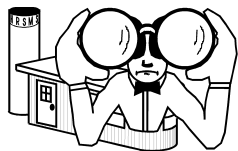


From The Bridge



Left handed scrawl

Had I been there on time, I would have been able to see the train leave the station. Thank you for nominating me and my Officers for one more term. Thanks, also, to everyone for handling all the important issues while I played. And thanks to everyone who brought the excellent Show and Tell. I think that Show and Tell is the best part of the meetings. The statement is not meant to slight to our excellent program "To Build A Ship Model", but is intended as an encouragement to everyone to share current projects and related items.

I was late because I took part in a rare ceremony with my good buddy Bill; the commissioning of a Nuclear Powered aircraft carrier. We didn't actually take part other than to make sure the cheap seats were filled. We were brave enough to endure the strong wind and biting cold that greeted us before, during, and after the ceremony. And we were brave enough to endure the maddening crowds fighting over the poor inventory at the "Ge-dunk." The weather and the crowds are what they are, something to test mettle. But the reward we received was the throat-choking thrill you get when you see the new vessel "come alive!" It's nice to see the "almost" finished product up close without the usual shipyard clutter blocking critical sight paths, and its fun to brag about the ship and my personal involvement in its construction to a friend. We paid for the pleasure with some severe windburn and very cold feet, but we'll do it again.

Several weeks ago, I got a chance to see some real professionals demonstrate a true passion for what they do. I found myself at a place north of Richmond, Virginia as my daughter had her "Imaging" appointment to purposefully de-

(Continued on page 2)

NAUTICAL TERM

Lubber's Hole A hole in a squarer rigger's top next to the mast through which heads of the shrouds pass to the mast. It is so named as a passage aloft of a lubber, the real sailor going "out and around" on the futtock shrouds.

Submitted By: Tim Wood

Mystery Photo



Mystery Photo #271: Taking advantage of a high vantage point the photographer captures a vessel headed toward an uncertain future. From the high angle, I would venture that the photographer is either very fortunate to have access to a rooftop or balcony, or maybe he's making the most of a corner office. Judging by the architectural style of the buildings you could make a convincing argument limiting the image to between, say, 1920 and 1960. If you include the cars and buses, that window conveniently narrows to between 1950 and 1960. And, if you're real sharp, you can most definitely give us the time of day. Even with the pixilation caused by the editor's enlargement most signage is readable. In the lower right we can read "Lincoln Tower" and the number "42", which is probably the number of floors. On the far side of the creek, the waterside structure proudly hawks the benefits (my term) of Jim Beam bourbon and an unidentified brand of vodka. Several of the buildings are landmarks, do you recognize them? To know them is to geographically pinpoint the location captured in the image. So, where are we, what ship do we have, and what circumstance did the photographer so wonderfully document?

I can tell you that this image was gleaned from the Internet by our tireless editor. I print my Logbook in color and I noticed that the image had a brownish, sepia quality. I'm not sure if the image was printed as a sepia or if it was scanned from a print that has yellowed with age, but it's condition suggests several things—to me anyway: 1) the image is from a web site that may offer historical, newsy type images as "Art Prints," 2) it comes from a personal web site (Blog?) dedicated to "Uncle Bob the sailor" or some such thing, or 3) it was found in some obscure digital library. Images like this are nearly impossible to find on the Internet without knowing the vessel's name, or some specific piece of data. However, after countless searches, I think I may have identified the ship.

Aside from the ship and the concrete billboard, the

(Continued on page 2)

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday February 14, 2009

Place: Mariners' Museum

Time: 1400 Hours

(Continued from page 1)



Mystery Photo

image proudly captures two famous Chicago landmarks: The Wrigley building and the Gotham-esque Tribune tower (as in the Chicago Tribune, parent company of our local Peninsula rag.) The Wrigley building has a prominent clock tower to keep locals, and alert tug captains, apprised of the correct time. Our image was made at either 11:10 AM or 1:57 PM depending on your outlook at life. This is important as one would think that moving a vessel through a large city, a move that requires the opening and closing of every draw span along the way, is best handled in the middle of the day to avoid the morning and evening rush hours.

