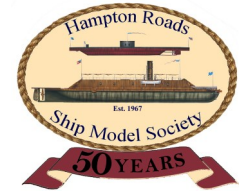


# Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

# Logbook!



No. 405

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

March, 2020

## From The Bridge



## Mystery Photo



It is only fitting to begin my first Logbook entry as Skipper by recognizing our outgoing “Supreme Dude”, as usually he referred to himself. Often it was simply “SD”, for short. He also went by “Dear Leader”, “Captain” and “Emperor of the Seas and Modeling Domain”. A bit of megalomania here? Folie des grandeur? Well, then it was well deserved. Gene was an excellent motivator, leader, and innovator. He presided over our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibit, which was nothing short of a resounding success. He also put a great deal of effort into the design of our new booth within the Mariners' Museum, to which I hope to return some day as an active participant. Not content to simply stay on course, he brought new ideas, including the Modeler of the Month (MoM) and the Modeling Experience Index. I particularly appreciate the MoM, through which I've learned a number of interesting things about our fellow members. It is certain to spark further conversation, which is what being part of a group is all about. The Index will also encourage interaction and exchange of ideas, which is the flip side of the same coin. He has inspired and encouraged us all with his spirit, and of course by his mesmerizing skill as a model maker. Gene, on behalf of the entire club, thank you for everything. Well done, sir.

Gene did well at past IPMS Old Dominion Open events, and so have other members. It's time to stop singing Gene's praises and heap accolades on others. Three raucous cheers for Ulrich Guenther and Dave Chelmow, who placed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, respectively, in the Maritime – Wood Construction category at the ODO last weekend. Ulrich's entry also garnered Best Mari time. So, best in breed and best in group, if not best in show. Good boy! I hear the club was well represented, aside from the competition entries. Roughly 10 members were present, some with items to display. It is great to be part of an ac-

*(Continued on page 2)*

Mystery Photo #404: What's in a name? Apparently, a lot! By the rules of this game there can only be one right answer to the Mystery, and it must match the vessel as presented. I will not make an exception this month, but I will allow other names to populate the essay. I have to because the ship in this Mystery had many names and roles and each has a story to tell.

The photograph is not a great one; you photographers, and would-be photographers, out there can pick it apart on its merits. But it does sort of drop us into the center of her history. From there we can let our gaze radiate as we review this history.

The vessel as shown is military—she has three guns on platforms and possibly two mousetrap ASW mortar launchers forward. She also has an appearance that suggests a prior use. It's especially noted by her graceful sheer, her clipper bow with bowsprit notch, and her fantail/transom stern. She looks like she was designed and built as a yacht. She is not too large, I'm guessing maybe no more than 150 to 175 feet in length. That length makes her large enough for the US Navy to operate in an emergency. The Navy did this in World War One and again in World War Two, but I am getting ahead of myself. Aside from the sleek hull, we see a small bridge, a single, pole mast, and a stack emitting a light amount of smoke that might indicate a diesel power plant.

Two replies this month, both of whom identified the ship correctly. Tim Wood and Dave Baker say that “This month's mystery ship is the U.S. Navy coastal patrol yacht U.S.S. PHENAKITE (PYc-25).” And that is a correct identification for the photograph.

Dave highlights her service data and provides some of his identification rationale: “The USN paid \$65,000 for the vessel, which was converted into a coastal patrol craft at Tomkinsville, NY, and commissioned under the name PHENAKITE and numbered PYc 25 on 1 July 1942. ...the photo having been taken sometime between her commissioning in the USN on 1 July 1942 and her decommissioning into local service on 17 Novem-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## MEETING NOTICE

**Date:** Saturday March 14, 2020

**Place:** Mariners' Museum

**Time:** 1000 Hours



## HAMPTON ROADS SHIP MODEL SOCIETY ANNUAL BANQUET

**Al Fresco Restaurant**

**Saturday March 21, 2020**

**11710 Jefferson Ave, Newport News**

**Cash Bar 6:30 pm Dinner 7:30 pm**

**Get you reservations to Ryland Craze by Mar. 14th**

# Modeler of the Month March 2020

## Stewart Winn



Like most of us, I began my modeling career when I was very young, starting with cardboard cut-out sets (remember them?) and then moving on to all kinds of other things, like Strombecker wood WWII airplane models, and old-timer automobiles (1919 vintage or older). But then high school and girls intervened, and I had to put off a while.

