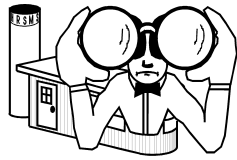




## From The Bridge



### Captain's Log 10.14.17

This year may have sailed by, but we've accomplished a lot. The big problem now is what to do for an encore. I'd like everyone to bring to the next meeting an idea of where we should go from here.

This coming February, on the heels of our exhibit closure, will bring the next opportunity. The IPMS show in Richmond has long been a great venue to flaunt and reveal our latest works. I want next year's event to be our most ambitious. We have four months to plan our assault on Richmond.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize Lee Martin for stepping up and answering the call from Jeanne Egnor of the Mariners' Museum. He generously donated his Rattlesnake model he had built previously to add to their model collections. Also, Kevin Ritton is building, for the Museum, a model of the Armed Virginia Sloop. Well done to both. There still are several models the Museum wants built from the kits in their possession. If you are interested, contact Jeanne Willoz-Egnor, Director of Collections Management, [jegnor@marinersmuseum.org](mailto:jegnor@marinersmuseum.org), (757) 591-7764.

Thank you, Ryland and team for organizing and putting on a successful picnic last month. Everyone had a great time. The weather was perfect, company good, and we didn't burn the place down.

That should take care of stuff for now. See you at the meeting. Bring your ideas...and yourself.

SD

P.S. What's the pool up to now???

## MEETING NOTICE

**Date:** Saturday October 14, 2017

**Place:** Mariners' Museum

**Time:** 1000 Hours

## Mystery Photo



There are a lot of ways to begin this essay. I could say "The butler did it" like in the board game Clue and take you through the story. But you'll find out later that's not the case. I could say "What goes around, comes around", the definition of karma; but I would have to add... "comes around again"—and karma will. I could say, "Oops, it happened again"—and it did, and you'll see! But I think in order to get to these expressions and how they apply to the Mystery Photo we need to talk a bit about shipwrecks, after all they're everywhere—they litter the seafloor. The exact number is unknown as new ones are discovered, or re-discovered, every day. Let's discover one today.

The condition of shipwrecks vary, primarily due to the depth, temperature, and salinity of the water, but other factors creep in. For instance, we all know or have heard that coastal wrecks are disturbed by storms, fishing, sport divers, and souvenir hunters. With others, father time plays heck with the wreck. Still more of them face greater and lesser challenges. There are cases where almost perfectly preserved wrecks are found in the Great lakes. And just a few weeks ago I was reading how World War II (WWII) warship wrecks are actually disappearing due to very unscrupulous salvagers—but that's another story. Still more wait patiently for the chance to re-tell their story. Our shipwreck is timely in that it was located in 2016 but not positively identified until June of this year (2017).

Setting that identification aside for the moment, what can we learn from our Mystery Photo? We have a ship in protected waters and she is not at anchor, but appears so as she exhibits little headway. She has her stern to the wind—the smoke is the telltale. It's a bright sunny day, the shadows make it very close to noon. Men are present on the foredeck, the bridge, at the open companionway, and on the poop deck. The livery is vintage white hull with buff topsides and features intricate scroll work at the bow.

