



Tied up to the levee, the American Queen rests at Madison, Indiana on the Ohio River, May 3, 2012.

The American Queen ... a Tribute to a Unique Vessel and the End of Steam

by Shawn J. Dake

As I begin to write words to describe what the steamboat *American Queen* means to the world of travel and the history of steam-driven passenger vessels, it is hard to limit my prose to only the subject at hand. For the past 200 years or so, steam has powered railroad locomotives across continents, steamships across oceans and the steamboats of literature and legend along our rivers. All are now gone, and with the demise of the *American Queen* in a scrapyard at Houma, Louisiana, the final period is put on the end of the era of overnight passenger travel under steam. The largest, grandest, and most authentic riverboat of all time is quietly disappearing without fanfare. Perhaps it is symbolic in some way, that her end coincides with the last months afloat for the *United States*, the greatest ocean liner ever built in America, before that ship of state is intentionally sunk into the depths of history.

inside ...

LA Fleet Week 2025

OSK's *Tōsan Maru*

Aww ... Wook at those stubby
wittle stacks!

images from the Author's Collection, unless noted

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SoCal Chapter Notes

Kate Vescera, President

Greetings Everyone!

On May 3, 2025 we had a wonderful presentation from Dr. Margarita Jerabek on the *RMS Queen Mary Art and Collections*. Dr. Jerabek spoke about the history of the collections and art treasures on board the *Queen Mary*, as well as the work she has done with surveying them and preparing the Conservation Management Plan for the *Queen Mary*. Dr. Jerabek particularly highlighted some of the female artists who contributed to the *Queen Mary*. She also spoke about ongoing conservation challenges. We want to sincerely thank Dr. Jerabek for this beautiful and informative presentation. Thanks also to everyone who attended in person and on Zoom.

Our next meeting will be on board the *Queen Mary* on August 2, 2025. Jim Shuttleworth will discuss the Pacific Coast Steamship Company.

Additionally, please mark your calendars for our fall meeting which will be on November 1, 2025. Instead of a speaker, we are going to be having a collectors' fair where members and guests will be able to buy and sell items. Vendors of collectibles and memorabilia relating to any mode of transportation will be welcome, and there will not be a charge to be a vendor. We have not done an event like this in quite a

while, so we are hoping that it will be an interesting way to change up our meetings. We ask that anyone interested in being a vendor at this event please contact Jim Shuttleworth at jimpinxit@gmail.com to register, or for more information. We have had a number of people sign up already, so reserve your spot soon if you are interested.

We also want to acknowledge our Chapter Archivist Dan Shonafelt for the great work that he been doing with clearing out and organizing our office on board, with particular help from Chapter Member Jim Shuttleworth.

As we mentioned previously, Chapter Member Jim Shaw unfortunately died last year. This was a real loss to the entire SSHSA organization. However, he very generously left his entire maritime collection to the Chapter. We just recently received it and we are working on organizing and cataloging it. It includes a variety of different items including framed prints, brass plaques, paper photos, slides, books, and magazines. We want to thank Jim Shaw's family for delivering all of this to us. This is really exciting for us to have and will be a great resource for the Chapter.

We are also very sad to announce the Chapter Member Kent Sanctuary died in February. Kent gave a very popular presentation last year about trips he took as a boy on the *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*. Kent's family has generously donated his extensive maritime collection to the Chapter. We are currently in the process of organizing and cataloging it and we want to thank Kent's wife Diane for getting the collection to us. Kent will be missed and we wish him fair winds and following seas.

Please check out SoCal's [website](http://www.socalsshhsa.org). We can now accept Chapter membership renewals and electronic payments through the site. If you have not renewed your membership yet for this year, please do so!

Additionally, we are always looking for people who would like to present at our upcoming meetings in

2026 and beyond. If you are interested or have ideas about possible presenters, please contact me at socalsshhsa@gmail.com for more information. We have had presentations on a wide range of topics, including personal trips and experiences, and we also welcome presentations on collections of items, or ships and maritime history topics that you are interested in.

We are continuing to expand our online presence, which has been growing considerably, so please follow our Facebook page [@shiphistorysocal](https://www.facebook.com/shiphistorysocal) and our Instagram page [@ship_history_socal](https://www.instagram.com/ship_history_socal). Thanks to Wayne Yanda for doing a great job of managing our website and social media.

We are also continuing our efforts expand our membership and develop new Board of Directors members and new program/project committee members. We are particularly looking for someone to assist with finding and scheduling presenters for our meetings and someone to handle the raffle, so please contact any Board member if you are interested in helping with those roles, or any other leadership position.

Hope to see all of you soon!

Best,
Kate Vescera

Your SoCal Chapter Board

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from the EDITOR'S MESS

Happy summer! We hope yours is going well.

Our cover story is courtesy of SoCal Member Shawn Dake. I had forgotten how opulent the *American Queen* was. Many vessels try to emulate the past through their interiors, but the *American Queen* did it right.

(We don't do enough on river boats, and will endeavor to add more of those stories to our quarterly mix.)

Now, do forgive a quick sidebar; though still keeping with river boats. If you ever find yourself in Kansas City, Missouri, do try to visit the *Arabia*; a steamboat that sank in the Missouri River in 1856 carrying enough cargo to fill several general stores. As you can see by my poorly taken photos, it is a most fascinating display of artifacts, and well worth your time. (www.1856.com)

SoCal Member Kevin Anthony takes us to this year's LA Fleet Week. The pictures do not do justice to how massive these vessels are.



We have exciting news regarding our celebration of the *Queen Mary's* maiden voyage. (Ninety years in 2026.) Learn about our keynote speaker!

Several years back, I came across an odd brochure for some Japanese cargo liners. Odd in that they were described as "ocean greyhounds." They are the focus of our *Ship Shot*.

Our May meeting saw Dr. Margarita Jerabek give a very informative presentation on the art and collections on the *Queen Mary*. THANK YOU to SoCal Treasurer David Tew for being our roving photographer!

Eighty-five years ago, the summer of 1940 saw the *America* on her sea trials. But it was not quite yet the *America* we came to know.

Until next time,
Wayne Yanda

OCEAN TIMES

EDITOR
Wayne Yanda

EDITORS EMERITUS
Bruce Vancil
Bill Keene

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We enjoy a mix of stories involving Pacific and/or Atlantic liners/lines, military ships, first person narratives, even bios of those with a connection to ships and the sea.

Got a story idea? Send it to:
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Coming up in the OT ...

