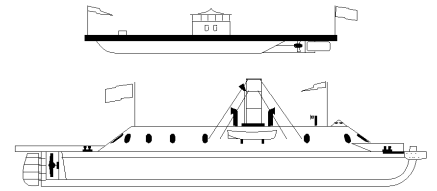


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook



No. 256

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

OCTOBER, 2007

From The Bridge



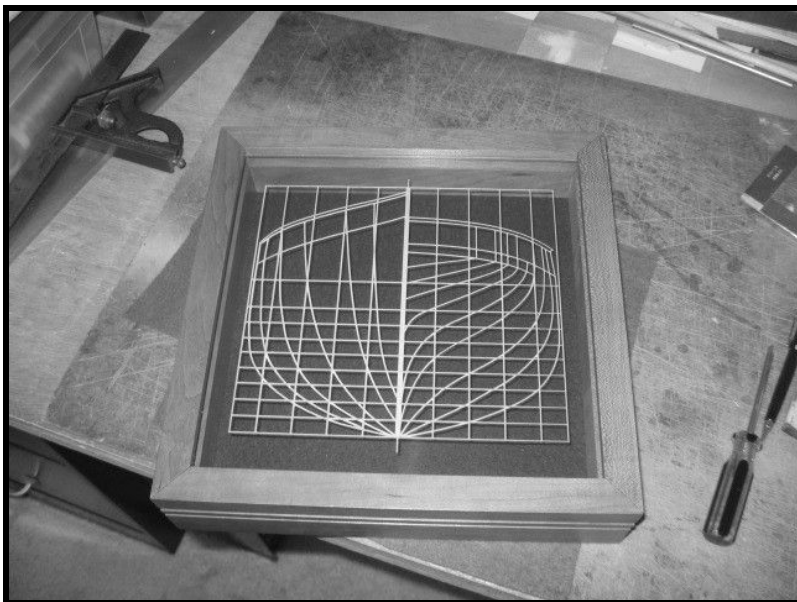
Mystery Photo



Opportunities

Ship models are where you find them. Opportunities to express our “nautical” bent are few and far between and we need to avail ourselves of every opportunity. Last Month, a close friend at work retired after 35-years on the job. He was instrumental in furthering my career: he was a mentor, a teacher, and a confidant. He will be missed.

To celebrate his retirement, a talented fellow in the office and I took on the task to build a memento that captured some of his passions. He loved to play cards, and he had a regular seat in a most uncommonly serious lunch time card game of Hearts back in the day. He was good! He won way more than his share of the games. His play earned him a lasting nickname—Killer, for all of the runs he stopped. I think he counted the cards—in fact, I know he counted the cards.



His card playing prowess more often than not eclipsed his godfather/guru status as keeper of our computer system. He wrote great code. He also was a math wiz. In thirty years, he was the only person I ever saw who did all of his math calculations in pen, and I never saw a scratch through or cross out in his work. Something I found phenomenal!

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Mystery Photo #255. For those of you without your trusty pocket dictionary at arms length, let me tell you that Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate defines “alert” as an adjective meaning vigilant, or watchful – a state of readiness, quick to perceive and act. Echoing the title of this column, the image requires the viewer to maintain a fair degree of “alertness” in order to identify the vessel. With a Clarke image you must maintain at least a modicum of special awareness in order to spot any traps he may set with the Mystery Photo. Did anyone spring the trap hidden in this Mystery? I suspect we may define “alert” somewhat differently by the end of this column.

Well, that was a big hint. Who was “alert” this month? Who dug deep and found the identity to this Mystery? Just prior to the last business meeting Bob Comet and I were discussing possible identifications to this Mystery Photo and I expressed an opinion that the image might represent one of the *Annapolis*-class gunboats. He commented that because of the sail plan the Mystery vessel must be older than the gunboat *Nashville*, a model of which he was presenting at the tech-talk. I corrected him by mentioning that the *Annapolis*’s were never than his PG-7. He expressed some disbelief at my statement and this reaction got me to thinking about this vessel.