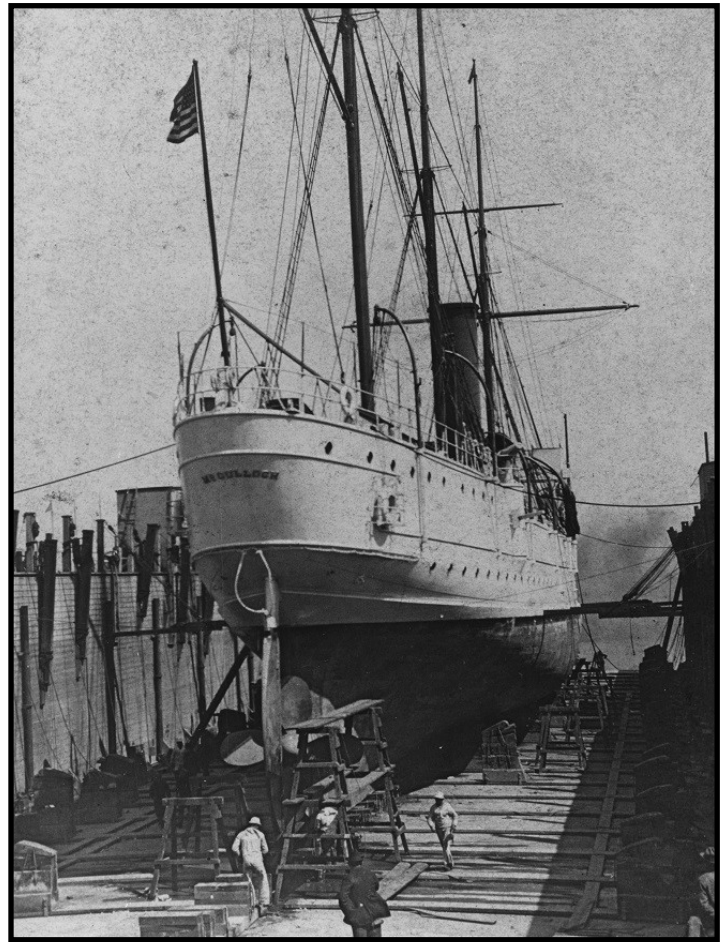
In addition to the raised decks fore and aft we have a protected main, or weather deck that is open from just forward of the enclosed bridge to the mizzen mast. She carries a barkentine rig with bow sprit that compliments the screw propulsion. Her sails are all nicely brailed. The type and color of her smoke indicates a coal fired steam plant. The decks seem to be clear of armament. However, you can see two sponsoned gun mounts. They are fitted to the main deck, one sits forward at the bow and one at the break of her deck aft. A similar arrangement is to starboard giving her four guns in total. At the bow there appears to be an odd shape worked into the stem casting. Plenty of port lights run in two rows along her hull. And she carries four ship's boats on her port side—again, a similar arrangement might be to starboard. I suspect she is of composite construction—wood sheathing over steel or iron frames. If she not com-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## What's Happening at the Museum

Summer is over and the halls and galleries are not as lively as they were during the summer months. But activity in the Museum has not slowed at all! On the 5th of October we welcomed the Lord Mayor and his delegation from Greifswald, Germany, a Sister City of Newport News, to officially open two new exhibits of marine photography and to recognize the 10th anniversary of our partnership with Greifswald. One gallery, Views of the Baltic Sea, houses a collection of contemporary photos from Greifswald and the other, Another Look, presents photography from 1948 to 1972 and showcases photographers not only from our area but from the far corners of the world. Both exhibits are compelling and highly artistic. Our collections in the Museum allow this ability to change galleries from time to time in order to present as much as possible of our store of tens of thousands of maritime artifacts to our visitors. The Bronze Door Society, a group of Museum patrons, has a direct link to the collections through their mission to finance the upkeep and expansion of the collections and this month, on the 13th, the Society will hold their annual Selection Dinner. The event allows the collections, curatorial, library and education staff to present their favorite project to the membership and the Society members vote to fund one or more of the projects with revenues collected during the year's fundraising activities. A couple of the items of interest this year include a 19th century Hotchkiss Naval Gun and the preservation of 16 films in the Museum's library, many of which relate to the two early hydrofoil sailboats in our collection. Last but certainly not least, the Introduction to Ship Modeling class wrapped up its seven-week practicum with good results from the four participants. They built, under the watchful eyes of Mark Arduini from the Museum's Education Staff and Ron Lewis, a kit from Dumas, the American Classic Skipjack. Needless to say, a lot of kit bashing was carried on! Photos will be available next month and we'll probably welcome a few new members whose craftsmanship has been reawakened! More on this in November.

Ron Lewis



*McCulloch in drydock at San Francisco, California, circa 1899.*

patch boat *USS Dolphin* immediately came to mind. I also thought of the revenue cutter *Bear* and even the *Yorktown*-class gunboat. Some additional research was needed, or I could just Google the damn thing.

