Duluth Sail and Power Squadron

Channel Chatter

United States Power Squadrons

Welcome to the Family

Baby on Board: Administrative Officer Tom Linderholm and Secretary Shelly Micke welcomed Chase Hunter Linderholm (9 pounds, 7.5 ounces, 21 inches long) on Jan. 24.

Volume 2013 Issue 4

Winter 2013-14

Inside this issue:

Photos in this issue were taken by P/C Editor Dave Stokes, Sue Graber, Nori Ferris and members.

The *Channel Chatter* is published four times per year for the members of the Duluth Sail & Power Squadron, a unit of United States Power Squadrons®.

Boating is Fun...
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Commander's Report

Dear Members and Friends,

The boating season is well over, the year is done, and Change of Watch will soon be upon us.

We have dedicated this issue of the *Channel Chatter* to the Tall Ships festival, and I think it is fitting that we look back upon the history of boating and the contribution that these mighty sailing vessels had upon the world. In today's world of airplanes and automobiles, many may look at these as relics of a bygone era, and this may be so, but they are also the ships that laid the foundation for the world as we know it today. Before vessels were powered by diesel, gasoline and fuel oil, and before steam, it was the tall ships that ruled the seas and provided the avenue for exploration and, later, for shipping and commerce.

While sailing ships have been around probably since the third millennium B.C.E., the glory days of sailing is arguably the period from the 1400s to the advent of steam power in the 1800s. The largest of the ships of this era were built between about 1850 and 1920 and they were in the range of 400-500 feet in length with displacements of about 10,000 tons, although there were some built larger. The design of the ships varied depending on whether their primary purpose was speed, cargo capacity, warfare or otherwise and they were typically categorized by their sail plans into designations such as clipper, barque or schooner.

The term "Tall Ship" seems to have been around a long time, but its definition has changed over time. Below are definitions of tall ships from the website of Sail Training International, which is the organization that coordinates the Tall Ship events:

There are four classes of vessel:

Class A
All square-rigged vessels (barque, barquentine, brig, brigantine or ship rigged) and all other vessel more than 40 meters Length Overall (LOA), regardless of rig.

Class B
Traditionally rigged vessels (i.e. gaff rigged sloops, ketches, yawls and schooners) with an LOA of less than 40 meters and with a waterline length (LWL) of at least 9.14 meters.

Class C
Modern rigged vessels (i.e. Bermudan rigged sloops, ketches, yawls and schooners) with an LOA of less than 40 meters and with a waterline length (LWL) of at least 9.14 meters not carrying spinnaker-like sails.

continues on next page...

Class D
Modern rigged vessels (i.e Bermudan rigged sloops, ketches, yawls and schooners) with an LOA of less than 40 meters and with a waterline length (LWL) of at least 9.14 meters carrying spinnaker-like sails.

Here is another Tall Ship definition from Wikipedia:
A tall ship is a large, traditionally-rigged sailing vessel. Popular modern tall ship rigs include topsail schooners, brigantines, brigs and barques. "Tall Ship" can also be defined more specifically by an organization, such as for a race or festival.

In the 21st century, "tall ship" is often used generically for large, classic, sailing vessels, but is also a technically defined term by Sail Training International for its purposes and, of course, STI helped popularize the term.

Regardless of what we call them or how they are classified, I think most everyone will agree that these are majestic vessels and I look forward to their next visit to the Twin Ports.

Also in this issue, you will find a summary of education offerings available to you. Education is one of our primary goals, so I encourage you to look through these and contact Mary Rantala or any of the bridge officers if you have an interest in taking a course or seminar.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Annual Meeting on February 20, so make sure to get this on your calendar and watch your mailbox for an invitation with event details. The Change of Watch is on March 8, so put this on your calendar, too, and don't forget the Winter Dock Party the day after. Hopefully, some of the snow will melt so we have easy access to kick off the new season.

