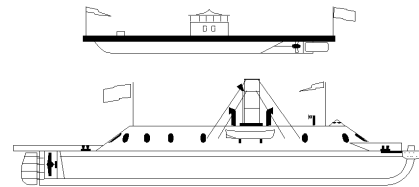


# Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

# Logbook!

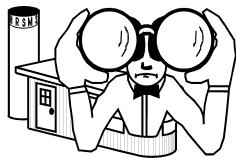


No. 367

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

January, 2017

## From The Bridge



Hope everyone had a good and safe Christmas and New Year. Lots of good food and deserts. This month's meeting will be the first for 2017 and another year will begin. Let's make 2017 a better year by building more or completing what we have started and bringing them in for show 'n tell.

This January we start our 50<sup>th</sup> year as a club. Let's celebrate every meeting. We also will be displaying our models at the Marines Museum as a club venture. We will be helping the museum as well as our club showing our skills as model makers and historians.

January's meeting should be an enjoyable one with good friends and a good demo. See you all there.

Please keep bringing in the models you are working on. Good or bad.

Enjoy the LogBook.

Bob Moritz  
El Capitan

## MEETING NOTICE

**Date:** Saturday January 14, 2017

**Place:** Mariners' Museum

**Time:** 1000 Hours

**Get you models ready  
for the  
HRSMS 50th Anniversary  
exhibition**

**HRSMS Auction  
March 11, 2017  
Norge Hall**

## Mystery Photo



Mystery Photo #366: Story ripped from the headlines? Maybe not! It all may depend on how you define "fast". Fast in ship terms usually means speed. There are proponents of the Littoral Combat ships who would say they are the fastest. The PT boat crowd might disagree. Others might stick to their guns and say the 'ole *Enterprise*, CVN 65, is (was) the fastest. Still more of you might think it's one of our SSNs. And then Gene will say it's the liner the *United States*, and certain heads will nod accordingly. I'm sure it will probably come out in this essay that the current focus of the mystery Photo shows the fastest ship—why not, the subject is raised! This debate is scheduled to continue long after all other heady contests have been settled. And it should.

What do we have on offer? We don't see a lot that looks fast; in fact, the ship is at rest—at anchor even. We do see a composite warship from that transition period when steel was replacing wood and steam was replacing sail as the main ingredients in warship design, and that screams the turn of the previous century. Running on, we see a raised forecastle, black hull lightly decorated with a scroll and shield at the bow; a not quite vertical and straight stem showing some evidence of a ram; a full ship's rig with a rudimentary bow sprit and enough of a steam plant to support two stacks; two ship's boat in the water and at least two more in davits; old fashioned anchors stowed the old fashioned way—even an anchor buoy. The hull is pierced for ventilation on the lower deck and I see what appear to be three sponsoned gun mounts. Along the rail we see a forecastle step in line aft with the foremast, Jacob's ladders, boat booms, and hammock racks! The flag at the staff is undecipherable. There are awnings rigged throughout the open decks suggesting a warm climate or at least a location with intense sunlight. And finally, I like that little pop gun sited right at the bow (there's a pair of them, but you have to look hard).

Taken all together, these features immediately identify the vessel—right? Ah...you wish. There is help though. It comes in the form of a watermark. It's located in the lower left corner of the image, and it might help with the identification. If it doesn't help, it should certainly help shorten the search. The mark is the logo of the United States Naval Institute (USNI). It's a fine organization, headquartered at the United States Naval Academy; I'm a member and that's why I recognize it. Search the USNI website and then listen to the voices.

This is a hard one. It really is because without the USNI clue you have to page through some old warship reference, one that features profile line drawings and maybe a picture or two. In doing so, I eliminated the English Navy as being too plain, the French warships as being too weird, and the Germans for being Teutonic. In doing so, I found the Russians to be a

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

contender for a while with their *Rurik* armored cruiser. The Japanese Navy featured a protected cruiser named *Unebi* that looked promising. While the Spanish offered up one of the three *Alfonso* class unprotected cruisers as a likely candidate. And finally, the Turkish Navy had the *Messudieh* class central battery ironclads. These ships all featured a full ship rig, two stacks, and a break in the rail forward. There may be other contending ships out there but there was only so much time that I was willing to devote to the search. After gathering this pool of candidates, it was time to get out the big glass and cast the critical eye on each looking for the glaring feature that would eliminate them one by one. Fast is a relative term and I was beginning to hear the voices.