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USS *Texas*

Bernard Perlin's Eye on History



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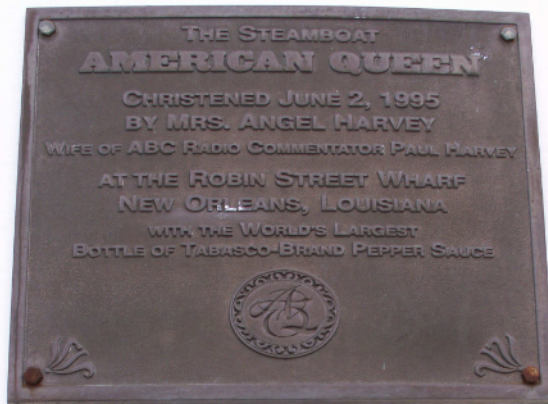
SSHSA/SoCal Chapter
65 Pine Ave.
Box 349
Long Beach, CA 90802



This postcard shows the fleet of the Delta Queen Steamboat Company: American Queen, Mississippi Queen, and the Delta Queen.

The *American Queen* is like no other ocean or river cruise ship in the world. Constructed long after “The Golden Age of American Steamboats,” the new vessel would incorporate and even emulate many of the best elements of her predecessors, notably the grand opulence of the steamer *J. M. White* of 1878. Of course, other concepts would be borrowed from her older fleet mates such as

The christening and builder's plates were located on Deck 5, on the bulkhead between the two Owner's Suites.



the open promenade decks wrapping around the entire vessel as found aboard the 1927-built *Delta Queen*, along with the 1976-built *Mississippi Queen*'s more modern elements like elevators and a Grand Saloon for entertainment purposes.

The tall smokestacks were hinged so as to be able to pass under bridges using a pulley system invented by none other than Abraham Lincoln.

And a certain writer and Mississippi River pilot who went by the pen name of Mark Twain held great sway over the planning of the new steamer including his observation that a proper steamer should be “long, white and dainty.” A fabulous public room aboard, filled with museum-quality antiques, would be named the Mark Twain Gallery in his honor.

Planning for a new boat began in earnest in 1992. The Delta Queen Steamboat Company was in the enviable position of having their two river vessels nearly always booked to capacity. A contract was signed with the McDermott Shipyard in Morgan City, Louisiana to construct the new vessel at a cost of between \$60-\$67 million. In setting out to build the largest steamer the world had ever seen, they created a throw-back, Victorian masterpiece.

The *American Queen* was christened on June 2, 1995 at the Robin Street Wharf in New Orleans using a four-foot-tall bottle of Louisiana-made Tabasco sauce. The dripping hot sauce provided a rather pungent air to the festive proceedings. The maiden voyage departed that same day sailing up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers all the way to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Originally using the provisional working name *Belle of America*, the new *American Queen* was very well-received by the traveling public. However, that initial glory was to be short-lived. As often happens, a combination of poor planning and too rapid expansion by the parent company, American Classic Voyages, along with circumstances beyond their control; The terrorist attacks of September 11, led to the company declaring bankruptcy on October 19, 2001.

After a period of layup, the *American Queen* returned to service in January 2003 under the new ownership of Delaware North. In April 2006, they sold the line to Ambassadors International for only \$3 million where it operated under the banner of Majestic America Line until 2008, when they too ceased operations. It marked the end of all cruising on American rivers for a period of four years. The *American Queen* was laid up in

the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) reserve fleet, first at Violet, Louisiana then moved to Beaumont, Texas in January 2009.

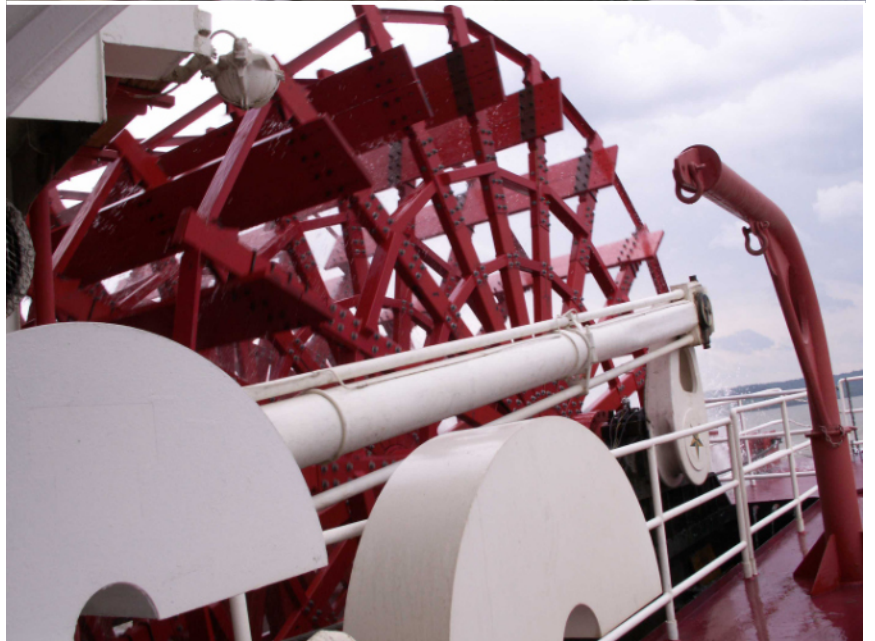
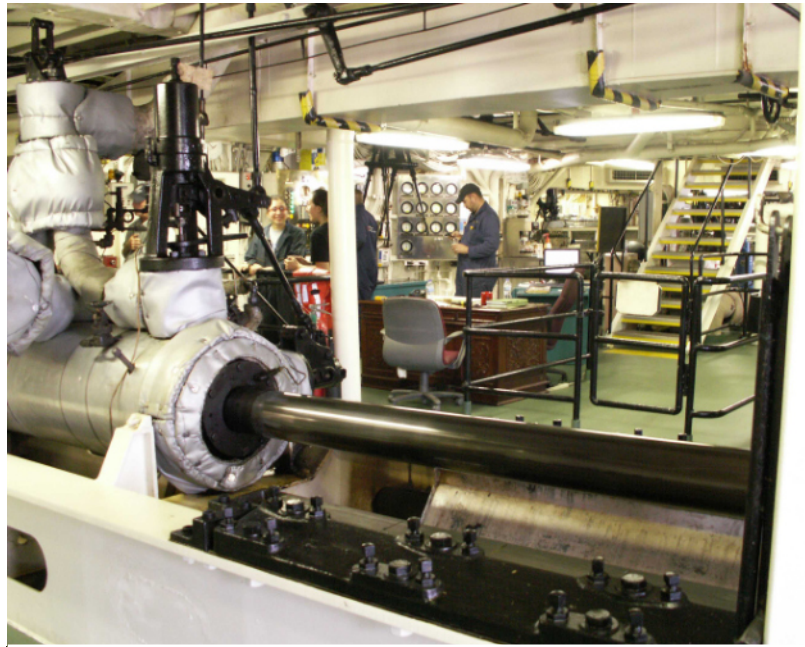
There it faced a very uncertain future until it was purchased on August 8, 2011 for \$15.5 million by HMS Global Maritime, parent company of Hornblower Dining Yachts, for their new cruise line to be named Great American Steamboat Company. At the helm were founders Christopher Kyte and John Waggoner. On July 1, 2012, the company would change their name to American Queen Steamboat Company to reflect the name of their flagship.