In the meantime, two replies arrived: One from Dave Baker and one from Tim Wood. Driving the twenty-penny home, they both nailed it! From their replies it was easy to see that *USS Dolphin* was not right as the placement of her forward guns was different and she never carried a bow sprit. The revenue cutter *Bear* was also not right due to a lot of other reasons. And the gunboat theory was a dead end. Which leaves us with their unified reply, and Dave says it best: "This month's mystery ship is the Revenue Service cutter *McCulloch*, built by William Cramp at Philadelphia, PA, and commissioned on 12 December 1897." Tim, getting into the October spooky state of mind, opened with the first stanza of the popular '80's Ghostbuster theme ending with this question: "If you're on a Coast Guard [cutter] named *McCulloch*, and it's sinking "Who are

*(Continued on page 3)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

posite, she is certainly sheathed in wood below the waterline.



The dual propulsion and wooden sheathing indicates missions of extended range.

From here it gets interesting. A lightly armed vessel wearing the standard livery of United States government ships from around the time of the Great White fleet should clue you in on where to look. The strong hint of a ship lost at sea is another. The absence of any identifiable flags can make for some interesting assumptions while you look. So I made a few. Assuming that this is a United States ship built and lost somewhere between, let's say, 1890 and 1915, it would be very safe to look for a vessel from the United States Navy, the Revenue Cutter service, or maybe the Fisheries Protection Service. I had a few vessels in mind.

But I began by taking another look at the Mystery Photo. The thing that really jumps out is that the mizzen gaff seems way too short and doesn't seem to extend to the mizzen vang. The clue is that we have a clew but not a peak. How did I initially miss that? A closer look shows that someone doctored the image by placing a white box over this spot of the photograph. And that spot just happens to be where the national ensign would fly. Assuming a United States asset, the US Navy des-

### Nautical Term

Abeam - At right angles to the fore-and-aft, or centerline, of a vessel. It is from Anglo-Saxon.

Tim Wood

(Continued from page 2)



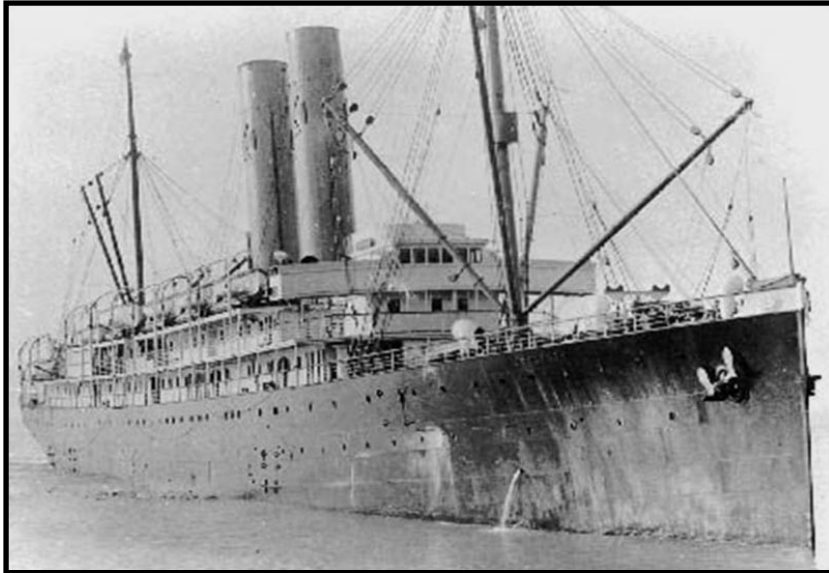
you going to call?”

What a beautiful segue—but more about that in a minute! First, let’s study a few characteristics about this Revenue Service cutter. According to the information provided by Dave, we can zero in on *McCulloch*: “I can’t date the photo, but it shows here original rig, which was later reduced to two masts. As built, she had a barkentine rig with single yard on the foremast and gaffs on all three masts. The ship displaced 1,280

carried four 3-in. quick-firing guns. *McCulloch* was unique among Revenue Service large cutters in having three masts and was the largest cutter in the service at the time of her completion. She had a steel hull planked in wood for duties in Arctic waters and made 17.5 its on trials.”