After graduating Georgia Tech, I spent three years in the Navy on the Newport News-built carrier *Intrepid* and briefly renewed my childhood hobby by starting a model of the clipper ship *Swordfish*. I soon realized that if I rigged it, I'd never be able to move it around, so suspended it for 20 years. I finished it in 1978, and it was proudly displayed at the Museum two years ago. (There must be some sort of record here.) Ironically, I first visited the Museum in 1950 and was completely awed by the vast array of models in the Great Hall of Steam. I thought then what a marvelous place that would be to work; and here I am, 70 years later, working in the model shop! Who could have guessed?

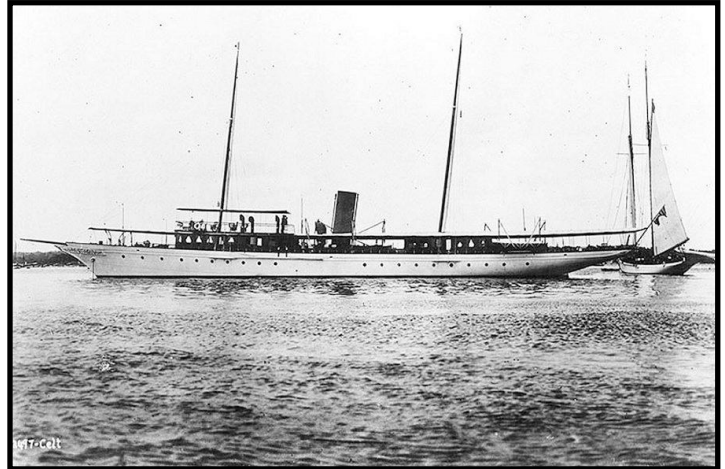
The rest of my career between school and retirement was spent in construction management, working for several different companies, moving around the country frequently, and building everything from houses to nuclear power plants and rapid transit systems. After moving to Williamsburg in 2000 and taking up golf, I realized I better have a more sedentary hobby for later years, so decided to take up ship modeling again. One of my friends introduced me to the HRSMS, so here I am today, hooked again.

2020 Dues  
are now due

(Continued from page 1)



ber 1944, but from the paint scheme, I'd say the year was 1944 and from her operational career probably somewhere off Key West Florida. The mystery ship photo appears on the ship's history and data page in the Navsource website, but no date is given. I was able to identify her from the faint hull number's first digit (2) and a fainter possible 5 and



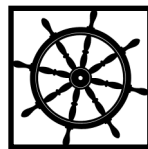
Steam yacht Celt, prior to WW I

then checked the armament list for PYc-designated ships in SHIP'S DATA, U.S. Naval Vessels, Vol. II, for April 15 1945. The Armament Summary for that period listed her as the only PYc carrying a 3-in. 23-caliber gun, which appears aft in the photo, while forward of the bridge are two single water-cooled .50-cal. machine-guns; two depth charge mortars appear on the fantail, forward of the 3-in. 23-cal. gun."

"As a commissioned ship, the PHENAKITE, was assigned to the Fleet Antisubmarine School at Key West as sonar training ship and local patrol vessel. On 2 November 1944, the ship was reassigned to the 3rd Naval District and transited to New York that month. Decommissioned on 17 November 1944 at Tompkinsville, NY, she was assigned to the Naval Reserve

(Continued on page 3)

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tive and social group, and I regret I was not able to attend this year.