The refreshed *American Queen* was rechristened on April 27, 2012 by Priscilla Presley, appropriately in its new homeport of Memphis, Tennessee. The city played an integral part in bringing the iconic steamboat back into service including the construction of a new Beale Street Landing.

The statistics for the only remaining large passenger steamer were impressive. Boasting a length of 418 feet (85.5 meters) by 89.4 feet wide (18 meters), with a pair of tall smokestacks towering 109.5 feet (33.4 meters) above the water, which could be lowered to permit passage under bridges and power lines, it had six passenger decks and carried 436-passengers with a gross tonnage of 3,707 tons.

In any discussion of a steamboat, some attention must be given to her steam engines. The *American Queen* was in fact a hybrid; long before that term came into general use. As has often happened throughout the history of steamboat travel, the vintage steam engines were salvaged from an earlier vessel: the Army Corps of Engineers steam dredge *Kennedy*, originally built in 1932 as the *Dundee*. The pair of 1,500-horsepower tandem, double-expansion-reciprocating steam engines were built by Nordberg Engineering of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The high-pressure cylinder is 15 inches in diameter and the low-pressure is 30 inches in diameter, with a six-and-a-half-foot stroke.

The bright red paddlewheel revolving at the stern was built of an oak and steel



The American Queen's engine room was accessible to passengers via the Engine Room Bar.

It was an impressive sight to stand on the platforms at the stern, right next to the revolving paddlewheel, almost to the level of the river.



framework and oak bucket boards weighing close to 60 tons. The steam engines drive the sternwheel, but since the steamer *Kennedy* was roughly half the size of the *American Queen*, supplementary propulsion was also required for extra muscle against the current and when maneuvering. So, in addition to the boat's most visible feature, two auxiliary, diesel-electric Z-drives operate two propellers below the waterline. This increases the total horsepower to 3,500.

Beyond the beautiful white exterior, and the historic nature of her power plant, the most distinguishing characteristic of the *American Queen*, that her passengers came to love, were the authentic Victorian interiors. In the public areas and staterooms, guests were surrounded by antiques. It created a glamorous, while at the same time casual, small-ship atmosphere that is sadly lacking on most of today's cruise ships. The designers thoroughly researched the history of steamboat travel in America, dating back to that first trip down the Mississippi River in 1811, to recreate the atmosphere of the floating palaces immortalized by Mark Twain in his novels and essays.

Little expense was spared when the vessel was originally constructed and all of the best elements remained in place throughout its career. Perhaps the finest example of this could be found in the J. M. White Dining Room, designed to replicate the Main Cabin of the 1878-built steamboat *J. M. White*. Domed sections two-decks in height, rose on either side of the dining hall, with huge tapestries decorating the forward bulkheads and large



The Grand Staircase connected the Main Deck Lounge to the Purser's Lobby on Cabin Deck.

Detail of the chandelier and dome over the Grand Staircase.

The Grand Saloon was an impressive space, two decks in height, viewed here looking aft from the Main Deck level.

mirrors reflecting the length of the room. Tall windows with velvet drapes and potted palms graced the perimeter. Whether dining from the buffet or enjoying a sit-down meal, the luxury of this grand dining room was designed to command attention.

At the after end of the same two decks, the Grand Saloon resembled a 19th-century opera house with design elements from Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. The two-deck height showroom featured a large dance floor and seating on the lower Main Deck level, while the upper level on Cabin Deck contained six sections devoted to box seats





and a balcony. Chandeliers and original artwork enhanced the elegance of this entertaining room.

Midship, a traditional grand staircase of wood and brass connected both levels of the domed lobby. On the lower level was the Main Deck Lounge with its tiny Captain's Bar.

At the top, going past the Grand Saloon balcony, all the way aft, the Engine Room Bar provided a completely unique experience with a series of portholes providing an almost psychedelic view, especially at night, of the rapidly turning paddlewheel flashing past.

On either side, open-air porches also provided spectacular views. Descending a small staircase through the bar, the actual engine room could be accessed, where the mechanically inclined could view the vintage machinery in operation.

The Main Deck and Cabin Deck provided some of the most interesting and lovely public spaces afloat, on either oceans or rivers. (And more wonders were still to come.)

At the forward end of Cabin Deck another Grand Staircase connected the indoors to the outdoors providing the main access for embarking or disembarking. At the top, two very traditional spaces provided a throwback to the 19th century in the port side Ladies' Parlor and the overly-manly decorated Gentleman's Card Room to starboard. Adjacent porches looked out on both sides.

Next door, and built along the centerline, the spectacular Mark Twain Gallery was a quiet lounge for reading, relaxing or playing games, done in dark wood tones with windows overlooking the dining room. Filled with antiques and displays of steamboat history,

As passengers entered the steamboat from the exterior forward staircase, if they glanced to either side, they may have noticed two rooms of identical size, but with very different decor.

On the port side of the Cabin Deck was the Ladies' Parlor, opposite was the Gentleman's Card Room.

The Mark Twain Gallery was a stately Victorian masterpiece for quiet relaxation. Windows on either side overlooked the J. M. White Dining Room.





The magnificent J.M. White Dining Room aboard the American Queen.

including that of the Greene Line Steamers, which ultimately developed into the Delta Queen Steamboat Company, it was a paradise for ship and boat buffs. A great model of the California turned Mississippi River steamboat *Delta Queen* was among the many highlights.

And directly amidship the elegant Purser's Lobby provided services at the office on the portside, while shoppers could stock up on quality merchandise and souvenirs at the AQ Emporium shop to starboard.

One deck higher, at the forward end of Texas Deck, was the Front Porch of America. Outdoors, but sheltered by the Observation Deck above, passengers could relax in rocking chairs or wooden swings while enjoying a hot or cold beverage and watching the passing scenery; an altogether lovely pastime. Indoors

was a small, casual dining area serving light food and snacks 24-hours a day. Soft drinks, fruit juices, tea, Starbucks coffee, lattes, cappuccinos, and bottled water were all available without charge at the Front Porch Of America. Soft serve ice cream cones were another treat as well. Eight selections of beverages could be dispensed from what more than one passenger described as "the best coffee machine ever!"