To see if this vessel was either newer or older than *Nashville*, I first had to re-familiarize myself with the appearance of an *Annapolis*-class gunboat. While being nearly identical in arrangement, it would seem that they have finer hull lines than our Mystery ship. This sleeker appearance quickly eliminated them from further consideration. My mind went back to Bob’s “older” comment and I remembered having an image of a sailing gunboat that might hold the key to solving this mystery.

Before I could check this idea, Bob’s formal re-
(Continued on page 2)

MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting will be held on Friday October 12, 2007

Place: 2713 Magruder Blvd Hampton, Virginia

Time: 2000 Hours

Host: Greg Harrington

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Mystery Photo

sponse arrived. In it you can read the absolute certainty of his opinion: “Here is my possible solution of the mystery photo, with a high degree of probability of being correct!” Wow, talk about being decisive!

“My search started with my trusty WWI Jane's.” Bob continues. “I found a potential match with a photograph of the *USS Vicksburg* which had been assigned as a Fishing Service Vessel in Alaska. I found that she was one of 4 ships of the *USS Annapolis* gun boat class, the ships being *Annapolis*, *Newport*, *Princeton*, and *Vicksburg*. I found the ships in the NavSource Naval History web site and examined them closely. They resembled the mystery photo in that all are barkentine rigged and steel or iron hulled. However they differed in detail. All the ships had longer bow sprits with dolphin strikers rigged, the smoke stacks did not have the same style, the number of gun ports differed, and the shrouds were not attached to the hull at the same location as in the mystery photo.”

Now with his senses “alerted,” he returned to his trusty Jane's and “found a submarine tender that matched the mystery photo more closely. I went to NavSource again and found the *USS Alert* a former gun boat converted to a Sub Tender. The photos of *Alert* matched the mystery photo in all respects.”

Bob carefully describes what we see in the image. “The photo shows a steel or iron armed barkentine rigged steam vessel with a graceful clipper bow and a figurehead carving. The combination of straight legged boat davits and radial davits is typical of the late 19th century or early 20th century. The vessel is flying an American ensign at the mizzen gaff peak and the American jack forward. The sails on the yards are neatly sailed in man-of-war style. In addition to the cowled ventilators visible, canvas wind scoops have been rigged indicating warm weather. The open bridge atop what looks like a charthouse is located forward of the smoke stack, and abaft the foremast. . . The ship is fitted with a spiked bow sprit (no dolphin striker). The smoke stack seems to have a division or some type of cowling about half way up its length. The background shows a relatively undeveloped harbor.”

I would add that there is evidence of awnings rigged throughout the main deck which further supports Bob's contention of a warm climate. And one sailor forward at the starboard rail just aft of the bulwark break seems to be stripped to his Tee-shirt. The hull is painted in wartime gray with the stack and masts painted in a lighter shade. The boats all feature a letter on their bow which, if legible, would be the strongest clue to her identity.

With Bob convinced that we had an image of the gunboat *Alert*, I pursued my similar photo idea. Digging deep into my trusty pile of photos I found an image of *USS Ranger* that is a spot-on match for our Mystery vessel. In my image, the vessel is neat and orderly with the hull painted white and the stack painted buff with a black top. No flags are evident. Gun barrels extend from

every closed gun port and the masts and booms are stripped of sail. The ship is anchored to a moor and all boats are away. I was beginning to think that the Mystery image might be of *Ranger*.

Looking for help, I turned to my trusty old Paul Silverstone's *U.S. Warships of World War I* to see if I could break this tie. On page 15, listed as Steam Gunboats under “The Old Navy”, Silverstone notes two sisters, constructed in the mid 1870's several miles apart on the Delaware River, *Alert* by John Roach and *Ranger* by Harlan & Hollingsworth. Displacing 1,020 tons they were 199' long and 32' wide. They drew about 12' of water. In addition to the very visible Barkentine rig they featured a 1-shaft horizontal compound steam engine rated at 365 IHP. The listed speed, which I assume is on the engine, is 10-knots.