We started with Gene and his titles. We'll end with my own. In his last address as skipper, Gene suggested "His Eminence". I'm not deserving of such a holy handle. I need a more mundane moniker. I was not into comic books as a child, but lately I've been binge-watching Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. If I had a superpower, it would be procrastination. It's even listed in the aforementioned Experience Index (see the Nov. 2019 issue). "Mañana Man" has a nice alliterative ring to it. It's also fitting, as I'm off to Portugal and Spain soon. That means there will be no progress on my eel drifter for an additional 3 weeks. But I need to do better. These things don't build themselves, and life is short. If you are like me, do as I say, not as I do... Season 5 Episode 10 awaits. --- MM

(Continued from page 2)



Midshipman Training School at Flushing Bay, Long Island and operated on Long Island Sound until placed out of service on 2 October 1945.”

As for her characteristics while serving as *Phenakite*, Dave provides: “As for platform data, PHENAKITE was 183-ft. overall as of 1945, with a waterline length of 153-ft, beam of 22-ft. 6-in., and draft of 9-ft. 7-in. for a full load displacement of 360 tons. Her single diesel could drive her at 13.5 knots, and she could carry up to 170 tons of diesel fuel oil. Her crew had four officers and 36 enlisted personnel. “Phenakite,” per the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* is a spelling variant for Phenacite, “a glassy mineral, either colored or clear, which is used as a gem and may be mistaken for quartz.”



the *Celt* circa May 1902

Now if that’s the middle of the story, what about the beginning and the end? Dave helps a little there too. “Launched on 12 April 1902, she was built by Pusey and Jones at Wilmington, Delaware, and completed as the private yacht *CELT*, at which time she had a steam propulsion plant.” From an on-line source we learn that “Celt was built for businessman John Rogers Maxwell from Manhattan.” He could be considered one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s robber barons—albeit a minor one. “He was the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Central Railroad of New Jersey, and president of the Atlas Portland Cement Company for many years. The Atlas Portland Cement company is known for having supplied the materials for the construction of the Panama Canal and the Empire State Building.”

The steel-hulled ship was Pusey & Jones’ hull number 306. “It was made with robust steel by Pencoyd Iron Works, later absorbed by Carnegie Steel then US Steel, a name that was the best guarantee of quality at the time.” – Sounds like advertising hype to me, I’ve never heard of “robust” steel. Her original power plant “was equipped with a 4-cylinder triple expansion steam engine by John W. Sullivan, fed by two Almy water tube boilers. This gave the engine the capability of delivering 1200 shaft horsepower and a speed of more than 15 knots. The boilers had a reserve of 42 tons of bunkered coal on the two sides of the lower deck.”

The on-line source continues: “Designed by Henry C. Wintringham, a famed yacht designer at the time, the magnificent vessel originally contained two deck houses, made of

(Continued on page 4)

## AMERICAN NAVAL HISTORY 1827

October 4: The sloop Warren, captures a pirate brig and a pirate boat off the village of Carabusa in the Creek Cyclades Islands.

October 16: The schooner Porpoise is convoying merchant ships from Smyrna, Turkey to Port Mahon, Minorca. After nightfall one of her charges, an English brig, is attacked and captured by several Creek caiques in Doro Passage. The Porpoise lowers four boats carrying 40 men, who drive off the pirates, killing around 40 and recaptures the brig. There are no American casualties.

October 25: The sloop Warren pursues a Carabusan pirate brig which grounds herself and sinks off Argenteira Island. The crew escapes ashore.

October 28: The Warren recovers the captured American brig Cherub at Syra, Greece.

October 30-31: Cruising off Miconi in the Cyclades Islands, the Warren captures a pirate galley.

November 7: A boat party from the Warren captures a pirate boat and burns another during a cruise around Andros Island in the Aegean Sea.

1827 Ends with no further actions.

Bob Moritz

### THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 404

USS *Phenakite* (PYc 25) undated photo from the collection of Harold Homefield

### Nautical Term

**Plank** A length of trimmed timber fastened to the frames to form the “skin” of the hull of a wooden vessel; also one fastened to the deck beams for the decks. The word comes from the Middle English *planke*, of the same meaning, which is believed to have had principally a nautical connotation in that area. It goes back to Latin, *planka* board.

