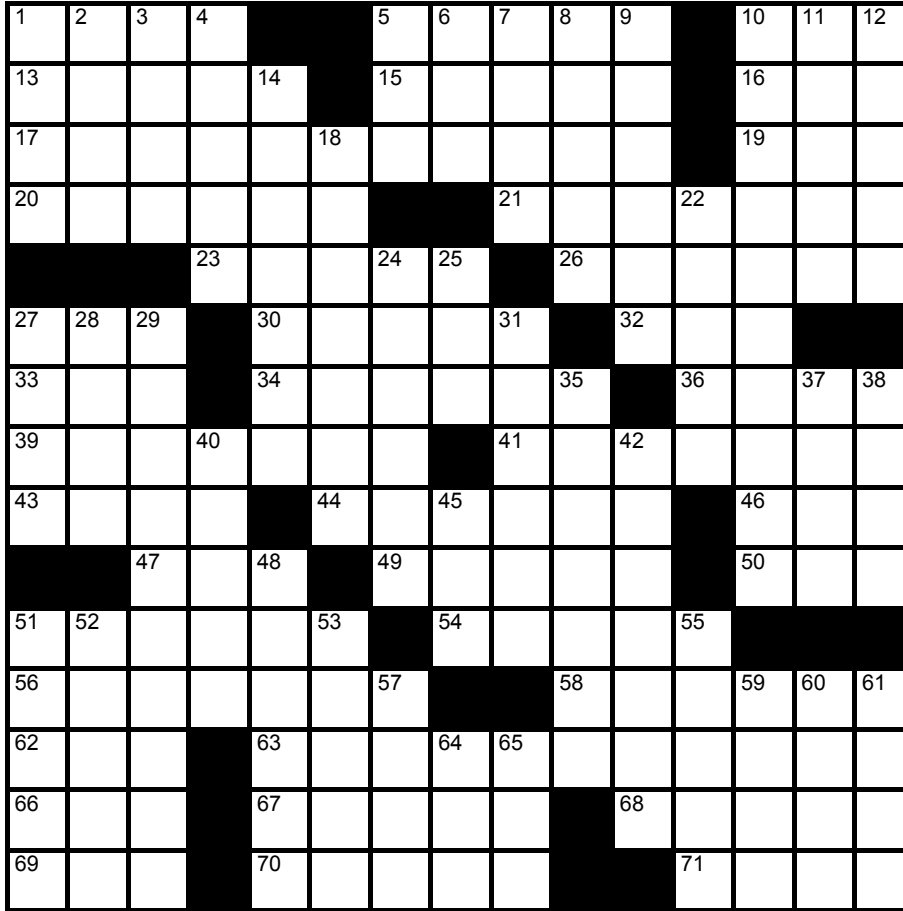
**Mystery Photo**  
Contact John Cheevers by mail, e-mail or  
telephone if you know what it is.  
[jfcheevers@verizon.net](mailto:jfcheevers@verizon.net)





# NAUTICAL CROSSWORD

Greg Harrington



## Across

1. Speedy
5. Shovellike utensil
10. A note to follow soh?
13. Son of Abraham who was offered as a sacrifice to God
15. Spring month
16. Female sheep
17. Acceptable in appearance
19. The most, informally
20. Largest desert in the world
21. Lady of Lisbon
23. Put into play
26. Totally destroyed
27. To be in debt
30. Only French aircraft carrier prior to the end of WWII
32. Formal title for a married women
33. Sailed before the wind
34. Examine again
36. A crossbar on a ship's rudder to which the steering cables are connected
39. An arm of the sea that extends inland to meet the mouth of a river

41. Related to a descriptive heading
43. Having no concealing cover
44. Spit, more formally
46. A river of northwest Germany flowing to the North Sea at the Netherlands border
47. Measurement of shaft speed
49. Fixed, as in position
50. Admit or receive
51. \_\_\_ Way, great paved highway from ancient Rome through Capua to Brundisium
54. A twilled cloth, often used for suits
56. A braid of hair very close to the scalp
58. Soldier that prevents the passage of unauthorized persons
62. "The Greatest"
63. Occuring once every four years