A small, interior space housed a video theater, aft of the lobby. The remainder of the Texas Deck was devoted to accommodations, including some deluxe staterooms with private balconies located aft.

Another deck higher, The Chart Room at the forward end of the Observation Deck was another highlight showcasing a library full of



nautical books and memorabilia, a constantly updated navigation chart-book showing the boat's location on the river and an elaborately painted dome with quotes from Mark Twain inscribed in brass. A huge ship's wheel ringed in brass was strategically positioned at the front windows creating the illusion of a pilothouse of bygone days. This was the "office" of the onboard Riverlorian who would offer up knowledgeable services describing the history of steamboats as well as narrating the sights being seen throughout the voyage.

A wide promenade completely encircled this fourth level deck, on which most of the stateroom doors opened directly to the outside. On this boat, a cabin did not just have a number, it had a name. In fact, the term "state" room originated with steamboats and on the *American Queen* guests might reside in one of the 50 states, be ensconced in a room named after a famous person, or perhaps one of the rivers of America. Suddenly watching the passing scenery from your open cabin doors became a very important part of life.

Chairs and a table were provided with each room along the shared promenades. This deck also contained 19 interior rooms.

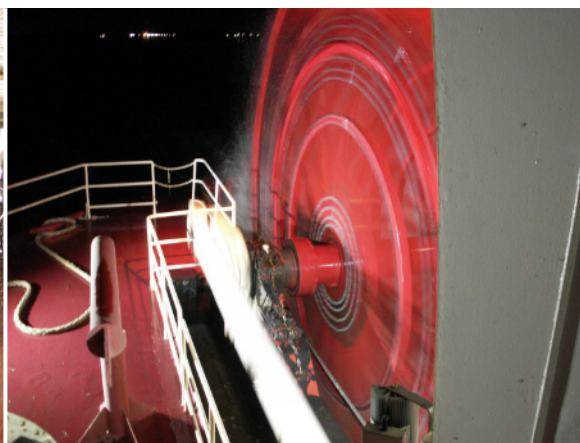
Altogether, there were six basic types of stateroom accommodations, divided into 14 price categories, and arranged over four of the six decks. These ranged from four plush suites to some rooms with private balconies; others with spectacular floor-to-ceiling bay windows; down to smaller single and double occupancy inside cabins. However, the vast majority were staterooms of various sizes, opening onto the outer decks.

Above the Observation Deck were two more levels comprising of the Promenade and Sun Decks; the highest two on the boat. Promenade Deck was home to the largest luxury suites and superior grade staterooms. As the deck name implies it was yet another perfect setting for strolling.

At the outdoor Calliope Bar, the unique sounds of that steam-operated instrument could often be heard, especially as the *American Queen* arrived or departed from the

The Chart Room was located forward on Deck 4. The room housed an excellent library, and the dome overhead contained brass plaques with quotes from Mark Twain.

Riverboat Royalty: Gordon C. Greene, son of Captain Tom Greene and Letha C. Greene, who bought and operated the Delta Queen for their Greene Line Steamers. As a boy, he hammered nails during the conversion of the Delta Queen from a California riverboat to the Queen of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.



At the stern of Deck 2, Cabin Deck, was the Engine Room Bar. This space also provided access to the American Queen's engine room one deck below.

The massive paddlewheel could be viewed from the bar. Whether by day, or illuminated at night, it was an impressive sight.



One of the most relaxing places anywhere afloat was found on the Front Porch of America. Here you could sit in a swing or a rocking chair and watch the river flow by while enjoying the beverage of your choice.

The Front Porch Cafe served great sandwiches and snacks in a casual setting.

Another place to grab a bite was the River Grill & Bar, located at the aft end of Deck 5. It was also known as the Calliope Bar.

The Great Steamboat Race of 2012 carried on a longstanding river tradition pitting the 1995-built American Queen against the veteran Belle of Louisville, originally built in 1914. Held on the Ohio River near Louisville, Kentucky on May 2, 2012.

Photo by Peter Knego.



towns along the river. Passengers were also given the chance to play the Calliope which had been a standard fixture on 19th Century showboats and still is on the few remaining steam-powered excursion boats. A piano-like keyboard releases the steam through 37 gold-plated brass whistles creating a melodic tooting sound. Located at the stern, lunch and dinner could also be taken outdoors at the River Grill, surrounding the bar, high above the paddlewheel; a fun spot with a great view.

The Sun Deck was the top level, also providing a fantastic vantage point six stories above the river. On hot days, a postage-stamp size bathing pool provided some wet relief. It was located adjacent to a small, but adequate gymnasium. All the way forward the tiny pilothouse with the latest modern-day equipment was crowned by a lacy cupola.

While the *American Queen* was a singular vessel, one of the many wonderful things about it was it both looked back on historic passenger steamers, and in some cases incorporated pieces of them. As previously noted, the steam engines were from a vintage sternwheeler. And emanating from the triple chime whistles, the same sounds returned to the rivers as were heard 100 years before. It is said there is a tradition of handing down steam whistles from one boat to another and the *American Queen's* can be traced all the

way back to the lovely sternwheel packet steamer *City of Memphis* built in 1898, which counted Mark Twain himself among its passengers. It was later renamed as *S. B. Duncan* in 1910. Eventually the whistles found their way to the sternwheel towboat *Jason* and from there passed to the *American Queen*. And, by looking back at old photos of the *J. M. White*, inside and out, it is easy to see how that grand boat was the inspiration for many elements seen aboard the *American Queen* from the filigree fretwork to the tops of those tall, fluted smokestacks.

This ends the nostalgic tour of the *American Queen*, the grandest steamboat of them all. Significantly, it also signals the end of overnight cruising under steam along the rivers of America. Sure, there are a few wonderful excursion steamers operating day trips; most notably the 1914-built *Belle of Louisville* a *Idlewild*, b *Avalon*, out of her namesake city, and the *Natchez* of 1975 vintage departing from New Orleans. There are few things more closely tied to the heart of the American experience than the sight of a paddlewheel steamboat. But out of the thousands of steamboats to come before it, the *American Queen* was the only remaining overnight passenger vessel propelled by steam remaining in service in the United States. Although no one knew it at the time, her last voyage would be the New Year's cruise departing New Orleans on December 29, 2023, and ending there on January 6, 2024. Just over a month later this message went out to employees: "We are writing to inform you that American Queen Steamboat Company LLC will cease all business operations effective February 20, 2024." The next day parent company Hornblower Holdings LLC filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and announced to the press that they had no interest in resuming cruising with their four riverboats.