Speaking of voices, let's see who chirped like a canary and who crowed like a...well, like a crow. And the first to crow was Mr. Tim Wood. His choice just happened to be one of my culls: "I believe this month's mystery photo is of the Turkish Navy *Messudieh*" or *Mesudiye* depending on the spelling you like. Tim found his like I found mine; only he used a reference I don't have. "I was able to find a line drawing of the ship online; the information I found on the *Messudieh* is from [The Encyclopedia of Ships](#) by Tony Gibbons, first published in the United States in 2001 by Thunder Bay Press."

Drawing from this reference Tim continues: "In the 1870's, the Turkish Navy and its fleet of ironclads ranked high among the navies of the world. At that time, they were some of the best warships afloat, but lack of finance meant that this situation could not be maintained into the 1880's. The last major

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## AMERICAN NAVAL HISTORY 1803

1804

February 16: Decatur destroys the Philadelphia.

May 13: Preble's blockade of Tripoli is beginning to be felt, but he is anxious to take more forceful actions.

August 3: First bombardment of Tripoli by Preble.

August 7: Second bombardment of Tripoli.

August 11-24: Preble attempts to bombard Tripoli by night. All six are ineffective.

August 27: Fourth bombardment of Tripoli.

September 2: Fifth bombardment of Tripoli. This is the last time Preble shells Tripoli.

September 3: The Intrepid attempts to destroy the Tripolitan fleet in Tripoli harbor. The Intrepid blows up at the entrance to the harbor, killing everyone on board, doing no damage to the Tripolitan fleet.

September 9: Commodore Barron relieves Commodore Preble. The blockade of Tripoli continues.

1804 Ends with no further actions.

Bob Moritz



Wreck of the Spanish Reina Mercedes, Santiago, Cuba. Ca. 1898

(Continued from page 2)



Mystery Photo

acquisition in the 1870's was that of the two iron-hulled, fully rigged, central battery ships designed by Reed and Built in Britain. These were *Messudieh* and *Memdouhied*; the latter was later sold to Britain and became HMS *Superb*." Hang on, didn't I already discount the English Navy as being too plain? Did I miss something, or did I cull these Turkish vessels for a reason?

Moving on for now...

A second response arrived and had its author singing like a canary. Rob Napier writes: "Well, I attempted to learn about the Mystery Photo in the honorable way --- by looking through Conway's All the Worlds Fighting Ships 1860-1905. But time was short. I looked at the major navies of the world, but had to pass on the smaller ones in the back. Usually, the configuration of vessels of this Mystery Photo's ilk can be picked out fairly easily because they differ so much. I figured

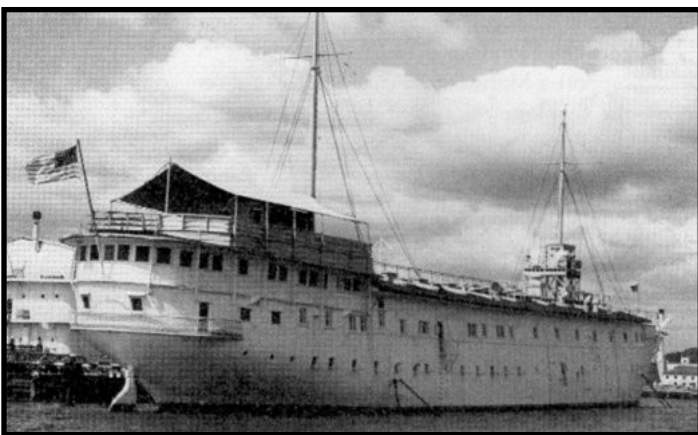
this one would be the same. Found no joy. But, not wanting to let the opportunity slide entirely, decided to try the search in the new-fangled and not altogether approved way. I scanned the MP into the computer at a convenient 300 dpi. Then I dragged the icon for the image to the Image Search Feature in Google. Wham-zot! The MP shows up immediately --- even though I had not bothered to eradicate the Call or Write John block in the upper right. Amazing thing, Google, that's for sure."