Fair winds,

Lt/C Lance R. Olson, P
DSPS Commander

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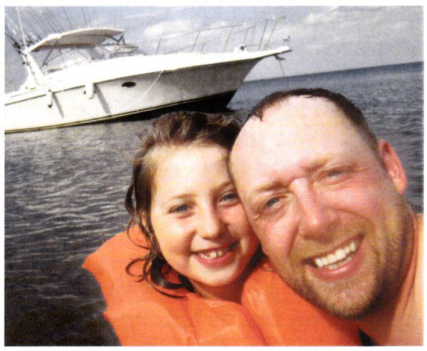
Administrative Officer's Report

Greetings members,

While you read this anticipating the spring thaw, keep in mind it was written on an evening when it was a balmy -30 with a -60 wind chill. Brrrrr. As I sit and compose this there are many words that come to mind, but only one that is in the front of my mind tonight…

"ANTICIPATION"

As I sit here composing this passage in our quarterly *Channel Chatter*, under a pile of blankets, I am anticipating many things. First and foremost, my much better half Shelly is only six days from her due date with our eagerly anticipated son. Much like this winter, he has no ambition to make this a short-lived experience, as he will certainly ride this out until he is forced out. While this is a pretty big thing in 2014 for us, there are many more things coming our way this year. Around the corner is our Annual meeting on the 20th of February and the Change of Watch on March 8, followed by the dock party on the 9th. Let's not forget the slow-cooked prime rib for the Fitting Out, fantastic fishing during the Captain's Platter and what is sure to be the hit of the summer, the 2014 Summer Rendezvous being held here in the Twin Ports.



For many, this is a hugely anticipated event right here in our own back yard. We expect a lot of members from our region to join us while we showcase our waterways. Keep in mind, with great events come a great amount of work from our membership. We have some strong individuals at the helm of this event, but we will certainly be looking for additional help in making this the event of the summer.

So, for 2014, what are you anticipating? Me, Shelly and Brianna, just long warm days with all of our family and friends.

See you soon!

Lt/C Tom Linderholm
Administrative Officer

Calendar

DATE	MEETING / EVENT	DATE	MEETING / EVENT
Feb. 20	Annual Meeting and Elections	April 5 & 12	America's Boating Course
March 8	Change of Watch	May 12-15	RiverQuest
March 9	Winter Dock Party	May 17-23	Boating Safety Week
March 28-30	D10 Spring Conference, Lake Elmo	June 14	Captain's Platter
March 29	America's Boating Course	July 19-21	Summer Rendezvous
April TBD	Fitting Out Party	Aug. 29–Sept. 1	Corn Roast

Educational Offerings

America's Boating Course
The first ABC Class for this calendar year started on January 14 and will go for 8 weeks meeting on Tuesday evenings. A second course is planned for three Saturdays in the spring: March 29, April 5, and April 12. Details on the courses can be found at the following link: www.duluthsailandpowersquadron.com/class.html

Seamanship
Our fall Seamanship class ended just before Thanksgiving with a total of 7 students graduating. We plan to offer this again in the fall if there is interest.

Advanced Courses
We have received some interest in Piloting and Advanced Piloting to we are tentatively planning these courses but we need a few more students for each. Information on all of the Advanced Grade and Elective Courses is available on the USPS national website, www.usps.org.

Seminars
The list of available seminars is at the following link: www.usps.org/e_stuff/seminars.htm

We would like to offer seminars at various times throughout the year, but we need to know where the interest lies, so please review the list and let us know what you would like organized.

If you are interested in any of these courses, electives or seminars, please contact Mary Rantala at 218-724-1647 or mlrantala@charter.net.

Vessel Safety Checks

The Duluth Power Squadron completed 146 Vessel Safety Checks during the 2013 boating season – the second-most in the district.

Listed here are the Squadron members who were vessel examiners this year, along with the number of VSCs they completed.

More information on VSCs is available at the DSPS website: www.duluthsailandpowersquadron.com/safety.html

Larry Anderson 10
Dave Carlson 36
Todd Carlson 13
Tom Cawcutt 5
Murray George 14
Bob Hecht 11
Len Robinson 6
Julia Rossini 12
Jason Smitke 29
Bob Stokes 10

–Larry Anderson, VSC chair

Quiz: Where in the World...

OK, forget how weird it is to have this woman on the buoy – the point of this quiz is: Where are we? I had to dig deep to figure this out.

You may know that planet Earth, in an act of great simplification, has been dived into two zones for lateral buoy systems, IALA A and B.

