

# custom house MARITIMES



AUTUMN 2016

Lifting a sunken mud scow in Providence, Rhode Island, Steamship Tasco Papers, Frank L. McGuire Maritime Library of the New London Maritime Society.



## what tomorrow brings

There are major changes brewing this fall for the Maritime Society. After eight years, president George Spreccace and vice-president Rob Pittaway are both stepping down from their leadership roles. That's a photograph, *center left*, of Rob, executive director Susan Tamulevich, and George back in 2009 taken at City Hall, where we'd just picked up the deed to the Society's first, of three, lighthouses. (That's *the* lighthouse, *upper left*, this picture provided by Anne Congdon of her family visiting the light in the 1950s.) Had we known of the peaks and valleys ahead—the highs of the *Light-house Kids* and 2014 restoration, and lows of the lawsuits and two-year (& counting) prohibition on bringing any-and-all visitors to the lighthouse—who knows what we might have done at that pivotal point. I like to think we'd still have jumped in to preserve these trusty beacons, whose service has meant so much to this harbor town. We owe George and Rob a tremendous debt of gratitude for their leadership, steadfastness, and all the good work they have done to keep our Society afloat!



On another note, through the Maritime Society's year-long local history program, under the direction of Jody Barthel (*photo lower left*), in October the City's 300 third graders will receive Discovering Amistad's new education program aboard the *Amistad* ship, which currently is docked on the New London waterfront. We are very proud of this program, which brings all 300 students to visit seven historic sites across the school year. NLMS's local history program is provided to the NL Public Schools free of charge and is supported by grants from the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut, The Anthony & Elizabeth Enders Fund, the Bodenwein Foundation, and the Morgan McGinley Family Fund.



*The third grade social studies program created by the New London Maritime Society matches perfectly with the Connecticut social studies frameworks. The frameworks suggest that third graders should be deeply engaged in the study of their own community; this is exactly what this program does. In addition, the frameworks completely support the field trips involved in the New London program. The work done by the New London Maritime Society with students should be commended.* —Stephen Armstrong, Social Studies Consultant, CT Depart. of Ed.

Hope to see you all at our Annual Meeting, Sunday, November 13 —it's at the custom house. ■





## AUTUMN 2016 - Here's what's coming up next.

The Custom House Maritime Museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, from 1 to 5 PM (closed Monday & Tuesday), or by appointment. Call 860-447-2501. Admission is FREE for NLMS members, individuals with current military or USCG cadet ID and children under age 14 (with adult), \$7 suggested donation all others. Go to [nlmaritimesociety.org](http://nlmaritimesociety.org) for details. Register for most events online 24/7 at [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com). Search "New London."

### Our 2016 Sentinels on the Sound Lighthouse Boat Tours run through October

Go to our website for details: [nlmaritimesociety.org](http://nlmaritimesociety.org).

**Find your lighthouse!** 90-minute excursions run every Wednesday and Saturday at 11:30 AM.

Sunset and Full-Moon tours take place across the three nights of the full moon: October 15, 16, 17.



### JIBBOOM CLUB # 1 -- Citizen Science on Long Island Sound, with Rachel Perry

October 18 Tuesday, 1 PM Former NLMS intern, Rachel Perry graduated from the University of Connecticut with a M.S. in Biological Oceanography in 2015. For the last five years she has worked with water quality issues in marine systems, and continues to explore ways to make monitoring projects more cost efficient and accessible to the general public.

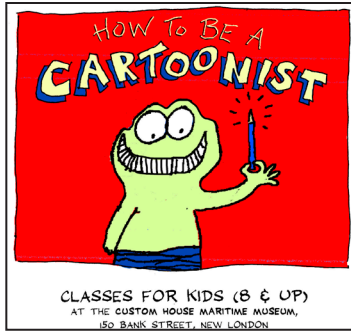
The Jibboom Club meets monthly, April through November, on the third Tuesday of the month for a speaker's program, coffee, cupcakes, and good conversation. Donation for refreshments, only.