I, too, sat and did the Conway's thing. And I produced the list indicated above. Then I perused the USNI site until I found their Naval History blog. The blog is interesting in that it contains stories and memories of the Academy and naval related activity---certainly not stories of hate, fearfulness, and discontent like the general use blogs out there in cyber land. But like most blogs it's tough to navigate without a bit of help. So, at the Google "all" line I searched for "USNI blog" and appended the name of each vessel I had on my list. I hit pay dirt when I got to the Spanish Navy *Alfonso*-class ship *Reina Mercedes*. The search returned a link to an article titled ""The Fastest Ship in the Navy": The Strange Saga of the USS *Reina Mercedes*." And published "Wednesday, September 23, 2015 6:00 AM, By Jon Hoppe." When I went to that result, I was staring back at our Mystery Photo.

Rob was right behind me, in a way. His Google image search pointed him, or as he says, "Went straight to the Naval History Blog at [navalhistory.org](http://navalhistory.org), and, there, read the entire story of Spanish *Reina Mercedes*, then of the *USS Reina Mercedes*." Now that's pretty fast, but remorse still sets in: "I sort of don't feel entitled to claim having discovered the history of the MP,

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(Below) USS *Reina Mercedes* (IX-25) under tow enroute to Norfolk in 1939 for an overhaul





(Continued from page 3)



Mystery Photo

having cheated by using the Google Image Search, and all, so I don't think I'll add any more detail. Others may. But I think that's the MP. Can't say that I think she's compelling in any way, appearance-wise."

Sorry Tim, Rob's in and you're out! But as for some consolation, take a look at the profile line drawing you supplied of *Messudieh* and compare it to one for *Reina Mercedes*—pretty darn close! If we hadn't found the image, I might have been tempted to declare you the winner. Several weeks after Tim's first reply, he sent the results of his own Google image search. Yes Tim, you got it right on your second try. Can I get chirp for his tweet?

That part of the mystery is solved, now let's see if we can solve the mystery of why Jon Hoppe calls the vessel the fastest ship in the navy. I guess we'll have to look into her history to understand why:

*Reina Mercedes* was an unprotected cruiser and unit of the Spanish Navy. Rob says that she was "Built in Cartagena (Columbia), 1887 [and] Served as station ship at Santiago, Cuba." (I think it's really Cartagena, Spain and not the one in Colombia.) DANFS says that the vessel was named for "Queen Mercedes (1860-1878) the wife of King Alfonso XII of Spain. She initially served in Spanish waters; joining the Instructional Squadron in 1893, but was transferred to the Caribbean in 1895. *Reina Mercedes* acted as flagship of Spanish naval forces in Cuban waters with additional duty as station ship at Santiago de Cuba." Her principle dimensions are: displacement 2,835; length 292'; beam 43'3"; draft 21'11" (mean); complement 91; armament none.

Does it strike anyone funny that a ship from the Spanish Navy has an entry in DANAFS? Well, it strikes me funny, so let's get to the bottom of this. *Reina Mercedes* time to shine as a warship was approaching as she was to fight against the US Navy in what Rob tongue in cheek calls the SPAM war. (SPAM the war was fought from 1898 to 1898, SPAM the ham was invented in 1937 as a means to sell the underutilized shoulder portion of the hog.)

When hostilities began, "*Reina Mercedes* served as a harbor defense ship at Santiago de Cuba", having arrived there in 1892. "By 1898, she was in such a poor state of repair that her armament was largely removed for use as shore batteries. Her part in the Battle of Santiago de Cuba on July 3rd, 1898 (a resounding victory for the U.S. Navy) was little more than to absorb shellfire and to act as an obstruction to navigation. The Spanish had hoped to tow her into the channel and sink her, denying access to the harbor. Even in that, she was not entirely successful; she sank in the shallows, and the channel was left open."

At the time, Spanish Lieutenant Jose Muller y Tejeiro had this to say: "Yet it was not entirely useless, since the enemy could not take possession of her, as she is all riddled by bullets which she received that night, and I do not believe she can ever again be used." But he was wrong; Hoppe writes: "Over the course of her seventy-year life, the *Reina Mercedes* would serve not one but two navies, and become a fixture (in more than one sense) at the Naval Academy."

"After the hostilities with Spain had ceased, the *Reina Mercedes* was seized by the U.S. Navy with the intention of raising her and turning her into a training ship. She was raised from the bottom in March, 1899 and towed first to Norfolk for repairs, and later to the Portsmouth Navy Yard for refitting. There, she was converted instead into a receiving ship. Rechristened the U.S.S. *Reina Mercedes* in 1905, she was towed to Newport, Rhode Island, replacing the U.S.S. *Constellation* there for that

purpose."