Tim Wood

(Continued from page 3)



carved mahogany wood and two masts made out of Oregon pine. There were 9 furnished and accessorized staterooms, which were also finished in richly carved mahogany, and had adjoining bathrooms with green tiling and mosaic floor. One was for the steward, another for the cooks, two for the crew, one for the owner, three for the guests, and the captain's room on the upper deck. The yacht was equipped with modern plumbing and electric power throughout, had ample light and air, electric fans fitted to the portholes, plus in every state room an icebox, a large berth, a chest of drawers, a dressing table and a wardrobe."



The Sachem as the Sightseer

"Construction took only five months after which the vessel was christened and launched as the *Celt*, on April 12th 1902. The christening ceremony was sponsored by Miss Elizabeth Hunter Pusey."

Her owner, Maxwell, a longtime member in both the Atlantic and the Corinthian Yacht Clubs, used *Celt* around New York Bay and Long Island Sound as pleasure craft, a tender for

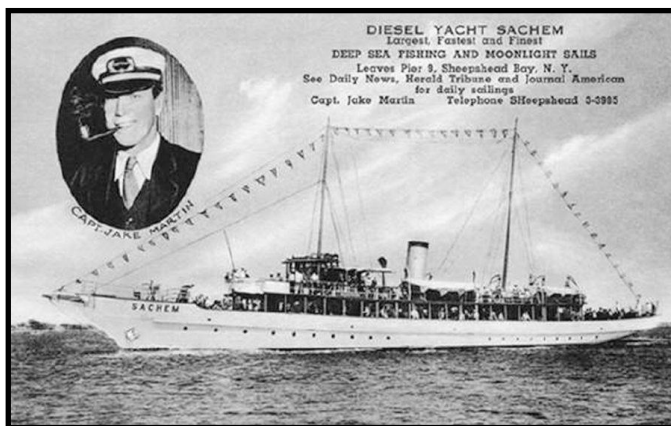


New York c. 1949

his sailing yachts, and as a summer home. *Celt* was intended to be the flagship of his racing fleet. The vessel was the toast of the whole New York coastline for nearly a decade. *Celt* was often present at races and at many New York events of the high soci-

ety. After Maxwell died in 1910 his widow, Maria Louise Washburn Maxwell, later sold the yacht to Manton Bradley Metcalf Sr. of New York, who renamed it *Sachem*. He continued to use *Sachem* as a private yacht in New York waters.

Then World War One happened and things changed. With Germany's threat to the European Continent through its use of submarines to block supply lines by sinking enemy ship-



An advertising postcard from 1932

ping, the US Navy needed patrol vessels to help find and destroy them. Lacking enough "in service" assets they resorted to registering and requisitioning private vessels, including yachts, to augment the patrol force. These registered vessels were categorized as Section Patrol Craft (SP) and assigned identification numbers. Dave mentions that "SACHEM when taken over by the Navy on 19 August 1917, she was listed as SP 192..." There the Navy "equipped the USS Sachem with modern maritime navigation, removed the masts, sealed the ornate brass, fringed the portholes, and raised the sides to make it ocean-worthy. SP-192 was outfitted it with depth charges racks and a defensive armament: one 6-pounder 57mm deck gun, a pair of 3-pounder 37mm guns, and two light machine-guns. The USS Sachem (SP 192) was placed in service on August, 19th 1917, under the Third Maritime District and assigned to harbor patrol. The ship patrolled to spot submarines around the East Coast, the Florida Keys and sometimes down to the Caribbean." Dave later adds that she "was returned to her owner on 10 February 1919."