So, what happened? The company claimed they were victims of a slow recovery due to the COVID-19 pandemic which idled all





cruising worldwide. But American Queen Voyages had also rapidly expanded beyond their core river product and subsequently overextended themselves. After an auspicious start in 2012, the company added the *American Empress* a *Empress of the North* in 2014 for service on the Columbia River, later deciding to rebuild two former casino boats; the *American Duchess* a *Isle of Capri* b *Bettendorf Capri* in 2017 and *American Countess* a *Kanesville Queen* in 2020, although it would not make its debut until 2021. While both were fitted with signature red paddlewheels, they lacked the charm and vintage décor of their fleet mates while having lower passenger capacities of 166 and 245 respectively.

Branching away from rivers into the Great Lakes and Eastern Seaboard the company also acquired and renamed two 4,954 gross ton coastal ships, each carrying 202 passengers. This Victory Cruise Line division then branched even farther afield into summer Alaska cruising with added voyages south to Mexico and Central America at the start and end of the season. These were very high-priced trips aboard the newly-built, 8,181 gross ton expedition ship *Ocean Victory*, operated seasonally on a charter basis with a capacity of 186 guests. During this transition the word Steamboat disappeared from the company's name, as they restyled themselves into American Queen Voyages, first moving their headquarters from Memphis, Tennessee to New Albany, Indiana and finally in 2021 to 23,000 square feet of offices in a high-rise tower in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Although they later attempted to return to their roots by laying up the former Victory ships and the too-small *American Duchess*, it was too little too late. Coupled with poor marketing, the pandemic, and amid very stiff competition from rival American Cruise Lines, the line could no longer survive financially. It really was a perfect storm of bad decisions and bad timing.

The liquidation of the assets of American Queen Voyages, including the four riverboats, proceeded rapidly and not without controversy. An auction scheduled for March 28, 2024 was canceled even though it was reported that there were multiple potential bidders including existing cruise lines. If that was the case, normally an auction would be held six to eight months after the bankruptcy filing; not after only one month.

Ultimately, American Cruise Lines was deemed to be the only "qualified bidder" and on April 1, 2024 the four boats were sold to them for a total price of \$6.3 million, later amended to \$6 million. Of that total, the price for the *American Queen* was only \$2.15 million. The poor *American Duchess* fetched a bargain basement price of \$200,000 while the other two boats went for \$1.6 million apiece. The intellectual property of American Queen Voyages was acquired for \$750,000 including all trade and domain names, business records, and a customer database of passenger and travel agency contacts.

At a hearing held April 4 in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Houston Texas, the sale was finalized with the judge stating American

Views from/of the top.

A river pilot's view. The American Queen was manually steered by a lever rather than a giant wheel.

The American Queen's bell and tall smokestacks.

The steam whistles of the American Queen date all the way back to 1898 when they first appeared on the steamboat City of Memphis.

The Delta Queen at Tuscaloosa, Alabama on October 14, 2007; shortly before she was retired from service. Today, she is for sale, but the future looks bleak.



The bedroom of one of the Owner's Suites. This one is #502, also known as the Captain Lawrence W. Keeton Suite.

One of the unique disadvantages of the Owner's Suites was every time the boat would pass under a bridge, the occupant would find a reclining smokestack resting on the veranda.



The John (sic) Lafitte Stateroom, #528, was a Superior Outside Stateroom with Open Veranda located midship on the port side of the Promenade Deck.

Few things in the world could be more relaxing than opening your cabin doors directly onto the Promenade Deck and watching the river go by.



The port side of Observation Deck 4, looking forward showing a row of staterooms opening to the deck with chairs for river viewing.

Twin bed stateroom #432 was a typical standard outside cabin that opened to the deck.



Cruise Lines will be considered the "sole and rightful owner of the acquired assets." A very reasonable price to pay for virtually eliminating all of the competition, save for one boat, the 386-passenger *Viking Mississippi*, completed in 2022 for Viking River Cruises, America. American Cruise Lines decided within a month that the *American Duchess* and *American Countess* would be scrapped. Various alternatives were supposedly being discussed with regards to the *American Queen*. No decision on the fate of the *American Empress* had been reached as of Spring, 2025.

On May 21, 2024 the *American Queen* arrived at a scrapyard in Houma, Louisiana. Off her starboard side was the *American*

Countess. Both vessels remained there throughout the rest of 2024. In a video shot by a drone, first viewed on YouTube in February 2025 the stateroom doors aboard the *American Queen* had all been removed. A large heap of scrap was on the adjacent shoreline. Brief glimpses revealed interiors had been completely gutted. This fabulous and important vessel still looked every inch a great steamboat on the exterior, but the sad reality is that it is an empty shell, awaiting an end which will surely arrive soon.

Better to remember the good times that were had on board by so many. The camaraderie among the passengers and crew on a vessel designed so that people could talk to each other, whether strolling on her open

Following page ...

The *American Queen* sails from Natchez, Mississippi on June 7, 2012, lowering her stacks before reaching an upcoming bridge.





The mighty red sternwheel of the American Queen churns the river at full speed.

Photo by Peter Knego

Postcard of kids watching the Gordon C. Greene pass by; perhaps wondering about the days of Mark Twain, Huck Finn, and Tom Sawyer.



decks, lounging in a chair while steaming up or downriver, or at a table in the incredibly lovely dining room. Savoring the memory of a decadent breakfast featuring Bananas Foster French toast stuffed with cream cheese along with a side of skewered bacon coated in brown sugar and hot beignets. Fabulous luncheons showcasing the regional cuisines of the South and Middle-America, including trying a New Orleans Muffuletta Sandwich for the first time. And those wonderful dinners created by celebrated Chef and Culinary Director, Regina Charboneau, including succulent steak and lobster not to mention the variety of incredibly good desserts. Wonderful entertainment in the Grand Saloon or the Engine Room Bar. Quiet times sitting on a swing on the Front Porch Of America enjoying a cocktail; or any night watching the sunset over the ever-changing river.

Finally, there is that sound that will never be heard again while arriving in a distant river port or falling asleep in your stateroom. It begins with a hiss, that builds into a melodic whoosh, as clouds of steam pour out of brass whistles. The sound of a steam whistle high atop a traditional river steamboat. At the stern, a bright red paddlewheel, churns the water.

These are now but memories of the steamboat *American Queen*, no longer in her element, no longer plying the waters of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.