In 1912, she was towed to Norfolk, Virginia for a refit. But instead of returning to Newport, she was assigned to Annapolis, Maryland to replace the U.S.S. *Hartford* as the station/barracks/receiving ship and brig. As such she served "as living quarters for unmarried enlisted personnel assigned to the Naval Academy, as well as the captain of the ship — who was also the commanding officer of the Naval Station, Severn River Naval Command — and his family. The most famous of these commanders was William F. "Bull" Halsey." In her service as brig, Naval Academy midshipmen were confined to the ship for periods of a week to a month or more for serious infractions of the Academy Regulations. Part of their punishment was to take their meals aboard and sleep in hammocks. This punishment was abolished in 1940. One has to wonder why this was considered punishment when these actions closely followed Navy mores of the time.

"The ship was fitted out rather luxuriously during her time at the Academy. One Marine Guard remembered the polished linoleum floors. Coming aboard, he remembered that "a visitor walks up a gangplank overhung with the inimitable white of Navy canvas. The entrance is flanked by two beautiful carvings made from the original hatches of the *Reina*. Upon reaching the quarterdeck, which was hung with flags and fragments of famous old ships, the visitor turned into the hall. . . . Jutting straight up through the center of the hallway was the mainmast of the ship, to which are attached port and starboard lanterns, affording both light and decorative effect. The main deck held three bedrooms, two baths, the dining room, den, and galley. Perching off the dining room and den were little Spanish balconies. On the next deck were two master bedrooms, bath, dressing room . . . converted into a sewing room and a 40×30 foot lounge. This is the room where much living and all entertaining is done. At the stern end of the immense room was the original steering wheel of the *Reina*. Deck No. 3 was the "penthouse" of the quarters, consisting of a small lounge and sundeck.""

But times change. The infrequent trips to Norfolk for repairs and such "were estimated to be so costly that the *Reina Mercedes* was ordered to be broken up. She was struck from the Naval Register on September 6, 1957. Decommissioned on November 6th of that year, she was towed to Baltimore and scrapped."

I'll end by reposting the poser we began with:

(Continued on page 5)

## Nautical Term

**Whiskers** (also *Whisker Booms* and *Shrouds*) Lateral bracing to the bowsprit and jib boom of a sailing craft. One guess is that it was a nickname, from the similarity to dog's and cat's whiskers.

Tim Wood

## THE ANSWER

The answer to mystery photo 366:

*Reina Mercedes* sometime prior to 1898

(Continued from page 4)



Mystery Photo

Though not exactly ripped from traditional headlines, the Jon Hoppe article alternately calls *Reina Mercedes* “a fixture” and “fasted”. So, how can a fixture be fast? To help you solve this riddle, I’ll ask an easier one: When is a door not a door? Answer: when it’s ajar. Ready? Question: When is a ship a fixture? Answer: when it’s made fast to a pier. Today, the same could be said of *USS Mount Whitney* (LLC 20) which is often called building 20 by active duty sailors. “*Reina Mercedes* earned the nickname ‘the fastest ship in the Navy,’ owing to her being tied “fast” to her berth at the Naval Academy and rarely ever moving.”

Happy New Year.



REINA MERCEDES, SPANISH WARSHIP, NOW USED AS A TRAINING SHIP, U. S. NAVAL ACADEMY.

John Cheevers

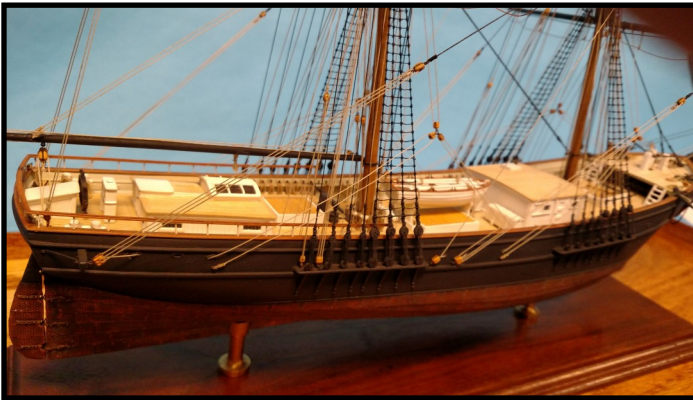


City of Richmond arrives in Baltimore after ramming sister ship, the City of Annapolis on February 24, 1927