North and South America and a few parts of Asia are in System B - red, right, returning. Go anywhere else in the world and it is the opposite. With both systems, regardless of color, the pointy ones are to stbd and the flat-tops to port, going upstream.

Now, here is where this image caused me to wonder. A red mark with pointy top. That says System B. But, the number? We have even numbers on red marks – where are we?

–Bob Bruce

The answer is Bermuda, and don't ask me where else this might be true.

Tall Ships *in the* Twin Ports

Photos by Sue Graber


EMS SULLIVAN


BALTIMORE
MARYLAND

Thanks to our Tall Ship escort vessel captains

Lee Bujold
Reed Byers
Dave Carlson
Todd Carlson
Larry Evanson
Charlie Grubb
Jeff Hall
Tom Kolar

Tom Linderholm
Ryan Ohr
Bob Oulette
Brian Schmidt
Dave Stokes
Jim Swanson
Jim Weckman
Jim Welinski


SUPERIOR, WI


49423
U. S. COAST GUARD


WELLS FARGO

Tales from a Liberty Ship

P/C Dick Bibby and the Liberty ships of World War II were featured in a recent issue of the Nor'Easter, *the newsletter of the Lake Superior Marine Museum Association. Thanks to LSMMA and author Larry Fortner for allowing us to reprint the article.*

By Larry Fortner

Only two of them survive, the *Jeremiah O'Brien* and the *John W. Brown*. Both are on museum duty, the *O'Brien* at Pier 45 in San Francisco, the *Brown* at Pier One in Baltimore. They were among the 2,751 Liberty ships built in the early 1940s that were credited by many for saving Great Britain from disaster at the hands of Germany and turning the course of war in favor of America and the Allies.

Jerry Sandvick, a retired history professor, president of the LSMMA and still a historian to the core, has a soft spot in his heart for Liberty ships and has toured and taken day cruises on both the *O'Brien* and *Brown*. Dick Bibby, a retired sailor and a former executive with the Hanna Mining fleet, had a more intimate relationship with Liberty ships. He sailed with distinction on two of them as a mate and survived the challenges that a Liberty ship in war could throw at a merchant mariner.

Sandvick and Bibby teamed up during Gales of November to present a program on Liberty ships. This story will serve as a recap of Sandvick and Bibby's presentation and also will go beyond the program to further explore the facts and mystique of the Liberty ships — unglorious, oft-maligned and unquestionably what the *John W. Brown* website calls "the backbone of a massive sealift of troops, arms, materiel and ordnance to every theater of war."

This story draws on followup conversations with Bibby and Sandvick, a smattering of credible websites and *The Liberty Ships*, a book by L.A. Sawyer and W.H. Mitchell.

• • •

Dick Bibby wasn't much more than a kid, an AB sailing on the Great Lakes still in his teens, when war clouds formed on the horizon and he faced the ugly prospect of appearing before his draft board in Pittsburgh and then certain induction into the U.S. Army. To avoid the dread prospect of service on dry land, one day he marched his self down to the Federal Building and the offices of the U.S. Maritime Commission.

That organization, virtue of the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, was responsible for building the ships and securing the crews of the U.S. merchant marine. Bibby was just what the merchant marine was looking for. He was young, he was experienced and he was eager to sail. Next thing he knew, he was a fresh product of just the fifth graduating class of the U. S. Maritime Service's Officer Candidate School at Fort Trumbull in New London, Connecticut.

And not long after that, he reported

for duty as third mate aboard the *Daniel Willard*. Dick Bibby was bound for Russia on a Liberty ship. He would be among the thousands of merchant mariners who participated in the fabled, and fearsome, Murmansk Run.