It was during this naval service that the Navy loaned the vessel to Thomas Edison who promised "to develop submarine & torpedo detection systems and ship camouflaging systems." Since "Edison needed an operable floating laboratory... the Navy gave him the USS Sachem (SP-192) in the spring of 1917. Then, they outfitted it for Edison and his employees. From August to October 1917 Edison conducted numerous experiments onboard the SP-192 along the East Coast in New York and Florida waters, and the Caribbean. Edison, enabled to work at real conditions, dedicated all of his time to naval research. While his relations with the US Navy were tumultuous, he developed 48 to 50 projects, including the "collision mats", the "kite rudder" ... which had potential but none were ever put into production due to the lack of belief and preparedness of the administration."

Following her service, she was returned to Manton Metcalf who then sold her "to Roland Taylor who used her as a rum runner mother-ship during the Prohibition. "In 1932, many

(Continued on page 5)

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years after, at the height of the Great Depression, Roland Taylor had to sell the yacht.” “*Sachem* was purchased for a fraction of its value by Captain Jacob "Jake" Martin of Brooklyn, a charter fisherman who plays a key role in the *Sachem's* history. During the hard financial times, many of these luxurious yachts were sold at ridiculous prices. Fishing was still a recreation for some folks, but an absolute necessity for others. Jacob Martin converted the *Sachem* to a party fishing boat which was a large industry at the time. Jake sailed in the Sheephead Bay of New York and along the New Jersey coast. He was an experienced captain and the *Sachem* was not his first vessel. Like many captains, he opened the boat each summer to anyone willing to pay \$2.00 to board. People came to party, or to catch fish to feed their families, even sometimes for the whole neighborhood.”

“During the winter of 1935-1936 captain Jacob Martin replaced his boat's steam engine and coal boilers with a diesel engine, which was more modern and practical to use: a seven cylinder Fairbanks-Morse 37D14 diesel engine, that is still present in the boat [today]. Over the years, the fishing trips became very popular, and Jacob Martin's business flourished. Even with



13 March 2013 Laying abandoned

the new conflict that appeared in 1939, the *Sachem* continued its life as a fishing vessel with Captain Jacob Martin until 1941. It was not until United States entered World War II that the boat served the nation another time.”

Following America's entry into World War Two the US Navy again faced the need for patrol boats and for a second time exerted “their right to requisition private yachts.” For a second time *Sachem* was caught up in the dragnet. She was again refitted and renamed. Appearing as the *Phenakite* that Dave so accurately described.

In December of 1945, Jacob Martin reacquired the vessel and renamed the ship *Sachem*, but she was a ship in terrible material condition. Facing budget problems “he had to relinquish his loved *Sachem* and offered it for sale. Eventually, in 1946, it was bought by the Circle Line Sightseeing Cruises of New York” which offered sightseeing of New York City by boats that circled Manhattan Island via the Harlem Ship Canal. *Sachem* was “subsequently renamed it *Sightseer*, then *Circle Line Sightseer*, and finally *Circle Line V*.”

“In 1977, after 31 years being in service she was removed from the fleet. The boat was sold off for scrap; then stripped from all its useful equipment, electrics, furnishings, brass bits and timber in an abandoned pier in New Jersey for reuse in other Circle Line boats. The pilothouse was removed



13 March 2013 Laying abandoned

for use as a ticket sales kiosk for the Circle Line pier, and what left of the ship was donated to the Sea Scouts and the ship ended up remaining derelict in the abandoned pier.”

Dave's final piece of information talks about her ending up in Kentucky, somewhere opposite of Lawrenceburg, IN. As he puts it: “How she got to Kentucky apparently remains something of a mystery.” Well, we're here to solve Mysteries.