There is strong evidence of wintery residue; some of the car tracks suggest they are driving through slush. The cars seem to be late '40 or early to mid '50 models. The bus has the rounded stern seen on General Motors coaches built until 1959 when the body was replaced by the famous "fishbowl" model.

The raised drawbridge sited just after the crook in the river gives the viewer a good cross-section of its upper and lower roadways. It's the Michigan Avenue Bridge and its just one of many draws spanning the Chicago River or the ditch more formally called the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. This man-made wonder, as you may guess, serves several purposes; one of which is to allow vessels too large to transit the Welland Canal system access from the open sea to the Great Lakes. It just so happens that the route goes through the center of the windy city connecting Lake Michigan with the upper reaches of the Mississippi River. The route is not practical or economic in terms of regular trade with large vessels so it is only used when necessary, like getting oversize vessels into or out of the Great Lake Navigational System.

(Continued from page 1)



fine her look for the Modeling and Fashion industry. And as I watched them work, I was struck by some of the similarities between how they choose color, texture, and material, just as we do, to perfectly finish and display their models. That sort of work doesn't come from linear thinking; it's a left brain verses right brain function. It's sort of like football the coach who places his linemen in ballet class to improve their coordination and nimbleness—definitely non-linear training and something not learned from hitting tackling dummies.

Watching these folks work, I could see them creating art. Part of what we do as ship modelers is to create art, a compelling impression, something to please the eye. Most folks cannot tell you why they like an object; all they know is that they like it. We are drawn to good ship models for this reason. It requires that artist's touch make it "Pop"! The next time you sit down to work on your model consider some non-linear thinking as you choose your materials, your colors, your textures, and your presentation.

John

Four replies this month, all referring to the Mystery vessel as a "Laker." Now you sports fans out there no doubt remember or have heard that the inaptly-named professional basketball team from Los Angeles used to call Minneapolis, Minnesota—the Land of the Lakes—home. Hence, their nickname. Likewise, any vessel associated with the Great Lakes, especially one that plies the fresh water for commerce is called...you guesses it...a Laker. Now there is another colloquial expression that is used from time to time to determine local standing and that is "come here!" The difference between a "Laker" and a "Come here" becomes moot once the vessel begins to earn its keep on the lakes but means a lot in determining the direction of the tow in our Mystery Photo.

As for the replies, they were separate and distinctive, and they began this way: "...I believe that the vessel in question is the *Cliffs Victory*. Being an old Great Lakes sailor I have seen her many times." Says first time player Hugh Van Brimer. Word-meister Dave Baker, who is never at a loss for words, had this to say: "Oh, the mystery ship...I'm stumped." Tim Wood offered this: "Here is my input for the photo of the month! I'll be honest; I have no idea what "Lake Freighter" is pictured." Finally Alan Frazer summed up the group effort this way: "This is a neat photo, and I can pinpoint the location easily, but naming the vessel (they're "boats" in that part of the world) is something else."

If the choices are "Laker" and "Come here," Hugh and Dave are the "Come here's" of the bunch based on their comments. Hugh said this about *Cliffs Victory*: "As I recall she was originally a US Victory ship probably built near the end of WWII. The photo must have been taken as she was east bound through the Chicago Drainage Canal in downtown Chicago." Dave, meanwhile, described the vessel as "a smallish, incomplete Laker being handled by the tugs, and she's headed for the lake." Tim becomes a "Laker" by default: "What I do know is this, the city is Chicago, the body of water the ship is on is the Chicago River and the avenue with the drawbridge is North Michigan Avenue." And with Alan, who briefly considered *Edmund Fitzgerald* as a "boat" choice, it was touch and go. "It appears to be a "Laker," a large bulk carrier unique to the Great Lakes, minus its hatch covers and most superstructure. She is being warped, by tugs fore and aft, around the bend approaching (or leaving) the raised Michigan Avenue Bridge. [And] the shabby condition of the ship suggests that she is on her last voyage, being towed stern-first to a breaker's yard somewhere upstream..."