Marty Gromovsky's Clara E. Randall



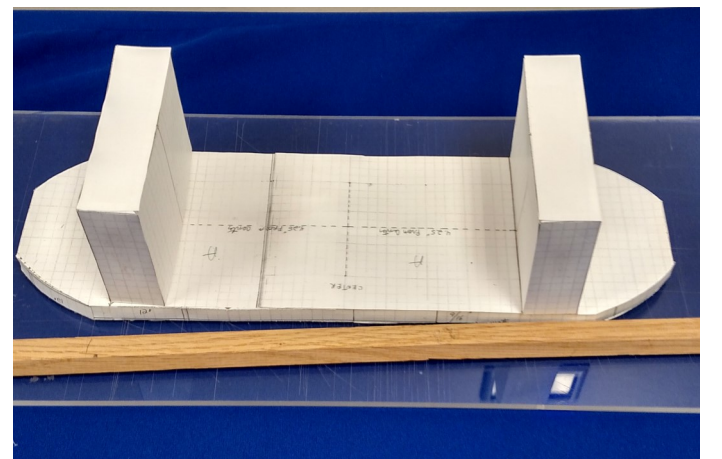
Ulrich Guenther's merchant brigg Volante



Bruce Brown's City of Richmond



George Livingston's racing shells



Bob Moritz's floating dry dock mockup

(Continued from page 8)

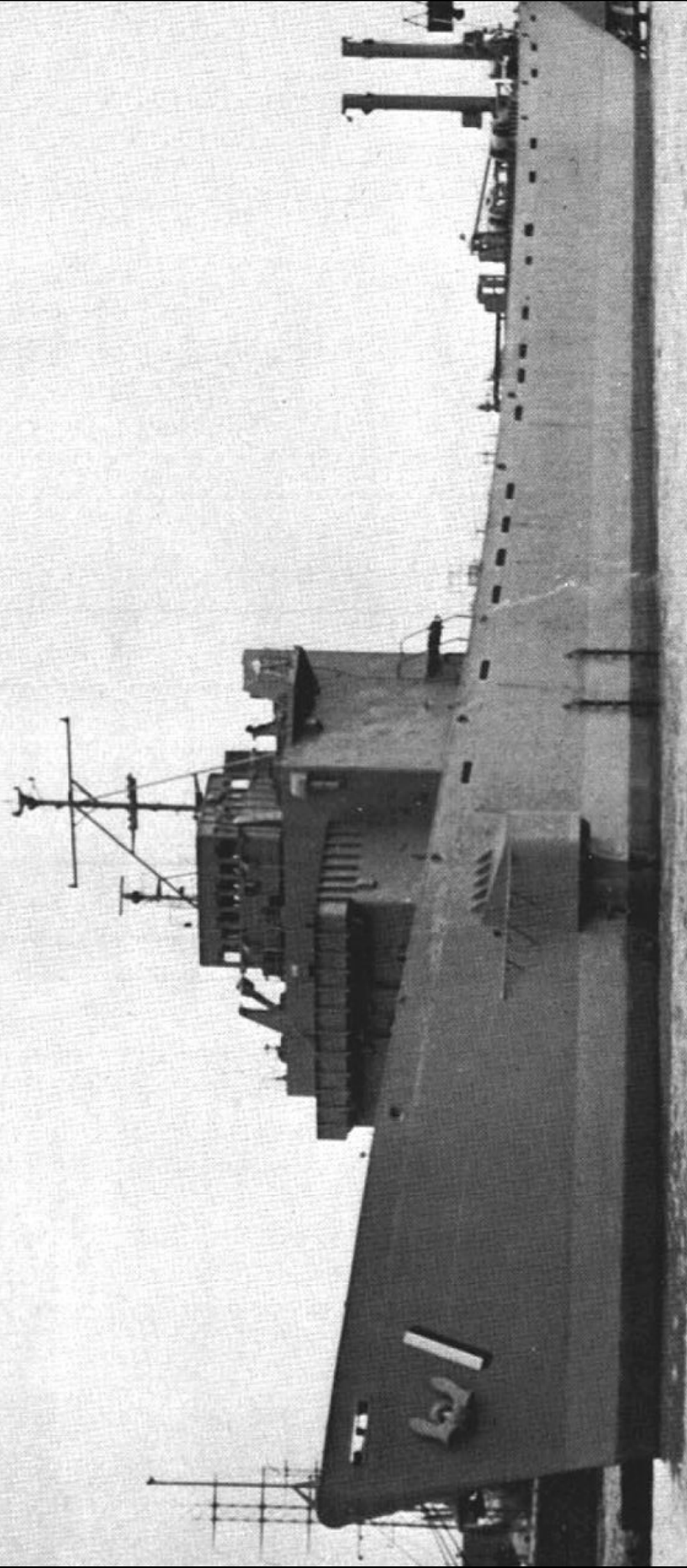


Model Shipways kit. John Wyld showed the book Resurrection: Salvaging the Battle Fleet at Pearl Harbor by Daniel Madsen. Bob Moritz showed a paper mockup of a floating dry dock. The dry dock will be used as base for a model of the USS Missouri.