A message from Steve Caloca,
Managing Director of the *Queen Mary*:

*It is with profound sadness that we
share the passing of our beloved
Commodore, Everett Hoard.*

*We will miss his kind heart, his passion,
and his unwavering devotion.*

*Commodore Everett Hoard is forever
part of the Queen Mary's story, and his
legacy will continue to shine as brightly
as the ship he so dearly loved.*





Sailors perform line handling aboard guided missile destroyer USS Carl M. Levin (DDG 120) as it arrives in Los Angeles for Los Angeles Fleet Week, May 20, 2025.

*(U.S. Navy photo by
Mass Communication Specialist
Seaman Shepard Fosdyke-Jackson)*

LA Fleet Week 2025

by Kevin M. Anthoney

The 10th annual LA Fleet Week sailed into the port of Los Angeles over the Memorial Day Holiday weekend lasting from Friday, May 23 through Monday, May 26.

This year's event offered three active-duty Navy vessels and a training Coast Guard vessel. The highlight of this annual event, is that the public can board and tour the vessels. Free tours of active-duty ships were open to the public from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily during the 4-day long event.

The ships were moored in the Port of LA's Outer Harbor, with trolley or shuttle bus transportation providing access. The ships visiting this year were:

USS *Harpers Ferry* (LSD-49), the lead ship of its class of landing ship dock of the U.S. Navy. The warship was named for the town of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, and is assigned to the Navy's "Amphibious Group 1." Its homeport is San Diego and was commissioned on January 7, 1995.

USS *Carl M. Levin* (DDG-120), an *Arleigh Burke*-class Aegis guided missile destroyer named for former U.S. Senator Carl Levin, who served as chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services. The ship was christened on October 2, 2021, at the Bath Iron Works shipyard in Bath, Maine, and is fitted with the Aegis Combat System baseline 9, which includes integrated air and missile defense capability. The ship was delivered to the U.S. Navy on January 6, 2023,

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Eagle (WIX 327) arrives in Los Angeles for Los Angeles Fleet Week, May 21, 2025.

(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Angel Campbell)



USCG *Eagle* (WIX-327)

Class, type:	<i>Gorch Fock</i> -class barque
Home port:	U.S. Coast Guard Academy New London, CT
Builder:	Blohm & Voss, Hamburg
Launched:	13 June 1936
Commissioned:	15 May 1946
Length:	295 ft (90 m)
Beam:	39 ft (12 m)
Draft:	17.5 ft (5.3 m)
Displacement:	1,784 tons (full)
Crew:	Permanent 7 officers, 50 crew When deployed 12 officers, 68 crew, 150 trainees
Sail area:	22,280 sq ft
Propulsion:	1 x 1,200 hp (890 kW) MTU 8V 4000 diesel engine
Speed:	Sail: 19 knots Diesel: 10 knots

and arrived at its homeport, Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, on August 7, 2021.

Unmanned Surface Vessel *Mariner* (OUSV 4) is one of the Navy’s “ghost fleet” surface vessels and is equipped with next-generation capabilities, including an advanced command-and-control system, virtualized Aegis weapon system and autonomous navigation system.

US Coast Guard Cutter *Eagle* (WIX-327), formerly *Horst Wessel* and also known as Barque *Eagle*, is a 295-foot barque used as a training cutter for future officers of the U.S. Coast Guard, one of only two active commissioned sailing vessels in the U.S. military today, along with the USS *Constitution*. Built as a German sail training ship and decommissioned at the start of World War II, the vessel was re-commissioned in 1942 and taken by the U.S. as war reparations at conflict’s end. Acquired by the Coast Guard in 1946, its homeport is New London, Connecticut.

For 2025, a new digital queue system for ship tours was implemented as an effort to combat crowd congestion; which had been an issue for years. Attendees would not be allowed to use the new system (www.getinline.lafleetweek.org) until they were located within the city of San Pedro, and location services had to be enabled on their mobile phones. They would then receive a notification when it was their turn to enter the shuttle line.

Unfortunately, an analysis of this year’s attendance feedback showed some visitors experienced significant wait times and frustration.



Guided missile destroyer USS Carl M. Levin (DDG 120) arrives in Los Angeles for Los Angeles Fleet Week, May 20, 2025.

(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Angel Campbell)

A large expo area next to the Battleship Iowa, on the Port of Los Angeles waterfront, featured military demonstrations and equipment, live music and entertainment, and food. This year also honored the 250th anniversaries of the U.S. Navy and Marines.

This year, 46,824 people visited the Fleet Week Expo at the Battleship Iowa. Of the 46,824 guests, 15,410 (or 33%) toured one or more of the three ships and one Coast Guard cutter participating in Fleet Week. Battleship Iowa and the Port of LA introduced a new digital queue system to manage the ship tour lines this year after being overwhelmed by interest in the visiting aircraft carrier during last year’s event. Tours throughout were consistent and orderly, with none of the frustration and long waits visitors experienced in 2024. Fleet Week drove over 100,000 people to the LA waterfront and the downtown San Pedro business district over the three-day Memorial Day weekend.

Over 100 Sailors, Marines and Coasties participated in each of seven “neighborhood activations” throughout LA and Orange County, including:

USS *Carl M. Levin* (DDG-120)

Class, type:	<i>Arleigh Burke</i> -class destroyer
Home port:	Pearl Harbor
Builder:	Bath Iron Works
Launched:	16 May 2021
Commissioned:	24 June 2023
Length:	509 ft (155 m)
Beam:	66 ft (20 m)
Draft:	31 ft (9.4 m)
Displacement:	9,300 tons (full)
Crew:	380 officers and enlisted
Propulsion:	4 x General Electric LM2500 gas turbines 100,000 shp (75,000 kW)
Propellers:	2
Speed:	31 knots
Aircraft:	2 x MH-60R Seahawk helicopters



USS *Harpers Ferry* (LSD-49)

Class, type:	<i>Harpers Ferry</i> -class dock landing ship
Home port:	San Diego, CA
Builder:	Avondale Shipyards
Launched:	16 January 1993
Commissioned:	7 January 1995
Length:	610 ft (190 m)
Beam:	84 ft (26 m)
Draft:	21 ft (6.4 m)
Displacement:	16,601 tons (full)
Crew:	22 officers 397 enlisted men
Propulsion:	Four Colt Industries, 16-cylinder diesel engines, with two shafts, 33,000 shp (25,000 kW)
Propellers:	2
Speed:	Over 20 kts
Armaments:	2 x 25 mm Mk 38 rapid-fire cannon 2 x 20 mm Phalanx CIWS mounts 2 x Rolling Airframe Missile launchers 6 x 0.5 in (12.7 mm) M2HB machine guns

Amphibious landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49) arrives in Los Angeles for Los Angeles Fleet Week, May 19, 2025.