I was curious about the upstream comment. Upstream suggests the water flows into the lake. Before the digging of the Sanity canal, the Chicago River flowed south before turning east at a point near the enormous Merchandise Mart, one of the largest buildings in the world, and emptying into the lake. The Sanitary and Ship canal connects to the Chicago River at this same spot. But during construction of the canal, clever engineering reversed the flow to south southwest, draining excess water into the plains west of town. The new canal connected the Great Lakes with the Des Moines River and locks were installed at the Chicago River entrance to Lake Michigan and other strategic inland spots to check the flow of water. So, Alan becomes an official "Laker."

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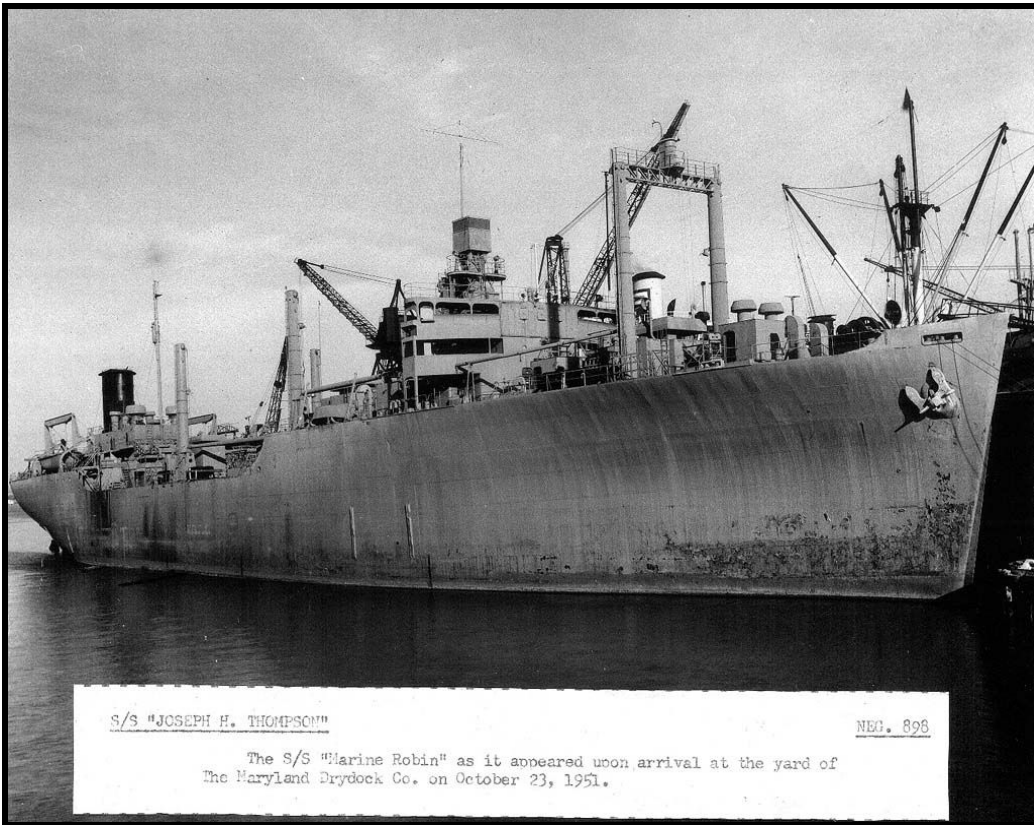
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Four replies with only one solid guess; that, of course, being Hugh's *Cliffs Victory*. What is curious about his choice is this statement: "[an] unusual thing was some of the cargo holds were aft of the deck house." An excellent Time/Life image of *Cliffs Victory* on her way to the lakes shows that our Mystery vessel cannot possibly be the same boat. The image is important in that it frames most of the same area important to our image. Taken just a few bridges downstream from ours it clearly shows the Wrigley building, the Tribune Tower (which only Alan identified), the Jim Beam building (commented on by Tim who

much better condition in this image which clearly moves the lower mark of our date range to after that year. Three of the four responses suggest a date range, all on target. Dave suggests a date range from the "1950s or maybe early 1960s," while Tim made a "guess around the late 40's to 50's by the looks of the autos in the photo." Alan says that "the architecture of the cars and especially the GM bus indicates a date of the 1940s to early 1960s."