Their armament as listed by Silverstone seems odd but may reflect what was available for use. He denotes 2 – 9 in. SB, 1 – 11 in. SB, and 1 – 60 pdr BLR. (I had to dig through his introduction to see that SB means smoothbore while BLR means breech-loading rifle.) Since no barrels are visible in our image, I suspect the ship is unarmed. I also think that the original armament was discarded well before this image was made. The cannon visible in the *Ranger* image shown at the middle three of five gun ports look like more modern rifles.

While *Ranger* went on to serve in the Nautical Training programs of both Massachusetts and New York States, *Alert* did a brief stint in the California Naval Militia. Following some time in ordinary, Bob mentions that *Alert* was “reclassified as a Submarine Tender in 1912,” and was “struck and scrapped in 1922.” *Ranger*, by now re-named *Emergy Rice* was scrapped in 1958. Bob mentions one career highlight, or lowlight as it were, that happened when *Alert* “as a gun boat spent time on the Asiatic Station. At [that] time, in 1892, she was rammed by the Imperial Japanese Yacht. It



would be interesting to know more detail about that!”

So, who is right?

If you were “alert”, would you have the answer? I

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MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Monthly Meeting
September 8, 2007
Mariners' Museum

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper, John Cheevers, at 1445 hours. A call for guests elicited no response from the assembly. John reintroduced David Tagg, at it had been a while since he had been in attendance. The minutes were approved as published. The Purser, Eric Harfst gave the financial report. The Webmaster, Greg Harrington was not in attendance, hence there was no Webmaster's report.

Old Business: Alan Frazer reported that 29 models were on schedule for exhibition at the Poquoson Library. He said that speakers were needed for the presentation on model building at the library. Bill Dangler circulated sign-up sheets for the picnic at Newport News park. The Skipper talked about the auction to be held at the October meeting and explained the reserve-pricing scenario. Charles Landrum talked about items donated for the auction by Don Watson.

New Business: The Skipper read a note from former member Jim McCurdy. Charles Landrum noted the International Plastic Model Society 2007 Region 2 Convention to be held in Roanoke on October 12th and 13th. The meetings through the end of the year were set with the Bob Comet hosting the December meeting at 1600 hours on December 15th.

Show & Tell: John Cheevers showed the progress of the tugboat *Susan Moran*. Tony Clayton had copies of Ships in Scale to give away, and a card model from wooden boat. David Tagg showed a card model of the *Monitor* and talked about Uhu rubber cement. Bill Clarke showed a brochure for the Cabin Fever Model engineering Expo. and a set of plans for a British patrol vessel. Alan Frazer informed the group that Stream Hobby Shop was planning to close. Tim Wood showed a bicentennial coin. Bob Comet showed a fixture for planking. Bill Clarke announced that 12 of Heinz Schiller's models would be on display at the Peninsula Fine Arts Center from January 12th through March 23rd, 2008.

The meeting was adjourned to the presentation "Building the Nashville Part II", Bob Comet.

NAUTICAL TERM

Loblolly Boy A surgeon's assistant aboard ship in the XVI to XVIII centuries. Loblolly was the name for the gruel of porridge usually served to the surgeon's customer in the sickbay.

Submitted By: Tim Wood

(Continued from page 2)



Mystery Photo

read the DANFS entries for both ships (*Alert* and *Ranger IV*) and found so many similarities in places visited and tasks performed that I could not make a choice based on their official histories. I suspect that we have to look closely at the "Clarke factor" and make a leap of faith. Bob chose *Alert* based on his finding the vessel in Jane's. I don't know if Bob discovered the sister vessel and I hardly think that Bill checked and found *Ranger* as well, so I will go along with Bob and choose *Alert* as this month's Mystery vessel. And because of the lack of visible armament, I will define my choice and say the image shows *Alert* while on station as a submarine tender.

What was Bill's trap? I suspect he thought we would all identify the vessel as the gunboat *Alert* not as the submarine tender. Did we fall into the trap?