(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Shepard Fosdyke-Jackson)



- City of Orange (500 attendees)
- LA San Pedro district (1,200 attendees)
- LA Fairfax district (5,000 attendees)
- LA Wilmington district (650 attendees)
- LA Westchester district (1,000 attendees)
- LA Mission Hills district (500 attendees)
- Rancho Palos Verdes (500 attendees)

Troops also attended:

- Dodgers game (43,517 attendees)
- Angels game (29,301 attendees)
- and celebrated Navy250 and LA Fleet Week at Disneyland (60,000 people in park that day).

They also participated in daily volunteer projects in several communities, including feeding the homeless; playing sports with kids at the Boys & Girls Club of Los Angeles; two days of work with Habitat for Humanity; visiting patients at Children’s Hospital of Orange County and Ronald McDonald House in Long Beach; planting trees and flowers in parks; and preparing cemeteries for Memorial Day events.





USS *Mariner* (OUSV-4)

Class, type:	Medium unmanned surface vehicle (MUSV)
Home port:	San Diego, CA
Builder:	Gulf Craft; Franklin, LA
Length:	193 ft (59 m)
Beam:	32 ft (10 m)
Crew:	6, even though most of functions are automated
Cargo capacity:	two 20-ft containers, and four 40-ft containers
Propulsion:	5 x 2,000 hp (1,491 kW) diesel engines connected to waterjets

Overlord Unmanned Surface Vessel Mariner sits pier side at the Port of Los Angeles in support of Los Angeles Fleet Week, May 20, 2025.

(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Aaron J. Rolle)

- In a new event this year, over 50 Sailors and Marines spent a day with over 100 Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts at an area beach camp, coaching and participating in water and land sports.

LA Fleet Week began in 2016. The event, a celebration of the nation's sea services, with active-duty Navy and Coast Guard members interacting with the southern California area communities during the four-day event.



Scenes from May's Meeting

Dr. Margarita Jerabek shares the extensive catalog of the fine and decorative arts found on the Queen Mary.

Below is just a sampling of the items that are raffled off, and available for purchase at every meeting.

(photos by David Tew)

Our May attendees saw the ongoing hard work put forth in preserving the *Queen Mary* for future generations.

Dr. Margarita Jerabek spoke on the history of the collections and art treasures on board the *Mary*, as well as the work she has done in surveying them and preparing the Conservation Management Plan for the liner.

Dr. Jerabek particularly highlighted some of the female artists who contributed to the *Queen Mary*. She also spoke about ongoing conservation challenges, the most recent effort involving the second largest artwork onboard: the 22-foot high mural *Unicorns in Battle*, found in the Queen's Salon, formerly the first class main lounge. It was executed by Gilbert Bayes and Alfred J. Oakley in carved gesso, and tinted in gold and silver.

We want to sincerely thank Dr. Jerabek for this beautiful and informative presentation.

Thanks also to everyone who attended in person and on Zoom.



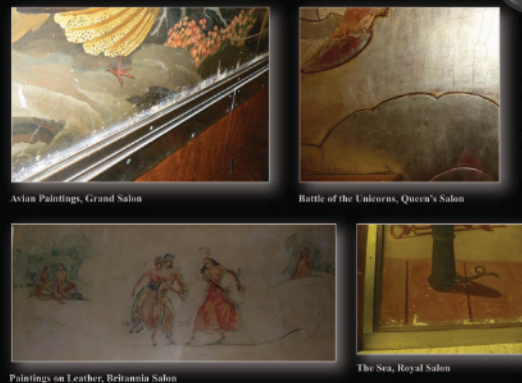
Fine and Decorative Arts Survey:
Grand Salon (Cabin Class Restaurant), R Deck



Fine and Decorative Arts Survey:
Observation Lounge and Cocktail Bar, Promenade Deck



Conservation Issues Identified: Damage to Fine Arts (Neglect,
Improper Use/Maintenance, Unstable Environmental Conditions)



Asian Paintings, Grand Salon

Battle of the Unicorns, Queen's Salon

Paintings on Leather, Britannia Salon

The Sea, Royal Salon

Post Conservation Management Plan: Interpretive Exhibits
Enhanced with Stored Archival Materials



First Class Children's Playroom Exhibit

Main Hall Exhibits and Displays

First Class Music Room

The Queen Mary Story Exhibit. The Madonna of the Atlantic was located in the Art Gallery and the Mediterranean Harbor Scene was not displayed.

A few of the slides from
Dr. Jerabek's talk.

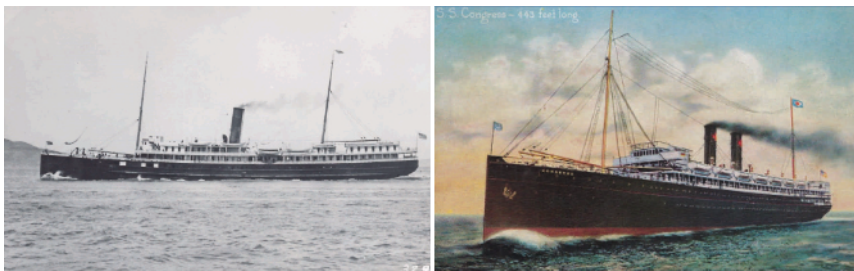
They show the exhaustive
survey, targets for
conservation, and new or
updated exhibits.

AUGUST MEETING NOTICE

Our August 2, 2025 Chapter Meeting will be in the
Mauretania Room on the *Queen Mary*. (1 p.m., Pacific)

Join us for Jim Shuttleworth's presentation on the
Pacific Coast Steamship Company, whose fleet
included such vessels as the *Queen* and the *Congress*,
shown below.

If you cannot attend in person, a Zoom meeting link will be sent out in advance.
(Details subject to change.)



Call for Speakers!

If you have a topic you'd like to present to the membership, at our meetings
aboard the *Queen Mary*, we'd love to hear it!

for more information:
Kate Vescera
socalsshhsa@gmail.com

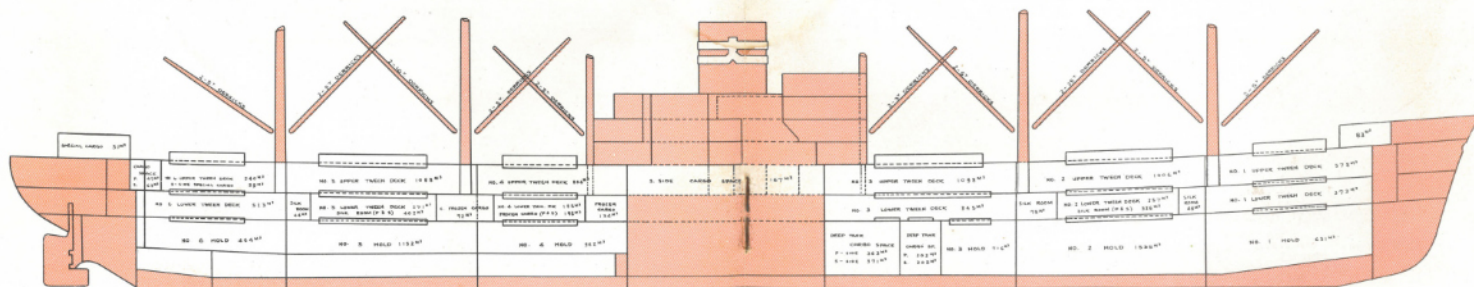


November 1, 2025
on the *Queen Mary*
in Long Beach, California

Anyone interested in being a vendor
should please contact Jim Shuttleworth
at jimpinxit@gmail.com
to register, or for more information.