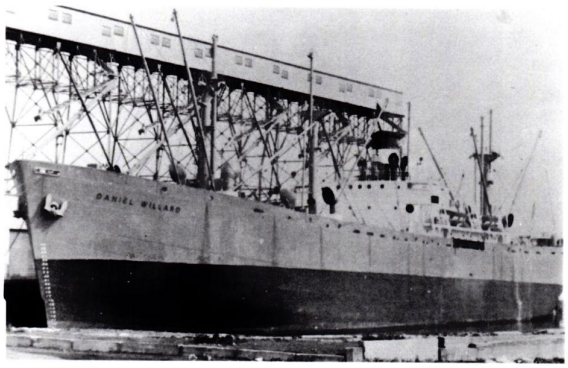
Here are some of the things Bibby remembers from that experience:

All Liberty watches stood from a pipe-made wheelhouse with canvas cover, a "monkey bridge" exposed to the weather and spray. Straight ahead were upright booms over the cargo deck. A man on watch couldn't see dead ahead. At night, with no lights and often in fog, he could barely see the other boats in the convoy, if he could see them at all. "It could be as black as the inside of a cat," Bibby says. "You had to get to the bridge early to let your eyes adjust to the dark."

On the other hand, crew quarters on the Liberty ship were excellent, especially when compared to quarters on the lakers Bibby had sailed on earlier. Bibby had his own stateroom — "with all the facilities."

At one point, Bibby's ship and convoy ran along an ice sheet in close proximity to the Arctic Circle. He vividly recalls severe cold, horrendous weather, high seas, fog, ice, snow and a semi-twilight in a sun that never rose above the horizon.

The ships had been pressed into service so hurriedly that their compasses hadn't been calibrated. Bibby, soon elevated to second mate and navigation officer, navigated by the stars, when there were stars, and sextant, when there was sun. He became adept at calculating azimuths. GPS, Loran and the like hadn't been thought of yet, let alone created.



P/C Dick Bibby served on two Liberty ships during World War II, including the *Daniel Willard*.

The crew was issued rubber suits to wear in case of the ship sinking, but there was little chance of survival in the bitter-cold water if a ship was sunk on the Murmansk run. "If your ship was torpedoed, you did not survive," Bibby says.

It was extremely difficult to maintain station in the fog, even with everything on a ship functioning correctly. Making things worse, many ships had been fitted out with flawed steering gears and subsequently lost steering while underway. That led to more than a few of what Bibby wryly calls "fender benders."A disabled ship would display a red light visible all around. "That threw the whole convoy all out of whack."

Bibby remembers learning by the seat of his pants, handling manila lines, using a slide rule to calculate lift limits for booms, sailing so "well loaded down" that the Plimsoll marks were under water — "a common occurrence."

In the early days of the Liberty ship era, licensed officers were in such short supply that some 70- and 80-year-old men, guys who hadn't sailed in decades, were pressed into service. One of those elders was on Bibby's ship and simply could not see at night, so the other officers would stand extended watches.

Holds and decks were loaded with the stuff of logistics and war: railroad locomotives, artillery, railroad tank cars, jeeps. Some ships carried fuel. "When a ship carrying gas got hit by a torpedo, it went off like a Japanese firecracker."

In places, the shipping lanes were

clotted with mines and stalked by German U-boats.

Guys who joined the Merchant marine after sailing on the Great Lakes were called "sweetwater boys" by the fleet's old salts and had to work extra hard to earn respect for their skills and savvy.

A convoy wouldn't be made up exclusively of America-flag Liberty ships. Virtually anything that could float would be loaded and assigned to a convoy. "There were all kind of ships flying all kinds of flags."

The crews, too, were multi-hued; this was long before "diversity" became a P.C. buzzword. "We had checkerboard crews. Black, brown, white, all colors of seamen."

The food, in a word, was lousy. And the portions were small. "We ran out of everything. The eggs were from a powder. The milk was from a powder. There were bugs in the flour." A Carnival cruise it was not.

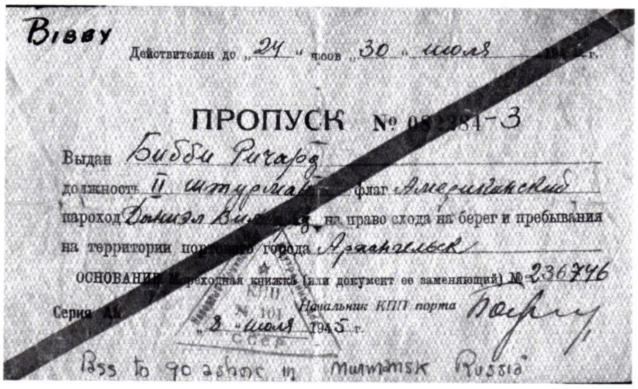
Bibby's crossing to Murmansk, via Halifax and Scotland, took 22 days. But "getting to Russia was only part of the job. I spent so much time there that I was beginning to feel like a Russian citizen." Ships were stacked up at anchor waiting for poorly equipped and staffed dockworkers to unload.