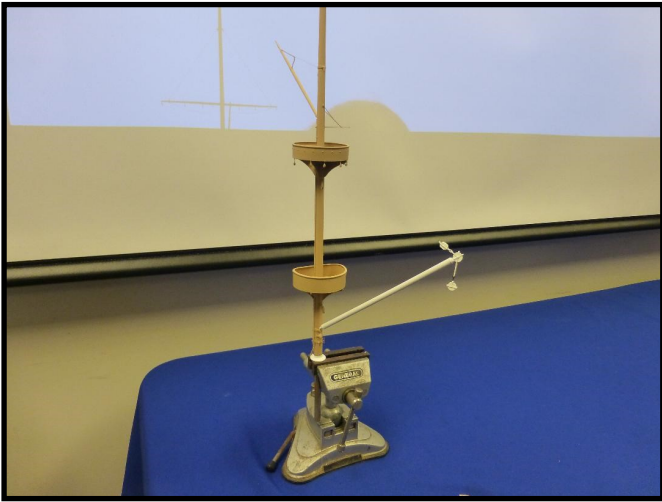
She languished in the New Jersey mud until 1985 when a “near” Cincinnati entrepreneur, Robert Miller from Fin-



Photo from the Sachem Project

neytown, OH, bought the vessel hoping to restore it for personal use. All did not go to plan and his several yearlong effort to get the vessel working at various New Jersey and New York piers was a miserable failure. The only bright spot at this time came when representatives for the singer Madonna asked to use the yacht as a backdrop for part of her music video of the song Papa Don't Preach. Near the end of this effort and facing vandalism, theft, and angry pier owners the Ohio business man was finding it hard to continue his Ohio commute to the ship and started to

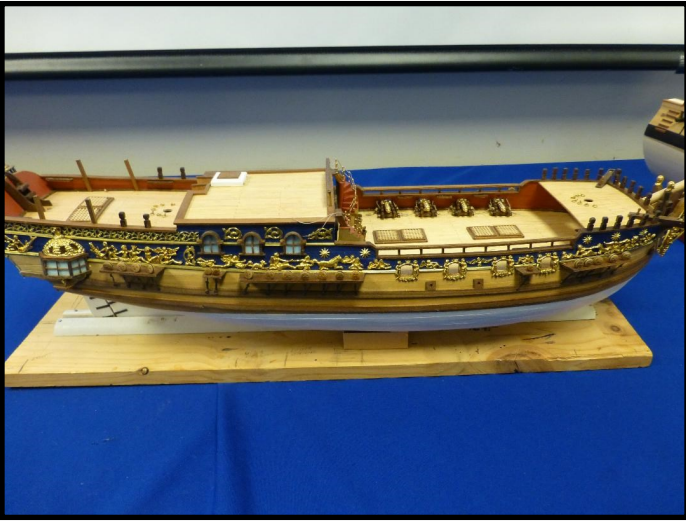
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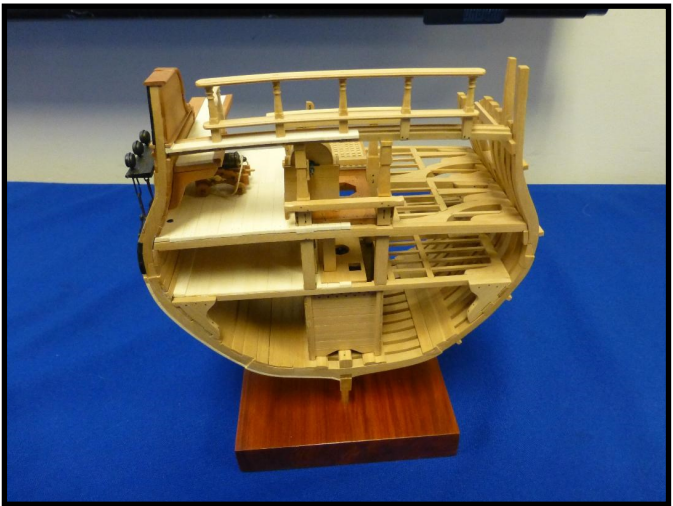
Mast for Gene Berger's Olympia



Some of the meeting attendees.