THE CAPACITY PLAN OF M.S. "TŌSAN MARU" & M.S. "KYŪSYŪ MARU"

東山丸・九州丸載貨明細圖



OSK's Fast Freighter: Tōsan Maru

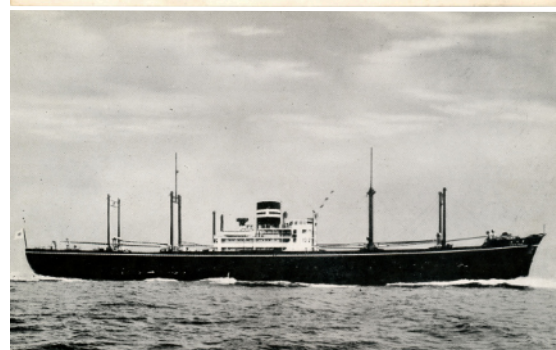
In 1920, the Osaka Shosen Kaisha (OSK Line) inaugurated cargo service to the United States. Volume was such, new ships were ordered in 1930. The ensuing increase in trade demanded even more ships, faster ships.

That second upgrade to OSK's "silk express" bore fruit in the summer of 1938 with the motorship Tōsan Maru. The debut of the Tōsan and her sister, Kyūsyū, warranted an eight-page brochure, with a stylish cover, route map, ship details, and a side view of the capacity plan. They could carry six passengers each, but those arrangements were omitted.

Referred to in the brochure as "ocean greyhounds," they were sleeker than cargo ships of that era deserved to be, with their 492-foot long hulls marked with a delicately curved bow, slightly rounded superstructure, and cruiser-spoon stern.

The 8,900-ton Tōsan Maru, averaging 16.5 knots, arrived in San Pedro, California on June 26. She was a day ahead of schedule, having left Yokohama 12 days prior. (The Tōsan had plenty in reserve. The twin-screw, diesel engine freighter managed 19.85 knots on her trials.)

She spent World War II as a troop transport, meeting her end on July 27, 1944, after being hit by several torpedoes, which started fires that ignited the artillery shells and depth charges stored aboard.





Celebrate the 90th anniversary of the *Queen Mary's* maiden voyage!

**May
29-31,
2026**

Planning continues for our celebration of the *Queen Mary's* maiden voyage, and we are pleased to announce Bruce Peter as our keynote speaker.

Peter is Professor of Design History at The Glasgow School of Art. His interests encompass modern architecture and design for transport, hospitality, and entertainment. He is also greatly interested in the aesthetic and technological design of modern commercial ships and has written extensively on these subjects.

This will be his second visit to the *Queen Mary*, his first was in November 2023 when he discussed her interiors in conjunction with the release of his book *Lusitania to QE2: The Great Clyde-Built Ships*.

His other titles include: *Cruise: Identity, Design and Culture*, with Peter Quartermaine; *QE2: Britain's Greatest*

Liner, with Philip Dawson and Ian Johnston; *Ship Style: Modernism and Modernity at Sea in the 20th Century*, with Philip Dawson; and *Danish Design at Sea: Ship Interior Architecture and Furnishing*.

His latest book, *Art Deco Scotland: Design and Architecture in the Jazz Age*, came out earlier this year.

Peter also assisted with the organization of the V&A exhibition "Ocean Liners: Speed and Style."

Stay tuned for further updates. If you have any questions about this event, contact: editor.oceantimes@gmail.com, or queenmary90th@gmail.com.



Aww ... Wook at those stubby wittle stacks!

As new ships were launched in the 1930s, a trend for smaller funnels emerged. Ships running on diesel, like NYK Line's *Chichibu Maru*, could get away with a short stack, as diesel didn't give off the smut that came with burning coal or oil.

Now did that stop the designers of oil-burning liners from trying to emulate them? Of course not.

The *Bremen* and *Europa* famously started out their careers with stubby funnels. They were called symbols of streamlining and modernity. A few voyages later, thanks to the soot collecting on the afterdecks, those stacks were extended for a more traditional look.

Given that well-publicized evidence, the funnels for the *America* were a rare design flaw from the drawing board of William Francis Gibbs. Though the angle in the inset above is a good look; the profile not so much.

The *America's* aft funnel proved quite inadequate off the Virginia Capes, during the builder's trials, and the official trials off Rockland, Maine in early June 1940. (As you will recall, the forward stack was a dummy.)

A fifteen foot extension later, and all was right with the world when the \$17,500,000 liner entered service that August.

Did this cause Gibbs to over-compensate with the *United States*? Discuss.



Southern California Chapter members continue to support *PowerShips* with the Spring 2025 issue having articles covering the future with remotely controlled and autonomous ships along with recollections of travels on the Atlantic Ocean aboard Cunard Lines.

Departed SoCal Member and past *PowerShips* West Coast Regional Editor **Jim Shaw** follows on his articles on the adaption of new fuels and fuel saving devices (see *PowerShips* No. 326 & 327) with a presentation of the on-going advancements of toward robotic and autonomous ship operations in his article entitled *The Age of Remotely Controlled and Autonomous Ships* that brings us up to date with

current progress and gives us a look into the future.

Member **Bill Miller** continues his "Lives of Liners" series presenting Part II of the story of the Cunard Line's Atlantic service in the 1960s when the line still provided eleven ships on the route; The *Queen Mary*, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Mauritania*, *Caronia*, *Britannic*, *Media*, *Parthia*, *Saxonia*, *Ivernia*, *Carinthia*, and *Sylvania*. *Onboard Cunard Line, Part II* recalls those times in the 1960s and later when transatlantic travel aboard ships declined and saw one liner after another set aside as the traveling public chose the airplane as the way to cross.

The SoCal Chapter welcomes **George Schneider** as he takes the helm as the *PowerShips* West Coast Regional Editor. May he experience fair winds and smooth seas.