Alan's response includes a statement that strongly suggests that the time on the Wrigley clock is closer to 2:00PM: "The handsome white Wrigley Building is abeam, its shadow touching the darker Tribune Tower across Michigan [Avenue]." The Photographer is shooting in a roughly north northeast direction so the sun is over his left shoulder. Also the length of the shadows for the time of day suggests the wintery months when the sun is lower on the horizon and that would match with the earlier wintery comment. Alan was not able to identify the photographer's perch but a wider angle image, Dated 1958, that also shows a cut-down ship in tow on the river and credited to David R. Phillips (not included, but available for viewing at www.friedmanfineart.net) reveals the location as the Chicago Jeweler's building. The building, physically twice the size of the Wrigley building, offers multiple terraces for the photographer.



S/S "JOSEPH H. THOMPSON"

NEG. 898

The S/S "Marine Robin" as it appeared upon arrival at the yard of The Maryland Drydock Co. on October 23, 1951.

says it no longer stands. He also thinks Wrigley building is no longer standing), and upper and lower Wacker drive (again, which only Alan mentioned) on the right.

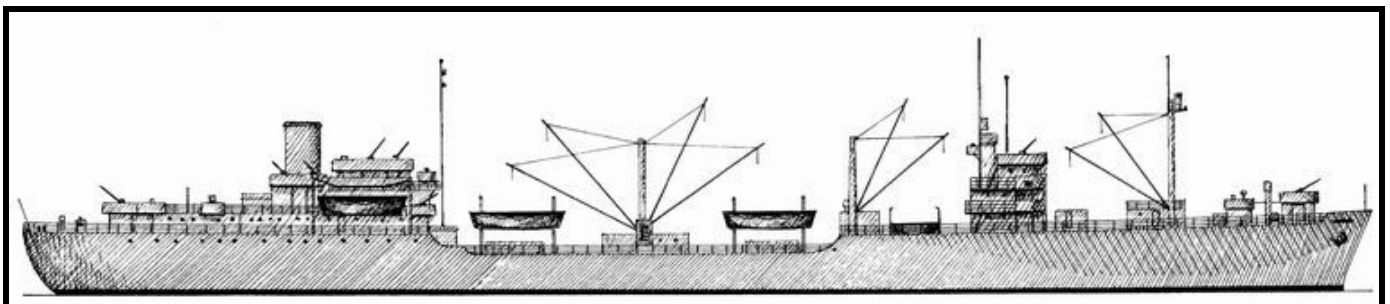
The image is credited to Francis Miller and dated 1951. The condition of the painted liquor advertisement is in

drawings.us-maritime-commission.de/drawing/c4...

In my search to identify this Mystery vessel I found images of at least three ships that were cut down and towed to the

Great lakes, and references to many more. I will agree with Hugh that probably the most famous of these is *Cliffs Victory*. I also remember a submission for this vessel made by our Web master about a year ago showing her at speed on the lake. She is an impressive sight and stunning in appearance, making full benefit of her "victory-sweet" sheer. The above

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MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society Monthly Meeting

January 10, 2009
Mariners' Museum
Guests: Bob Moritz 3rd meeting

The meeting was called to order by the Mate, Ryland Craze. Ryland recognized the guest, Bob Moritz. Bob indicated that he would like to rejoin the group. The Mate asked Bob to leave the room while the vote was taken. Bob then returned to the room as a new/old member. There were no corrections to the minutes, but Bob Comet noted the presentation schedule had been revised. Eric Harfst gave the Purser's report. Eric said that dues are receivable in March may be paid at any time. The Webmaster, Greg Harrington, said there was nothing to report on the web site. There was some discussion about the new member-user-names and passwords.

Old Business: The proposed change to the bylaws clarifying the meeting schedule had it's second reading and was passed by the members. The banquet was he next item on the agenda. Dave Baker said that he would be in contact with Riverwalk

Restaurant in Yorktown on the following Tuesday. There was a discussion of the date we would prefer to have the banquet. The consensus was to have the banquet on a Saturday night the last two weeks of March or the first week of April. Bob Comet noted that our brochures state that our meeting is held on the second Friday of the month and that they should be annotated before distribution. The correction will be made at the time of the next printing.