Murmansk is a port city in the extreme northwest part of Russia, on the Kola Bay, an inlet of the Barents Sea on the northern shore of the Kola Peninsula, not far from Russia's borders with Norway and Finland. Murmansk had been nearly destroyed by German bombs and artillery, but the Russians held their ground there, and the port served as a vital link between Russia and the Allies. Bibby recalls seeing nothing left standing in Murmansk but a single church steeple when he arrived.

Without the cargoes carried by the Liberty ships and other vessels on the Atlantic run, Russia likely would not have survived. Or, as Bibby puts it, "We saved their asses."

Not that the Russians were inclined to show any gratitude. "We were subjected to bad treatment," Bibby recalls. He had to have a written pass just to leave the ship during loading so he could check the Plimsoll marks, and he was closely watched by soldiers bearing rifles with fixed bayonets. "The Russians' attitude was terrible."

Another memorable incident: Bibby came down with a terrible toothache during his stay in Murmansk, so terrible that he finally had to go ashore and seek a dentist. He found a dentist all right, but not one who had novocaine. She had size going for her, though — 300 pounds of formidable bulk — and she firmly pinned Bibby down during the procedure to drill and fill the tooth. "I couldn't budge her," Bibby recalls, not with a smile.



Bibby and thousands of other sailors risked their lives on the Murmansk Run. Bibby says the Russians showed them little gratitude, though. He needed a written pass just to leave the ship.

• • •

Jerry Sandvick was quick to dispel a lingering and persistent Liberty ship myth during his part of the presentation at Gales: "All of the ships were built in coastal yards. Because of their overall size, they could not navigate the pre-Seaway waters to the Twin Ports. No Liberty ships were built in Duluth or Superior."

Regardless of where they were built, the story of their assembly was nothing less than astonishing. Driven by a fierce (if belated) sense of urgency (you could call it panic), the U.S. Maritime Commission selected a design originally crafted in England for an oceangoing cargo ship that could be swiftly and cheaply built.

Shipbuilding started just before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Work was done in 17 different yards by a workforce of more than 650,000 (up from 19,000 in the summer of 1941!). The new workers came to the job with no skills and no experience, but with a zeal for learning and getting the job done. Many of them became fondly known as Rosie the Riveter.

To speed construction, the ships were welded in many places rather than riveted. They were built in assembly-line fashion and were all alike; if you could build one, you could build a hundred.

The ships were 441 feet long with a beam of 57 feet and a draft of 18 feet. They had two oil-fired boilers and a 140-ton vertical triple expansion compound steam engine. It was of obsolete design but was selected because it was cheaper and easier to build in the numbers required for the Liberty ship program.

The 2,500-horsepower engine was simple and rugged, and could turn the ship's single 18-foot screw at a stately 11 knots. The ship had a range of 11,000 miles and a capacity of 9,140 tons (which was nearly always exceeded).

The boats were built in a hurry. As Sandvick pointed out, the keel for Bibby's first Liberty ship, the *Willard*, was laid down on October 26, 1942, and launched on November 25. The keel for Bibby's second Liberty ship, the *John Merrick*, was laid down on June 12, 1943, and launched on July 21.

The *Robert E.Peary*, as a publicity stunt for one of Henry Kaiser's yards in California, was built in 4 days, 15 hours and 29 minutes. The national average was 42 days. By 1943, three Liberty ships were being completed each day. Ultimately, 2,751 Liberty ships were built. (The number varies somewhat from source to source.) Not in question is that the Liberty ships were being built

faster than the Germans could sink them. Still, more than 200 Liberty ships — Bibby's count is 229 — and more than 9,000 mariners were lost.