### 2016 Pittway Lighthouse Award Dinner

October 27, Thursday, 7 PM Join us at Tony D's restaurant for the 2nd biennial Pittway Lighthouse Award dinner honoring the person who has done the most to preserve and protect our local lighthouses. This year we honor NLMS president George Spreace for his tireless work on behalf of three area lights: New London Harbor, Race Rock, and New London Ledge. Call 860-447-8700 for reservations.

### How to be a Cartoonist, with Jon Buller

October 29, 10:45 AM to 12 NOON for four (4) Saturdays You, too, can be a cartoonist! Jon Buller leads another series of *How to be a Cartoonist* Workshops on four Saturdays. The Workshop is \$40, all materials included. Children ages 8 and older are welcome. Adults often sign up, too. [brownpapertickets.com/event/2628785](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/2628785)



### Haunted Lighthouses with Elinor DeWire

October 30, Sunday at 2 PM It's the perfect time of year for a few scary maritime tales! Almost every lighthouse claims to have a ghost...or two...or three! Join author and lighthouse historian, Elinor DeWire, for a fun and slightly hair-raising visit to a few haunted lighthouses and hear stories of their ghosts. Ms DeWire will do a book signing and discussion at the end of her presentation. 860-447-2501. \$12 adults, \$8 up-to 14 yrs old.



### JIBBOOM CLUB # 1- The History of Electric Boat, with Thomas N. Plante

November 15 Tuesday, 1 PM Director of Strategic Planning at Electric Boat Corporation in Groton, Thomas N. Plante is responsible for the development of the company's Strategic Plan, Integrated Enterprise Plan and maintaining a comprehensive analysis of the business environment, focusing on the Navy, the Department of Defense and the defense industrial base. In addition, he supports preparation of the company's annual operating plan, quarterly business reviews and congressional priorities. Donation for refreshments, only.



### New London Maritime Society 2016 Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 13, at 1 PM At the 2016 Annual Meeting, scientist Peter Auster will give a presentation about the new Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, an area he first explored in the 1980s. Join us for a brief business meeting, Peter Auster's terrific talk, and light refreshments. Suggested donation is \$5 for NLMS members, and \$10 for non-members. Please call 860-447-2501 or register online 24/7 at [brownpapertickets.com/event/2629172](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/2629172).

### An Evening of Song and Conversation with Peter Yarrow

December 2, Friday, at 7 PM This concert is a fund-raiser for the New London Maritime Society. The concert takes place at the UConn Avery Point Auditorium. (UConn is a sponsor of this event.) Concert tickets are \$35 each and are available online at [brownpapertickets.com/event/2606201](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/2606201) or by calling 860-447-2501. (Tickets will not be sold at the door, due to venue regulations.)

On View at the Custom House: Submarine Memorabilia from the Collection of Ed Uditis: 1940s through 1990s, with additional items from Axel Westerberg and the New London Maritime Society Collection.

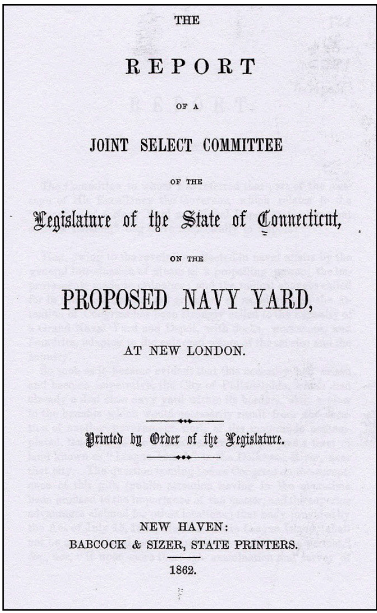
SECONN Skin Divers was founded in 1963 to promote safety and education in diving. This Fall SECONN present a photography exhibition to highlight the marine and freshwater environments of New England at the Custom House Maritime Museum. Whether you view it from under the water or from above, there is no denying the natural beauty of New England's coastline! Opening Friday, November 11.