One last thing: Since this essay appears in the October Logbook, I want to share an image of *Alert's* baseball team. Apparently these Boys of October achieved some noto-

THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 255 is:

From the back of the photo:
USS Nantucket PG-23
Former USS Rockport (1917 - 1918)
Former USS Ranger (1876 - 1917)
Anacostia July 1929
IX-18 On 7-1-21

80G-424466

(Continued from page 1)



What could we do for this guy? With short notice, a ship model was out of the question, but was there a way to express the essence of a ship model in a memento? Actually there was. We decided to make a keepsake box (we preferred to call it a card box) that featured a clear top inscribed with the lines of Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company's hull #1 – the tug *Dorothy*.

As I set about making the box, the other guy set about making the top. What he did was to generate a numerical control tool path that traced the body lines of *Dorothy* and then have them etched in Plexiglas using our 3-axis NC router. The box was made from cherry off-cuts and featured a masculine style. The bottom was lined with felt and the top was prepped to accept the etching.

The finished product was outfitted with several decks of cards, a score sheet, and, of course, a pen.

He was very appreciative of the memento and I found the time that I spent making sawdust to be very rewarding.

That is all,

John

Auction

We are having an auction this month. The ship's lockers and storerooms are full; in some places the dunnage is piled dangerously high—especially in my cabin! So I'm bringing for sale what I have, and what I'm holding from Mastini's and several other places. And you should too! Come prepared to purchase the neat and interesting items that surface, the goal is to get these surplus findings into the right hands, create some well needed aisle/shelf space in our shops, and to generate treasure for the coffer.

To whet your appetite, here is a smattering of what I have: An ancient, Craftsman floor model drill press, an ancient, Craftsman 8" table saw, a craftsman 4" joiner, a Dremel table saw, a Marvin Bryant 4" disc sander, a rotary tool, and assorted wood and hand tools. There is a fair amount of strip wood and rigging line and some tools from Mastini's shop, and some wood and tools from other sources. There may even be a ship plan or two in the pile. That's just what I'm hauling ashore (minus the drill press, of course.)

Here is the pricing arrangement that was agreed to at the last business meeting: 1) Items can be placed in auction for the sole benefit of the society. 2) Items can be placed in auction with a defined split-of-proceeds between the seller and the society—the split is determined by the seller, but I expect it to be generously in favor of the HRSMS. 3) Items can be offered at auction with a reserve to prevent someone from stealing it (stealing treasure?) through a low bid. Reserve items should also denote a profit-split, if warranted, or the club as sole beneficiary. Items offered with a profit-split and reserve should have that information clearly marked on the object prior to sale. If a reserved trinket doesn't sell, it goes home with you. But, the auctioneer has instruction to encourage lively bidding to ensure everything goes.

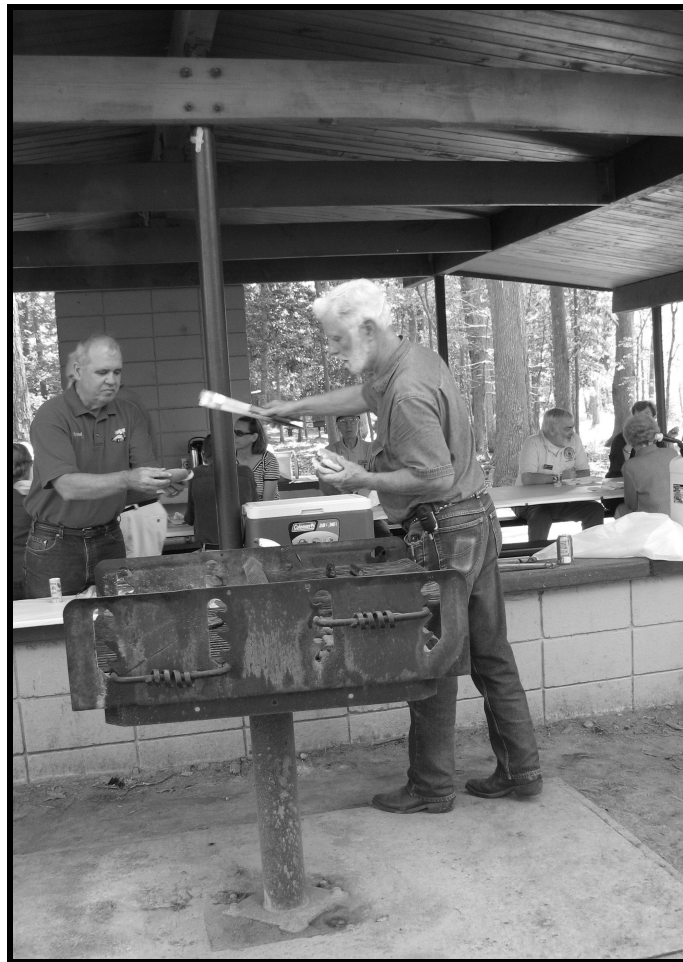
Bring your surplus items, bring your cash--dig up that Mason jar in the back yard. Plan to spend, spend, spend! The HRSMS wants you to buy, buy, buy!