Based on all of this, I would say that Dave and Tim are right with their identification—OK, they are right! Our Mystery Photo, complete with identifying national ensign, while properly credited to the Mare Island Museum can be readily found at several websites. KPBS out of San Diego, California, features the image as part of a story posted June 13, 2017, about an “Historic Shipwreck Discovered Off [the] Southern California Coast...” KPBS is the first site (top result) featuring the image that find using the Google image search. The fourth such site, Workboat.com, carries the good stuff. There, you can see how “*McCulloch* was found and surveyed by a joint Coast Guard-NOAA team in October 2016.” Excellent wreck imagery accompanies this article.

OK, we have the beginning and the end of this story, what about the middle? What about all those expressions from the first paragraph? Remember how Dave mentions that the ship “was commissioned on 12 December 1897” and how she was planked for Arctic duties? Well it seems she was destined for service on the West Coast and the waters off of Alaska. According to DANFS, “As the Spanish-American War was about to commence, the new cutter was steaming via the Suez Canal and the Far East to her first station at San Francisco. Upon her arrival at Singapore 8 April 1898, 2 full weeks before war was declared, orders directed *McCulloch* to report to Commodore Dewey on the Asiatic station...Because of her speed, *McCulloch* was dispatched to the closest cable facility, that at Hong Kong, bearing the first dispatches of the great naval victory.” Dave



SS Governor ca. 1920

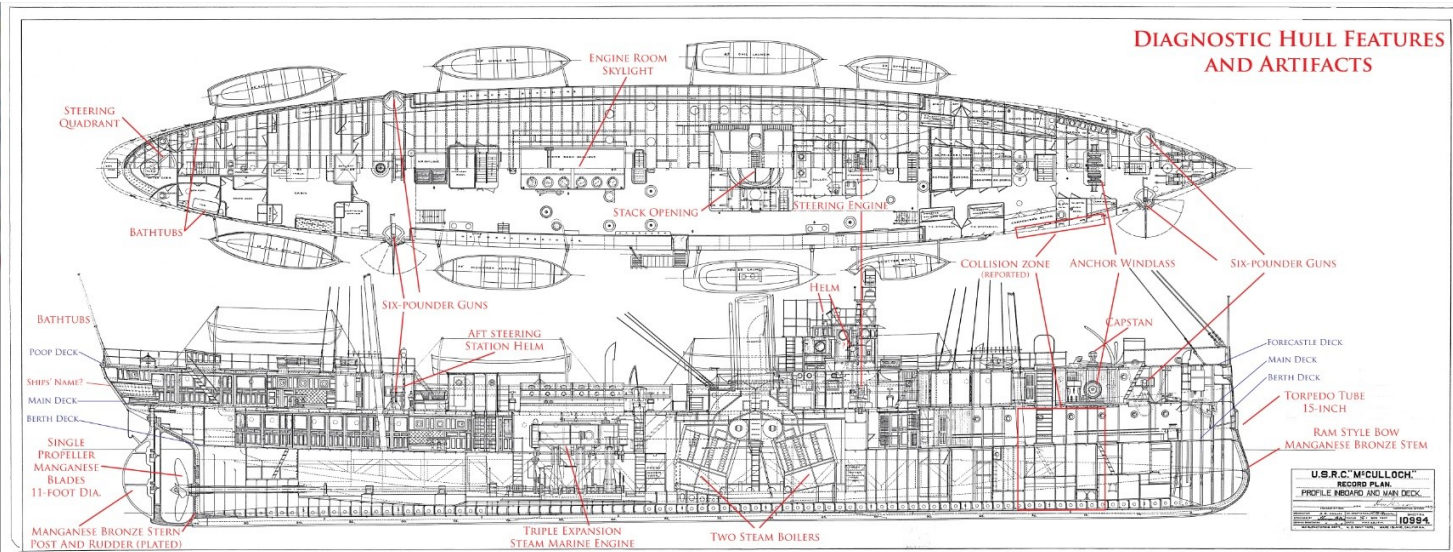
tons and was 219 feet overall (not counting the bowsprit) and 200-ft. between perpendiculars. Beam was 33-ft. 4-in., and draft 14 ft. The single triple expansion steam engine was fed by two 200 p.s.i. boilers. During WW I, her crew totaled 130.”