SECONN {PH<sub>2</sub>O} EXHIBIT



# News from the Frank L. McGuire Maritime Library



## 1862: A Navy Yard Proposed for New London

This was the summer of the "Subtennial," a celebration of southeastern Connecticut's distinctive history of submarines: their design, construction, deployment and servicing. Most readers probably know that the origins of the Submarine Base date well back into the 19th century when, In 1862, a committee of the State Legislature published its report on a proposed Navy Yard to support the coming transition from wooden sailing vessels to iron-hulled steamships. Its authors, including Alfred Coit from New London County, made a strong case for locating the yard in New London, which was competing with Philadelphia, the latter expecting it would prevail because it already had a yard on the Delaware River. New London's advantages are described in sometimes flowery prose: its strategic location on Long Island Sound; the fresh water of the upper Thames, which would be better for iron-hulled ships; the "commodiousness" of the harbor ("of sufficient depth and expanse to float the whole Navy of the country"); the security provided by Fort Trumbull; the "salubrious" climate; the absence of winter ice; the availability of granite, timber, coal and iron; and, not least, a population of "hardy seamen and skilled naval mechanics."

Not so long ago a library wishing to acquire a historic booklet of this type would have to obtain a micro-film, a photocopy, a costly original, or go without, but thanks to the digitization of so many of the world's books one can usually buy a reprinted copy "on demand," as we have done several times to develop our holdings of New London's maritime history. ■

Brian Rogers, Librarian

The library staff is working hard to develop a web presence for the Frank L. McGuire Maritime Library. The plan is to create online exhibits accessible from the NLMS website that will illustrate our archival collections – photographs, documents and other non-book materials relating to an aspect of New London's maritime history. Among these are an extensive historic postcard collection being digitized by Gretchen van der Lyke, and the *S.S. Tasco* archive, a unique collection of photos and historical information about the salvage vessel of the T. A. Scott Company being prepared by Laurie Deredita. Collections to follow include the Dwight and Lila Lyman Fort Trumbull papers, the Judge Robert P. Anderson papers, the Herman Pedersen merchant mariner papers, the Admiral Billard Academy, the U.S. Merchant Marine Officers Training School at Fort Trumbull, the career of early 20th century mariner William Alexander, the Robert Bachman War of 1812 papers, the Thames Shipyard photo collection (which Eugene Macmillan is currently organizing,) the visit of the German commercial submarine *Deutschland* to New London during World War I, and Robert Mills, the architect of our custom house. ■



I'M JOINING THE NEW LONDON MARITIME SOCIETY!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Individual \$35\_\_ Family \$50\_\_ Contributor \$100\_\_ Sponsor \$250\_\_ Patron \$1,000\_\_ Sign-up date \_ \_\_\_\_\_

Cash\_\_ Check\_\_ ~ please make payment to New London Maritime Society Visa\_\_ Master Card\_\_ AmEx\_\_

Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_ Security code \_\_\_\_\_

Benefits of membership include *free* admission, invitations to special events, discounts, and a newsletter.

*New London Maritime Society's mission is to protect, preserve, & and celebrate New London's U.S. Custom House, three area lighthouses, and Long Island Sound, and to interpret the rich maritime life & history of the port of New London and the surrounding region through museum exhibitions, educational programs, and preservation initiatives. Learn more about us at [nlmaritimesociety.org](http://nlmaritimesociety.org).*

New London Maritime Society - Custom House Maritime Museum, 150 Bank Street, New London, Connecticut 06320 860.447.2501

**N.L.M.S.**



## 2016 Update from Ledge Lighthouse

After transfer of ownership from the US Coast Guard to the New London Maritime Society in August 2015, the Ledge Light Foundation carried on its work of 30 years fulfilling our responsibility to maintain, restore, and provide public access to Ledge Lighthouse. We undertook various restoration projects, and this fall, we will be installing three more windows as part of our ongoing window replacement project to stabilize and protect the building. With these three, we will have replaced 19 of the 42 windows at the lighthouse.