66. An object against which legal proceedings have been instituted
  67. Remove bindings
  68. A fine, often starched net of silk, rayon, or nylon
  69. Anger
  70. 10-ship class of American WWII aircraft carriers
  71. A romantically involved couple
- ## Down
1. Douglas and Fraser
  2. \_\_\_ Brown Boveri, manufacturer of marine power distribution equipment
  3. A band or ribbon worn about the waist
  4. Small quantities of food taken with a drink in Spain
  5. Placed upon
  6. Licenced financial examiner (abbr.)
  7. Spheres
  8. Refueling at sea ships
  9. Shipboard space used to distribute air
  10. Citrus flatfishes?
  11. Cognizant
  12. Grouping of six
  14. Left and right hemispheres
  18. What graduates are considering
  22. Last of Japanese carriers to sink at Midway
  24. Incomplete Soviet aircraft carrier reportedly sold to the Chinese to serve as a casino in Macau.
  25. Before
  27. Popular sandwich cookie
  28. Click [?] to see photo clue
  29. Doolittle Raid carrier
  31. Indigenous
  35. Varied
  37. A short ridge or mound of sand and gravel deposited during the melting of glacial ice
  38. Irish Gaelic
  40. Unfasten
  42. Touching but not intersecting
  45. Fleur-de-\_\_\_
  48. Letter of \_\_\_ - document authorizing a private citizen to act as a privateer
  51. Ticks, mites, and their kin
  52. A gondola driver?
  53. People, places, and things
  55. boredom
  57. Buddhist temples in Thailand or Cambodia
  59. Pinball error message
  60. Abnormal respiratory sound characterized by fine crackles
  61. Pre-big-bang matter
  64. Expire
  65. Cornish or Devon

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## NOTABLE EVENTS

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### JANUARY

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bob Comet  
Nomination of Officers  
21-22 Cabin Fever Expo, York, Pa.

### FEBRUARY

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Dave Baker  
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

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

### JULY

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

### AUGUST

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

### SEPTEMBER

- 13-16 NRG Conference, Manitowoc, Wi.

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

### OCTOBER

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

### NOVEMBER

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

### DECEMBER

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

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## 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: Len Wine (757) 566-8597  
Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955  
Bill Clarke (757) 868-6809  
Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580  
Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 930-4615

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## Thanks

The members would like to thank Jack Bobbitt and his wife, Jeanne for hosting the December meeting.

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## Next Meeting

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**Date:** January 12, 2007

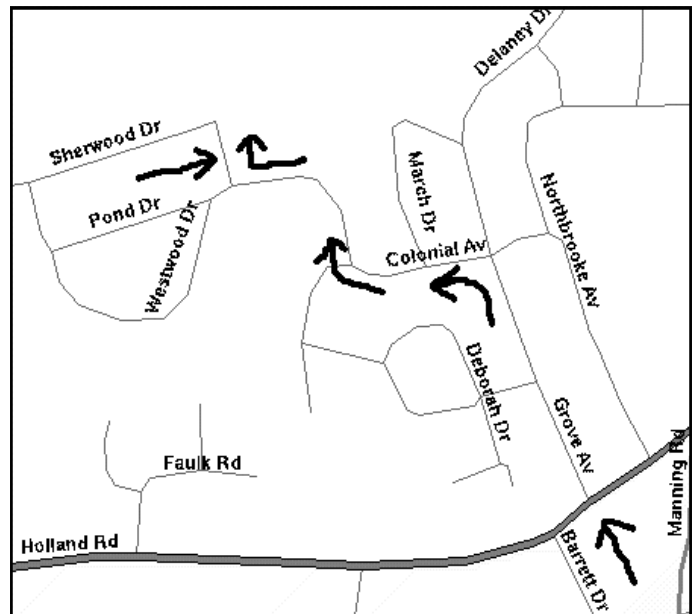
**Time:** 2000 Hours

**Place:** 316 Sherwood Drive, Suffolk, Va.

**Host:** Bob Comet



For those coming from Richmond, take either 460 E or 64 E. From 460 E, proceed until it intersects 58 W. Proceed on 58 W, staying on 58 bypass. At the third stop light after 58 bypass joins 58 bus., turn right onto Grove Ave. Take second left onto Colonial. Take second right onto Pond. Take first right onto Sherwood. House is seventh house on right at 316 Sherwood Drive. phone 757 934 1279. For those coming via 64 E, take either James River Bridge (Mercury Blvd exit) or continue to 664 S and cross Monitor Merrimac bridge tunnel. Those taking James River Bridge, follow route 32 (state) south to 58 W then proceed as above. Those taking 664, proceed to 58 W (Suffolk exit 13) and further proceed as above. For those coming from Newport News or Hampton, take either the James River Bridge or 664 S and proceed as above. For those coming from Norfolk, Portsmouth, or Virginia Beach take 64 E to 58 W, or take 264 W to 58W and proceed as above.



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## THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 246  
*Black Douglas*