So she’s not a big vessel. But she is large enough to carry an unusual piece of armament. Remember that “odd shape” I mentioned that was worked into the stem bar? Dave thinks he has that answer along with remarks about some other identifying characteristics. “Like many of the Revenue Service’s large cutters, she was equipped with a bow torpedo tube and also

(Continued on page 4)

## THE ANSWER

The answer to mystery photo 375:  
USCG *McCullough* in an undated NOAA Photo



## Photos from the September Picnic.



(Continued from page 3)

summarized this and added, “McCulloch protected Dewey’s supporting fleet of stores ships during the battle [of Manila Bay].” Again from DANFS we find that later “*McCulloch* arrived at San Francisco 10 January 1899 and operated on patrol out of that port, cruising from the Mexican border to Cape Blanco.” And finally Dave finishes it up by saying that “*McCulloch* was home-ported at San



Francisco and, after 1906, was assigned to patrol the Pribilof Islands west of Alaska, relieving the famous *Bear* on that station. She was transferred to the newly-formed U.S. Coast Guard in 1917, then to the U.S. Navy at the onset of World War I”

So the stage is set and we can segue into the first “goes around, comes around.” Here’s how it goes. While on patrol in dense fog off Point Conception, California, *McCulloch* “collided with the steamer *Governor* off, on 13 June 1917 and sank.” *Governor* was southbound from San Francisco to San Pedro carrying 429 passengers and crew. At the time, “*SS Governor* was owned by the Pacific Coast Company and managed by the Pacific Steamship Company.” Who you gonna call for what comes around? After an inquest, “the *SS Governor* was found at fault for not obeying the “rules of the road” and agreed to a settlement payment to the U.S. government of \$167,500 in December 1923.”

What comes around are these lesser known facts: In addition to owning *SS Governor*, The Pacific Steamship Company also owned *SS Valencia* which was the subject of Mystery Photo #293. And on the “very early morning of Friday April 1, 1921, she [*Governor*] collided with the *SS West Hartland*, de-