Continuing our 30 year partnership of restoration work and tours with Project Oceanology, our summer season was a success. Our volunteer corps of guides expanded. We continued to fine-tune all aspects of our popular and unique tour to make it one of our best seasons ever. Hundreds of lucky guests were charmed by this jewel of our harbor. The pages of our guest book are filled with glowing comments, from local folks who have wanted to go inside Ledge Lighthouse their whole lives, to people from afar, including Europe, who find what the Foundation has done amazing. All of them truly appreciate that we are preserving history.

100% of the all-volunteer Ledge Light Foundation tours and gift-shop revenue goes back into work on the lighthouse. We are already planning new events, exhibits and tours for 2017. Please check our website [www.LedgeLighthouse.org](http://www.LedgeLighthouse.org) or our Facebook page for updates during the off season. If you want to volunteer for preservation work, as a guide, or just to help out, please contact us at [info@ledgelighthouse.org](mailto:info@ledgelighthouse.org). We welcome all who want to help preserve this local maritime treasure! ■

*Below, Visitors enjoy the spectacular view of the surrounding land and sea from the catwalk atop Ledge Lighthouse during a Foundation tour.*  
photo: Todd Gipstein

## What's up at the Custom House?



**shop events tours museum**

**Custom House Maritime Museum**  
150 Bank Street, New London, CT  
Wed. - Sun. 1 - 5 PM, 860-447-2501

[nlmaritimesociety.org](http://nlmaritimesociety.org)

## 2016 Sentinels on the Sound Boat Tours

Summer may be over, but our *Find your lighthouse!*, *Sunset*, and *Full Moon* boat tours continue through October. *Find your lighthouse!* tours run every Wednesday and Saturday from 11:30 AM to 1 PM. *Sunset* and *Full-Moon* tours take place monthly across the three nights of the full moon October 15, 16, 17. Go to [nlmaritimesociety.org](http://nlmaritimesociety.org).

**New London Maritime Society**  
**Custom House Maritime Museum**  
150 Bank Street, New London, Connecticut 06320

[nlmaritimesociety.org](http://nlmaritimesociety.org)  
*nicely nautical*





Please Join us for the 2016 New London Maritime Society 33rd Annual Meeting

**Sunday, November 13, at 1 PM**

On September 15, 2016, President Obama designated the first marine national monument in the Atlantic Ocean, protecting fragile deep-sea ecosystems off the coast of New England. The new national monument – which encompasses pristine underwater mountains and canyons – will provide critical protections for important ecological resources and marine species, including deep-sea corals and endangered whales and sea turtles.

At the 2016 Annual Meeting of the New London Maritime Society, scientist Peter Auster will give a presentation about the new Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, an area he first explored in the 1980s. The meeting will be held November 13 at 1 PM at the Custom House Maritime Museum. Join us for a brief business meeting, Peter Auster's terrific talk, and light refreshments. Suggested donation is \$5 for NLMS members, and \$10 for non-members. Space is limited. Please register online 24/7 at [brownpapertickets.com/event/2629172](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/2629172) or call 860-447-2501.

Peter J. Auster is a Senior Research Scientist at Mystic Aquarium and a Research Professor Emeritus at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Auster's research focuses broadly on the ecology and conservation of fishes, which has allowed him to participate as scientist or chief-scientist on over 60 major research cruises and a multitude of shore-based projects in the northwest Atlantic, Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Caribbean Sea, South China Sea, Indian Ocean, Sea of Cortez, and in the equatorial Pacific. Snorkel, scuba, research submersibles and remotely operated vehicles are the principal ways he goes to work in the field.



**Keep up with What's Up!** To receive weekly Custom House news, email [nlmaritimedirector@gmail.com](mailto:nlmaritimedirector@gmail.com).

Below, The most-evocative objects at the Custom House may be the vintage dive gear from the collections of Jay Kane and Ed Uditis.