John

SKIPJACK NORFOLK UPDATE

The Skipjack *Norfolk* is currently being restored by the East Harbor Boat Works at Cape Charles, Virginia. In 2005, the City of Norfolk donated the former *George W. Collier* to the non-profit project of the Cape Charles Renewal Program. The boat had fallen into severe state of disrepair and the city was not willing to make the investment in her restoration.

For more information go to:
<http://www.msctsn.com/friends.htm>
<http://content.hamptonroads.com/story.cfm?story=131691&ran=86460>



**Chef Bill Dangler serves Ryland Craze
at the 2007 picnic**

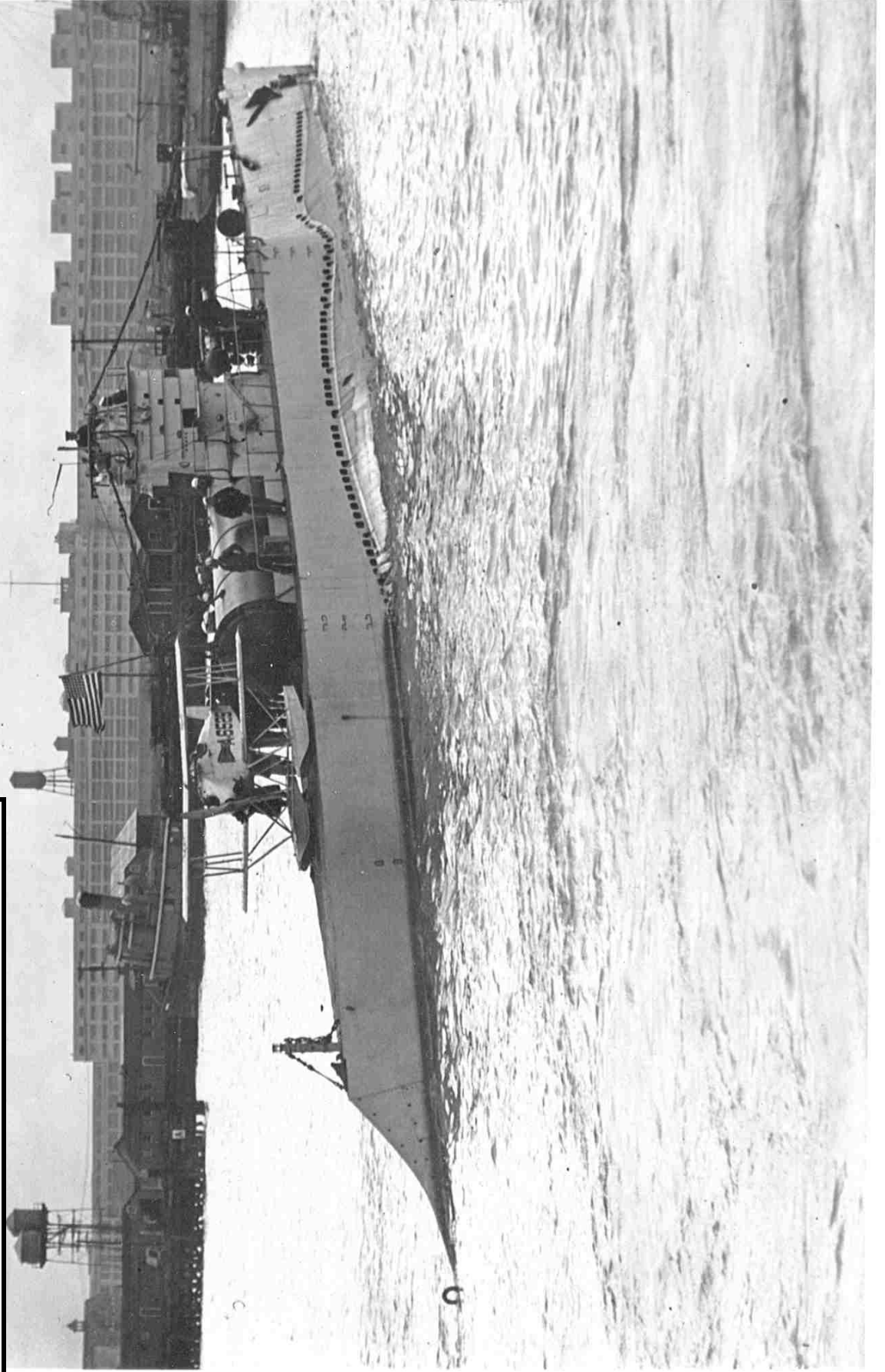


**Ship's boats on the deck of
Bob Comet's Nashville**

Mystery Photo

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

jfcheevers@verizon.net



NOTABLE EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Host, Greg Harrington
HRSMS Auction

NOVEMBER

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation "Technique for Milling Sheer and Camber"
by John Cheevers

DECEMBER

- 15 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Host Bob Comet
Presentation "Model Ship Research Via the Internet"
by John Wyld

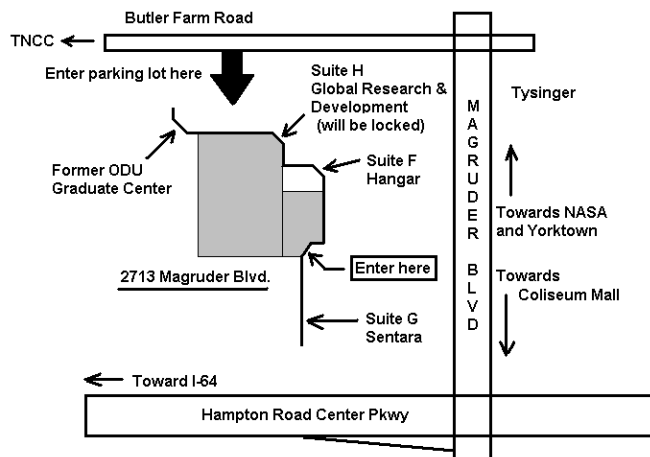
JANUARY

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Nomination of Officers
Presentation "Making Water" by Charles Landrum

FEBRUARY

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Election of Officers
-

MEETING LOCATION



WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Mate: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
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

FROM THE POQUOSON PUBLIC LIBRARY WEB SITE

Sunday, Oct. 28th, 2:30 to 4:30 PM

During the month of October, various ship models will be displayed in the library by the members of the Hampton Roads Ship Model Society. A talk on ship model building and its techniques will be presented by Alan Frazer, the retired Senior Curator of the Mariners' Museum, and the members of HRSMS in the library. All ages are welcome. Register at the Circulation Desk.



Boarding the Ferry Jamestown at Willoughby 1949

From: Ocean View Nickel Tour
<http://www.rkpuma.com/ov/nickel1.htm>

SCROLL CARVING TOOLS FROM HACKSAW BLADES by Albert Fischer

<http://www.scavm.com/gouges.htm>

**Contact Bob Comet if you are
willing to give a presentation in 2008**

NAUTICAL QUOTE

"It is as hard to describe the fascination of the sea as to explain the beauty of a woman, for, to each man, either it is self-evident, or no argument can help him see it."

Claud Worth 1926
Yacht Cruising, 3rd ed.