The ships were built by the U.S. government but operated by more than 90 private companies. The Liberty ship was considered a five-year vessel, and expendable, like its civilian crew members. Merchant sailors took a higher percentage of fatalities, almost 4 percent, than any branch of the armed forces. By the end of the war, the Merchant marine included as many as 250,000 civilian sailors. The losses continued well after the end of the war as merchant ships continued to sail waters that were still laced with mines.

(Few of these numbers can be verified beyond doubt because the ships and their crews were operated by private companies, not a branch of the military under a central command.)

The Liberty ship's crew of about 62 included a complement of 20-some Navy Armed Guards who manned the

weapons. On the *John W. Brown*, for example, that included three 3-inch 50-caliber guns, a 5-inch 38-caliber gun and eight 20-mm guns. Not much in the way of armament to stare down the planes, ships and subs of the Third Reich.

The ship was not universally loved. President Roosevelt took one look at one of the first of its breed and called it an "ugly duckling." Others were not so kind, calling the new vessel a "sea scow."

Dick Bibby, though, who sailed on two Libertys, remembers them as a "magnificent class of ships."

"Despite the 'ugly duckling' reputation, in my humble opinion, I thought the Liberty, on her loaded waterline, was a good looking ship," Bibby says.

Naming the class, in fact, was an early act of branding. The Maritime Commission declared September 27, 1941, to be "Liberty Fleet Day" and launched the first 14 vessels.

President Roosevelt, on hand for the launch ceremony, referred to Patrick Henry's famous "Give Me Liberty, or Give Me Death" speech, and from that day on, the ugly duckling became known as the Liberty ship.

• • •

Dick Bibby also sailed to the Persian Gulf via the southern route, which included passing through what he remembers as "the Ditch" — the Suez Canal. Now, instead of fighting cold, he was fighting heat. "It was hotter

than hell," he recalls.

It was on that passage, aboard the *John Herrick*, that the ship's chief cook decided to exercise his rights as a capitalist and exploit the booming black market of the time by selling off a goodly portion of the ship's consumables. "He sold cigarettes, a couple of sides of beef, our other meats. Can you imagine being on board a ship with 35 other guys who had no cigarettes?"

Bibby had managed to squirrel a couple of tins of peanut butter — "and I still lost 20 pounds."

• • •

The contributions of the merchant marine have been called "honorable, vital and heroic." Despite that, their government didn't acknowledge the sailors' service and accord them status as military veterans until 1988, and then only after a long legal struggle.

Bibby shrugs off his veteran's status today. "It's a little late to be going to college on the G.I. Bill," he says.

Despite the extraordinary conditions, despite dodging mines in the North Atlantic and being fired on in the Mediterranean, he insists that sailing a Liberty ship was nothing remarkable.

When asked to single out a highlight of his life in the war-time merchant marine, he says, "It was just ordinary sailing. We didn't do anything special. We stood our watches. We did our jobs."

Liberty ships weren't the only vessels sailing dangerous waters, he says. The fleets included tankers and other cargo carriers.

"I was no hero," he insists. "The real sailor heroes were ones who were lost and never returned home."

A kind word from the Russians

In April 1993, Russia finally said "thank you" to Dick Bibby and the U.S. merchant marine. Vladimir P. Lukin, ambassador of the Russian Federation in New York City, mailed a message of gratitude for "your outstanding courage and personal contribution to the Allied support of my country which fought for freedom against Nazi Germany." The letter also informed Bibby that he had been awarded a commemorative medal on "The 40th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War (WWII)."

Accolades


United States Power Squadrons®

dedicated to making boating safer and more fun

Merit Mark Award

For the year 2013

Is hereby presented to

Robert E. Stokes

For having contributed substantially to the promotion of the interests and objectives of

United States Power Squadrons®

Chief Commander

Merit Mark No. 50

Congratulations to P/C Robert Stokes, who in 2013 received his 50th Merit Mark. More to come on Bob's service to our squadron in a coming issue.

Pictured, from left: Ed Katzmarek, P/C Robert Stokes and P/C Don Schafer at the squadron dock in September 1970.

Dave Molitor of Viant Crane volunteered the use of the company's equipment to help erect the 128-foot Bentleyville tree. At top right, Dave (left) receives a certificate from Nathan Bentley for his contribution.