New Business: The Mate started the procedure for the nomination of officers. He stated that the current holders of the Skipper and Mate positions were eligible to serve another year in their office. (There are no term limits on the other offices.) John Cheevers was nominated for the office of Skipper and the nominations were closed. A motion was made to keep the current slate of officers. The motion passed. Bob Comet was appointed as chairman of the Founders' Award committee. Ron Lewis said that the Mariners' Museum would open an exhibit on Antarctica and there will be a dinner on February 5th to mark it's opening. He detailed some aspects of the exhibit and noted some of the speakers at the dinner. Greg Harrington said that Joe Hinzs was sending several of his signed prints for us to sell. Ryland Craze said that Bob Hunt wanted to put a link to our club on his web site and wanted a group picture to put with the link.

Show & Tell: The late arriving John Cheevers said that the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers is having a meeting on January 22nd with the speaker on the research,

design and construction of the third replica of the Godspeed. Dave Baker showed a book on Big Gun Monitors. Dean Sword showed a book procured while at the USS Arizona Memorial. Dennis Hobbs shared some pictures he took while in Russia. John Wyld opened more discussion on Don Pruel's model of the *Arizona*. Bob Comet presented his work on the *Niagara*. John Cheevers showed Rob Napier's book on reconditioning the model if a 18th century model and a book on Ohio River images. David Tagg showed His paper model of the *Nimitz*.

The meeting was adjourned a program "Building a Bread and Butter Hull My Way", by John Cheevers.



Oyster Boats, 1916, From the Cheyne Collection

(Continued from page 3)



Mystery Photo

mentioned Time/Life web article has over a dozen images of her tow to the lakes—many taken during her transit through downtown Chicago with multiple open draws. One image, made on an inland river, shows her as one half of a tow—barges to starboard and the victory to port. Impressive sight.

But our Mystery vessel is not *Cliffs Victory*. A search



Freighter Cliff's Victory steaming under drawbridge; city skyline in background.

Location: Chicago, IL, US

Date taken: May 1951

Photographer: Francis Miller

through likely candidates found on the web site www.boatnerd.com reveals images of *Marine Robin* that looked promising. The skinny on this vessel claims “The 1952 conversion of the 1944 built, 520' (158.5m) loa, C4-S-B2 cargo vessel *Marine Robin* to the 714' (217.63m) loa, Great Lakes bulk carrier *Joseph H. Thompson* at the Maryland Dry Dock Co., Baltimore, MD” was a success. Maybe so, but I could not find a transit image showing her tow through the ditch.

One image I did find shows the cut-down *Tom M. Sindler* making the turn from the Sanitary Canal into the Chicago River at the Merchandise Mart. I suspect that the vessel seen in the previously mentioned David R. Phillips image is the same ship. It is not our Mystery because the livery is slightly different.

Finally, I managed to locate an image of a cut down ship transiting the canal that seemed like the perfect match. The livery matched, the two stack pieces were arranged near the bow just as in our Mystery. The open deck and everything matched. This vessel was named *McKee Sons* and was billed as a “Bulk freighter, self-unloader.” The image can be found at the University of Detroit Mercy website by Googling [Fr. Edward J. Dowling, S.J. Marine Historical Collection](#).

On a hunch, I compared this vessel with *Marine Robin* to see if they were built to the same design. Bingo! *McKee Sons* was also a former Maritime Commission type C4-S-B2. The design produced several variants for operational naval auxiliaries in World War Two. Fourteen were built at Sun SB&DDCo., Chester, Pennsylvania (MC-736 to 749) between 1944 and 1945 and were fitted with steam turbines in an engine-aft arrangement. This design, although not standard for freighters of the time, opened the center part of the hull to cargo and other uses. Several were completed as hospital ships; does anyone remember the *SS Hope*?

After World War Two, many surplus vessels were laid up in idle fleets such as the local one on the James River near Newport News, VA.. “Due to the hostilities in Korea in 1950, demand for iron ore exceeded the hauling capacity that existed for Great Lakes fleets. As a result the shipping compa-

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)



Mystery Photo

nies' orders for new vessels filled the Great Lakes shipyards to capacity. Since tonnage demands exceeded the Great Lakes yards' ability to meet the number of ships needed, innovative and quick planning was required. Upon suggestion from the U.S.