Artist, Activist, and Folk Singer - Legend



An Evening of Song & Conversation with Peter Yarrow

**Friday, December 2, at 7 PM**

This December 2, folk singer - legend Peter Yarrow will present 'An Evening of Song & Conversation with Peter Yarrow' -- a fund-raiser for the New London Maritime Society. The concert takes place at 7 PM, at the UConn Avery Point Auditorium. (UConn is a sponsor of this event.) Concert tickets are \$35 each and are available online at [brownpapertickets.com/event/2606201](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/2606201) or by calling 860-447-2501. (Tickets will not be sold at the door, due to venue regulations.) Opening for Peter Yarrow is the singer/song writer duo 'Mustards Retreat'.

Peter Yarrow's talents as a creative artist—both with the legendary trio Peter, Paul & Mary and as a solo performer—are frequently directed at using music to convey a message of humanity and caring. His gift for songwriting has produced some of the most moving songs from Peter, Paul & Mary, including 'Puff, the Magic Dragon,' 'Day is Done,' 'Light One Candle' and 'The Great Mandala.'

*Yes, it will be nostalgic for many. But on another level, it will bring them a sense of what is still possible. Yes, they will sing 'Leaving on a Jet Plane,' and I will give them a sense of the current history of what this music is doing, and why it's important. So it will be a history lesson, it will be a singalong that inspires, but it will also assert the importance of the continuation of this kind of music in people's lives today. And where we're going from here in those terms. It's not necessarily a big lecture — it's inherent in the music. They'll get it. I know it, 'cause that's what I do.*

— Peter Yarrow



## the heart & soul of New London Maritime Society. - our volunteers



My Experience as a Docent at the Custom House, by Christina Corcoran

When I thought about volunteering at the Custom House I did not know what to expect. I knew that I loved New London maritime history and hoped that perhaps I could make a contribution. My experience as a docent has been amazing and has made my life much richer.

My first encounter with Bill LaRoue made me realize how much I did not know --and I thought I knew a lot. Bill has fascinating stories about aspects of New London history and encouraged me to learn as much as I could to be able to start giving tours. People from all over the country and the world come to visit the museum and love to hear about New London but also love to share their own experiences and knowledge of history. It is wonderful to get a group of people in the Amistad exhibition, who not only ask questions but contribute thoughts and ideas that I had not thought about before.

I have also been fortunate to meet many wonderful volunteers and members. It is fun hanging out with Linda and Josephine and there are always people coming in and out of the museum, sharing stories, information, artifacts, or just wanting to spend time in the gift shop. Some days are quiet and others make me think of Grand Central Station!

People of all ages love to tour the museum. It is extremely rewarding to see the excitement on kids' faces when they enter what I call the *Harry Potter* Library. I never imagined that young people would enjoy a museum as much as they do. It is so much fun showing them around and asking them questions. My teenage friends Cassidy and Chloe have been volunteering with me and have absolutely loved the experience; they feel they have become more confident working with people. Susan has given them added responsibility working at the SailFest and even painting the walls!

As volunteers we have new opportunities every day, including lighthouse tours, the SailFest, working with the *Amistad* and with young people, piano concerts, and now we are even creating a mural! I highly recommend volunteering at the Custom House! ■  
*If you'd like to learn more about being a Custom House volunteer, please send an email to: [Iroselund@hotmail.com](mailto:Iroselund@hotmail.com).*

*Photos, top left: Linda, Christina, Chloe, Roger and Caddisy at SailFest; right: super-volunteer Jim Diaz fixing our front flagpole.*



Hello, My wife and I visited New London this past summer after sailing up from Annapolis, MD. We had never been there before and could almost imagine the thrill of past sailors coming into the harbor for the first time in centuries past. The Customs House was an amazing discovery and I wanted to congratulate the entire staff for what they are accomplishing. History comes alive in New London and especially at the Customs House. What is spurring this email is that I wanted to share the attached photograph with you. Please forward to [head docent Bill LaRoue]. Apologies for not being able to remember the docent's name but I do recall every detail of the history he explained. He was remarkable in what he knew, enthusiastic, and extraordinarily engaging. I felt I had just met a modern day historical archeologist. The discovery of the new documents by Fresnel's son are a true treasure. Hope you enjoy the photo as much as I do!

Chuck & Ann Kahle  
S/V Blue Heaven

(email received on September 27, 2016)