From the Editor

Happy New Year to all of you – I hope your Christmas and holiday season was special. I'm looking forward to things turning green in 2014. As I write this on a 30 below zero day in January, watching the NFL Wild Card games, I'm already seeing television ads for Northwest Outlet's winter close-out sale. Things seem to go faster each year!

I hope you have enjoyed this past year of *Channel Chatter* with *Lake Superior Magazine* and me at the helm of the publication. I think we have a lot to be proud of and it's always fun to showcase our members. Remember, this is your publication, so I welcome you to submit material to be included.

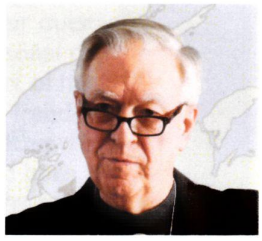
As always, I encourage you to find a chance to volunteer in the coming year; let your bridge members know where you can help. Please watch for upcoming planning meetings for our milestone Summer Rendezvous here in Duluth. On July 19-21, 2014, we'll be celebrating our squadron's 75th anniversary and the 100th anniversary of the United States Power Squadron.

For this "dead of winter" issue, we decided to relive one of the highlights of summer 2013 with a look at the Tall Ships Festival as seen through the camera lens of Sue Graber. So, put another log on the fire and enjoy. Stay warm!

Your Editor,
P/C Dave Stokes
dave@stokesmediahouse.tv

P.S. The days are already getting longer!

Taking the Circle Tour



Paul Hayden, publisher at *Lake Superior Magazine*, presented his Lake Superior Circle Tour talk at the December meeting of the Propeller Club, at Northland Country Club.

The Circle Tour, as the trip around Lake Superior is known, is most often completed by car, though many intrepid boaters have circled the lake, too.

It's a big undertaking – it is the Big Lake, after all – but the Circle Tour is something you'll never forget, Paul says, whether by water or road.

A Squadron Christmas

Despite appearances, the Christmas party wasn't held in a basement – Grandma's was under construction. Here, members enjoy good food and good company at the annual gathering.

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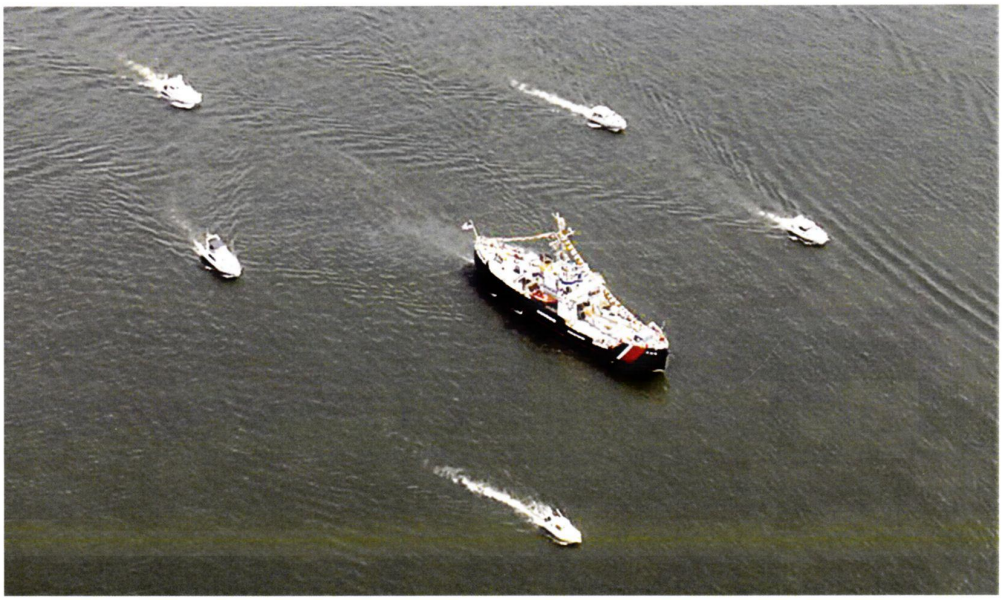

D10 Rendezvous Weekend

July 18, 2014

Mark your calendars and celebrate with us aboard *Sundew*.