Maritime Commission, surplus World War II cargo vessels, many of which had laid up on the James River, were made available for sale under the Great Lakes Vessel Sales Act of 1950 (enacted September 28, 1950) to be converted for Great Lakes use. The Act allowed Great Lakes fleets to purchase up to 10 surplus ships by December 31, 1951 and receive a 90% cost subsidy to convert and refurbish them for Lakes use."

McKee Sons was christened *Marine Angel*, a fast troop transport, at the Sun Shipbuilding and Drydock Co., Chester, PA., in 1945. After wartime service she "was acquired by Amerisand Steamship Co. in 1952 with partial ownership shared with Boland & Cornelius (American Steamship Co.) whose fleet would operate the converted vessel on the Great Lakes." Initial conversion was carried out at the Maryland Dry Dock Co., Baltimore, Maryland, in 1953. Following her tow the Great Lakes (the event captured and presented by the Mystery Photograph) her conversion to a self unloader

was completed at the Manitowoc Ship Building Co., Manitowoc, Wisconsin, also in 1953. I think we have our year defined.

In our image we see a vessel much changed from her C4-S-B2 appearance. Aside from all the cut down structure required to clear bridges over the canal and on the Des Moines River and the general unfinished appearance we see evidence of blistering near the tuck of the stern. Also the conversion "included [a] lengthening of 123 feet, [a] new fuller bow, replacing the midship pilothouse with a new bow pilothouse, and an overhaul of her engine." The conversion lengthened the vessel to just over 620-feet in length. "As such, she became the first salt water vessel to sail as a self-unloader on the Great Lakes."

You can read more about *McKee Sons* on any of the web sites mentioned.

I leave you with this thought: All things being what they are, if Alan is correct about these vessels being called boats, then why is the ditch called a "ship" canal?

John Cheevers



Mystery Photo

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



NOTABLE EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Election of officers
Presentation, Tony Clayton, "H.M.S. Bounty's Launch,
1789"
- 28 IPMS Model Show and Contest, Richmond, Va.

MARCH

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, John Wyld

APRIL

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Bob Comet

MAY

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Greg Harrington

JUNE

- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Charles Landrum

JULY

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, George Livingston

AUGUST

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Tim Wood

SEPTEMBER

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
19 Talk Like a Pirate Day

OCTOBER

- 6-11 NRG Conference, Buffalo, NY
10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

NOVEMBER

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

DECEMBER

- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

**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
Chaplain: Alan Frazer

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

Stin round a pot belly stove in the dead-o-winter sho give a body time to recollect some of the antics of the ole boys what hang round the dock.

One night many years ago, Captn Oscar gathered him up a crew to head off shore to do some fishin. . They was headin out in the wee mornin hours. The boat was well stocked with bait and all the mates' favorite refreshment, beer. Them guys thinks that beer is a gottta-have when fishin. They won't too bad as they was packin up the boat, just a few to get um started. When they left out o Benny Wallace's Marina they was still doin pretty good as they got through the crooky channel marked by big ole tins upturned on poles stuck in the mud bars. After the skiff rounded Factory Point them boys got down to some serious beer drinkin. As they passed the bell buoy, Captn Oscar set her on course for the Thimble Shoals Channel. Peerin through the haze they could barely make out the light at the next waypoint. The boys settled in tellin lies what been told a mess o times and drinkin mo beer. Bout two hours later, the boys noticed that the light were gittin no closer. Captn Oscar checked on the compass. The headin were good and the light were dead ahead. After another half hour, or so, someone picked up an empty from sides the compass, woha! The compass swung to the north. The steel beer can had pulled the compass round and they been followin the stern light on a freighter up the Baltimore Channel. Them boys was halfway to Tangier. It took um a bit to figger out where they was and get headed in the right direction. Made for a long trip to get to the other side of the light tower.

Then there was Captn Jack. We all knowed for years that he was a prisoner o war back in WW 2. Yea, I just come to know the whole story. He was a prisoner all right, locked up in the brig at Fort Monroe fur goin AWOL.

Cabin Boy

THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 271:
From the photo caption
Marine Angel
Chicago, Illinois 1953

HRSMS BANQUET

Look for details in the March Logbook.