Pat Roll's HMY Royal Caroline



Dave Chelmow's Echo cross section

*(Continued from page 5)*



look for a way to bring the vessel closer to home. To accomplish this he fitted the vessel with "a Murray & Thurgurtha Z-drive propulsion unit installed on the rear deck with a reused General Motors bulldozer engine to power it." Finally in July of 1986 he managed to get the vessel going and took her on the Great Loop up the Hudson to the Mississippi, and then up the Ohio to Cincinnati—the voyage took 40 days. Only he never quite made it to Cincinnati.

Miller owned a plot of land about 25 miles almost due west of Cincinnati near the town of Petersburg, KY (which is about 25 miles from Mom's house), and it just happens to have Taylor's creek flowing through it. Miller arrived and steered the ship into the creek when the water was high. When the water level of the Ohio River receded the vessel settled into the muddy bed of the creek where she remains to this day. Afterward

Miller ran short of cash, abandoned the ship, and moved on to other projects. He eventually retired and sold the land which contained the ship to the surrounding neighbors and moved to Mexico.

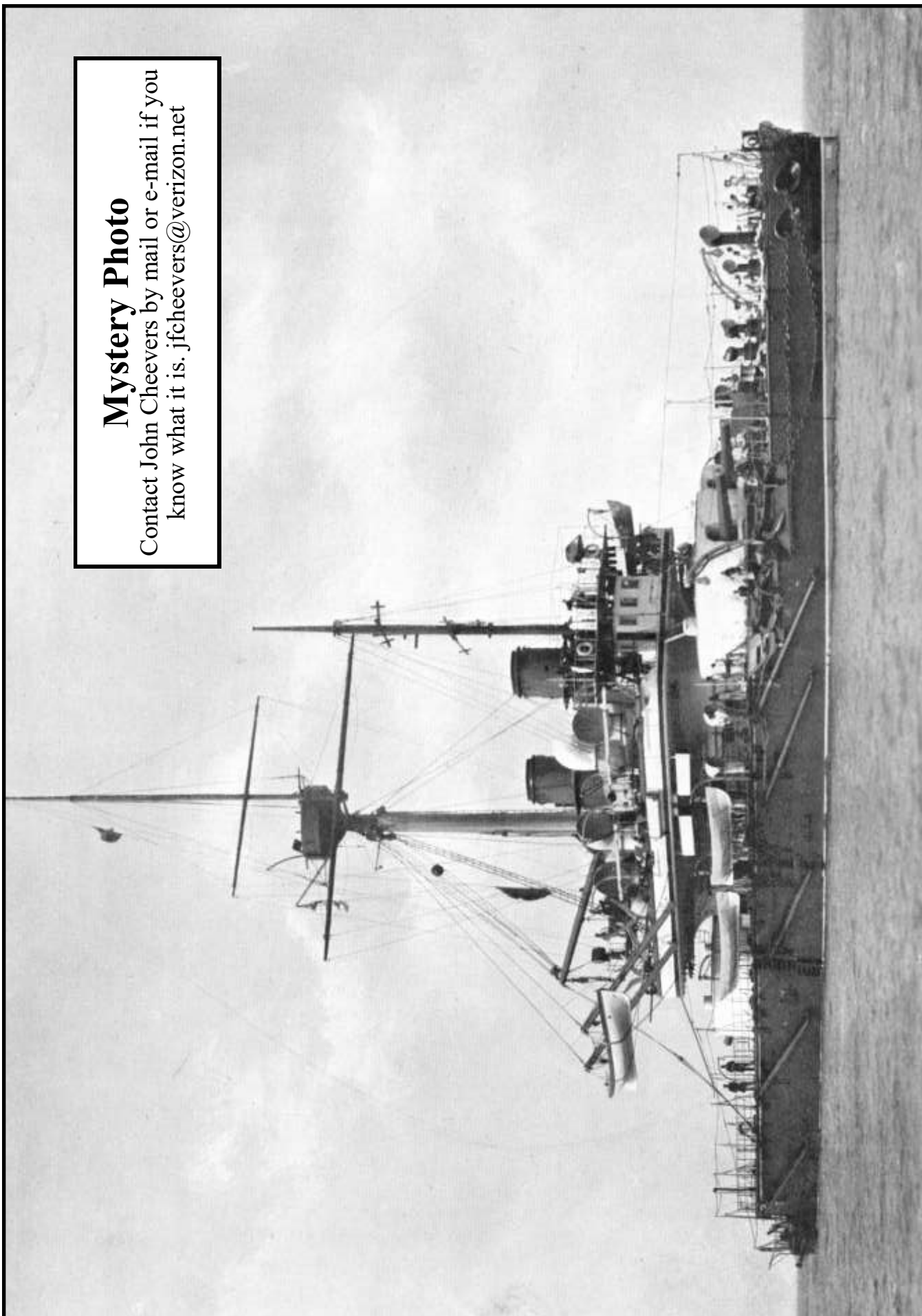
The ship was forgotten until being found again by kayakers in 2009 which rekindled the story and fostered other myths including "Ghost Stories."