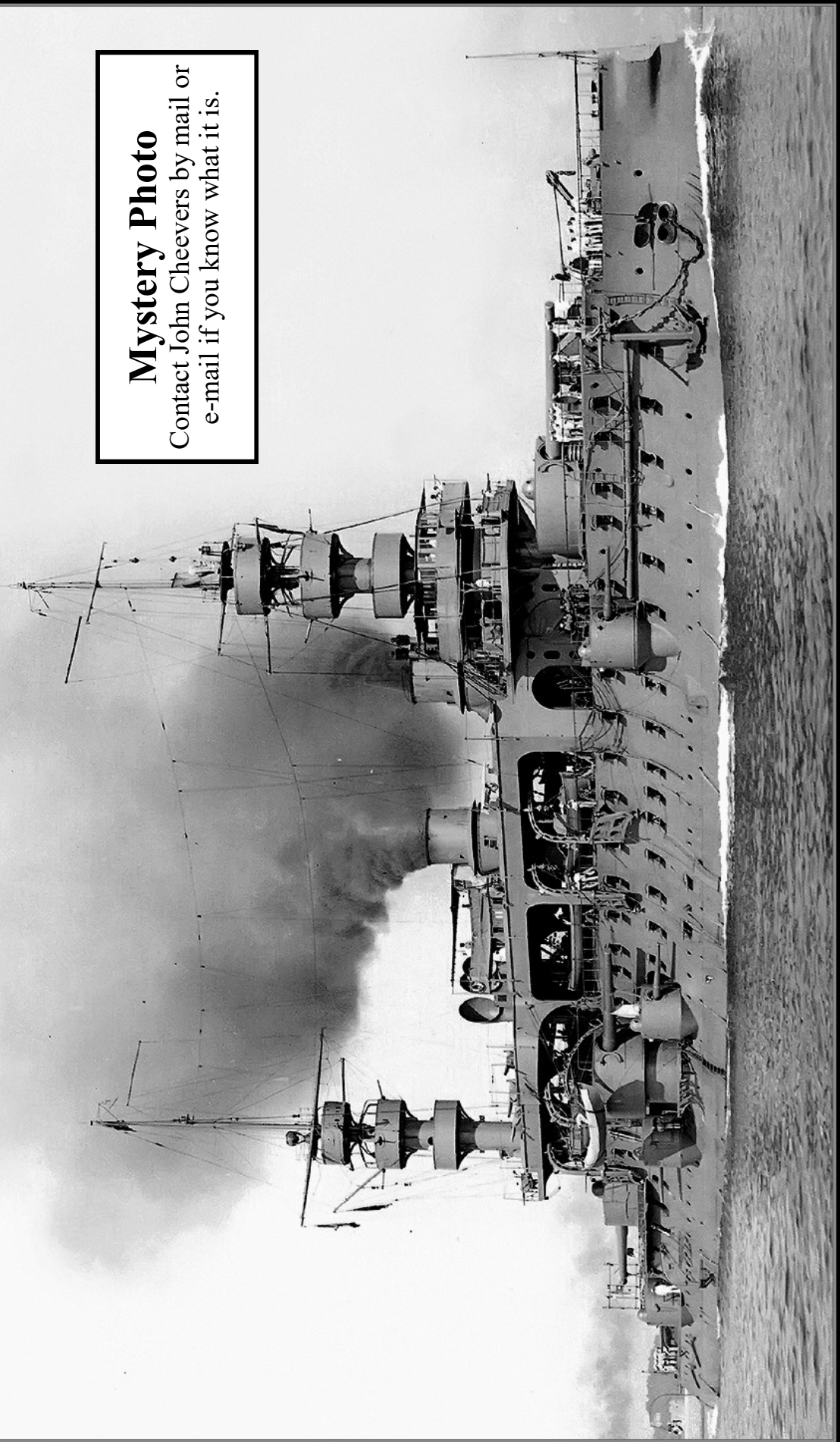
The McCulloch helm. NOAA/USCG/VideoRay

parting Port Townsend for India. The *West Hartland* tore a 10-foot gash in the starboard hull of the *Governor*, and twenty minutes later she sank, taking eight lives with her.”

(Continued on page 6)

## **Mystery Photo**

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



## NOTABLE EVENTS

### OCTOBER

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, Marty Gromovsky, TBA  
26-28 NRG Conference

### NOVEMBER

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

### DECEMBER

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

### JANUARY

- 12-14 Cabin Fever Expo, Lebanon, Pa.  
13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Nomination of officers

### FEBRUARY

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation,  
Election of officers  
24 The Old Dominion Open Scale Model Show & Contest

### MARCH

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting:

### APRIL

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

### MAY

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

### JUNE

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

### JULY

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

### AUGUST

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

### SEPTEMBER

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

## WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: Gene Berger (757) 850-4407  
Mate: Ron Lewis (757) 874-8219  
Purser: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804  
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580  
Historian: Tim Wood (757) 481-6018  
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  
Newport News Park  
September 9, 2017

The annual picnic was held and all business was deferred.

(Continued from page 4)



And if karma isn't enough of a bitch, it comes around again, and again. "On April 20th, 1943, U.S. freighter *Michigan*, (ss west hartland—us shipping board design) steaming in convoy UGS-7, is torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine *U-565*, off the coast of North Africa." The submarine had a modest raiding history that consisted of seven ships, five were sunk (including two warships) and two damaged. "*U-565* was badly damaged by bombs dropped by US aircraft on 19 September 1944 in the Mediterranean near Skaramanga in



Sinking of the McCullough

Greece. She was eventually scuttled in Salamis by 3 depth charges on 24 September 1944."

*McCullough* was sunk on 13 June 1917. Her wreck was found in 2016 but not positively identified until 13 June 2017. Coincidence? Karma? Irony? How, about those expressions... wrecks do really litter the seafloor.

John Cheevers'

"Any fool can carry on, but a wise man knows how to shorten sail in time."- Joseph Conrad