The meeting was adjourned to the presentation "Wooden Racing Shells" by George Livingston.

## Mystery Photo

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





## NOTABLE EVENTS

### JANUARY

- 13-15 Cabin Fever Expo, Lebanon, Pa  
14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, Tony Clayton, SS Savannah, Etcetera  
Nomination of officers,

### FEBRUARY

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, Round Table  
Election of officers  
25 IPMS Old Dominion Open, Richmond, Va.

### MARCH

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Auction, Norge Hall

### APRIL

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, Tom Matthews, Bicycles + Battleships = ?

### MAY

- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, Bill Fox The James River: Boats and Steam  
boats

### JUNE

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation: Ron Lewis, AC 35 (w/AC50s)

### JULY

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, John Cheevers, Carving the Chine Hull

### AUGUST

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, Greg Harrington, Building the Clue & Chata

### SEPTEMBER

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting  
19 Talk Like a Pirate Day

### OCTOBER

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, Marty Gromovsky, TBA

### NOVEMBER

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

## WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: Bob Moritz (804) 779-3365  
Mate: Gene Berger  
Purser: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804  
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580  
Historian: Bill Dangler (757) 245-4142  
Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955  
Bill Clarke (757) 868-6809  
Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580  
Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 930-4615  
Photographer: Marty Gromovsky

## MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society  
Monthly Meeting  
December 10, 2016  
Mariners' Museum

Guest: Jim Tarantino, 2nd meeting  
Bob Yurchuck, 1st meeting

The meeting was called to order by Skipper Bob Moritz at 1006 hours. The Clerk was dinged for a misspelling of the Mate's last name in the minutes. Ryland Craze gave the Purser's report, detailing our meager financial holdings and the expenditure for our IPMS sponsorship. Greg Harrington gave the Webmasters report stating that the section for adding references is not working properly and he is working to resolve the issue.

Old Business: The Skipper inquired about the progress on Alan Frazer's the memorial plaque. Ron Lewis stated that it should be completed by the January meeting. Bill Dangler was asked if he reserved a shelter for the annual picnic. Bill said that he would make the reservation but would not be able to do the setup as he had done in previous years. Greg Harrington volunteered to take the lead on managing the picnic. Greg Harrington talked about using the Warwick Yacht Club for our March banquet. Greg quoted prices for several menu options and they sounded reasonable. Greg was given the green flag to make arrangements for a three option plated meal to be held on the third or fourth Saturday in March, and bring the details to the January meeting. Ron Lewis talked about the changes to the galleries at the Mariners' Museum and the relocation of the model builders' stand. The location for the museum's HRSMS 50th anniversary exhibit has not been decided. Guest, Bob Yurchuck was recognized. Bob explained that he was downsizing his closet and he had brought several kits the he would like to sell.

New Business: Tim Wood was asked about the status of the design of the HRSMS membership certificates. Bill Clarke reminded the bridge that John Cheevers has the original certificates. John was asked to pass the certificates on to the Skipper. The Skipper made the suggestion that we have a group build in support of the museum's needs. After discussion it was decided to take a measured approach to this subject and build a solid consensus amongst the membership. Tony Clayton said that he has items to donate to an auction. John Cheevers said that he was holding material for the next auction. After discussion it was decided to have Tony reserve Norge Hall for a March 11th auction.

Show & Tell: Marty Gromovsky showed the progress on his schooner Clara E. Randall. John Cheevers showed the progress on his tug Dorothy and a fixture for holding a Dremel tool to grind molding scrapers. Bruce Brown showed his build of the Dumas kit of the steamer City of Buffalo altered as the steamboat city of Richmond. Stewart Winn showed work on his Caldercraft British Bomb Ketch. Bob Yurchuck showed several model that he had for sale. Ulrich Guenther presented his build of the 1/8 scale, 1853 Merchant Brigg Volante based on the

*(Continued on page 6)*