Usually, when a Mystery Photo appears the subject has long since been cut up for razor blades. Not this time. This month's offering highlights a vessel that exists today, lying nearly forgotten in the mud waiting for the proper backer to come along and restore her to glory. I will tell you this: If you try to see the ship by traveling down the lane that runs along the creek, forget it. The vegetation is too thick and dense. Spend your time wisely and lose yourself in this essay.

John Cheevers

## 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

### MARCH

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation: August Fletcher Crabtree; An Artist and  
His Work, by Ron Lewis
- 21 HRSMS banquet, Al Fresco Restaurant

### APRIL

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Auction, Norge Hall

### MAY

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

### JUNE

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

### JULY

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation: TBA

### AUGUST

- 8 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, TBA

### SEPTEMBER

- 12 HRSMS Monthly Meeting  
Picnic, Newport News Park
- 19 Talk Like a Pirate Day

### OCTOBER

- 10 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, TBA

### NOVEMBER

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation,

### DECEMBER

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation:

### JANUARY

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Nomination of officers

### FEBRUARY

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Election of officers

**WATCH, QUARTER  
AND  
STATION BILL**



Skipper: Greg Harrington (757) 218-5368  
Mate: John Cheevers  
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) 218-5368  
Photographer: Marty Gromovsky

## MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society  
Monthly Meeting  
February 8, 2020  
Mariners' Museum

Guest: Eric Reaves

The meeting was called to order by Skipper, Gene Berger at 1012 hours. The Skipper recognized guest, Eric Reaves and had him tell a bit about himself. Pat Roll was recognized as modeler of the month. There was no correction to the minutes as published. Ryland Craze gave the Purser's Detailing expenditures and account balance.

Old Business: Ryland Craze talked about the Old Dominion Open to be held at Richmond Raceway. Ryland said that the Richmond IPMS would need help setting up on Friday evening and Saturday morning. Gene asked that those attending should bring models to put on the HRSMS Table. Gene then reminded everyone of the March banquet. Ryland said that he was taking banquet reservations and collecting 2020 dues. The Skipper directed the Clerk to cast a single ballot for the unopposed slate of officers. The bridge is Skipper- Greg Harrington, Mate- John Cheevers, Purser- Ryland Craze, Clerk- Tom Saunders.

New Business: None

Show & Tell: Bill Fox said that he would giving a talk on the Shipyard Apprentice School at 1430 hours at the Museum. John Cheevers showed a copy of Bill Fox's history of the NN Apprentice School. Dave Chelmow showed his Echo cross section. Pat Roll showed the progress of his HMY *Royal Caroline* from a Panart kit. Gene Berger several photo-etched parts for his Olympia.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation on the Naval Academy Museum, by Ryland Craze.

### Presenters Needed

If you are willing to give a presentation at a meeting, contact Tony Clayton.

### Notice

**Founders' Award Ballots  
And  
Banquet Reservations  
Are due by the March meeting**