

# custom house MARITIMES

AUTUMN 2024



Winsome Bingham was at the museum in October for a Sunday afternoon program. Ms. Bingham read her book *THE WALK*, followed by a conversation about empowering the children in our lives, and how we can encourage them to make choices. NLMS presented signed copies of *THE WALK* to all NL Public School elementary school libraries.



Photos, from top: Educator/tattoo artist **Richard Stremme** shares his collection 'The Scrimshaw/Tattoo Connection'; historian **Manisha Sinha**  
Photo: Sharon Brown; A New Haven field trip with some of our docents, from left: **Joe Gareis, Ford Gerritt, Dick Fraser, Bob Tellier, & Jim Flood.**

## Back in the Groove from the director

Something's shifted at the Custom House. There are new docents at the desk, volunteers stepping forward, school groups from elementary to college-level taking the tour, browsers in the Shop. We've got our pre-COVID groove back!

This is after a summer one could only call peculiar. It was as if we existed in a suspended state -- working hard, but behind-the-scenes -- developing plans, writing grant proposals, sorting piles of files. Construction preliminaries at our two off-shore lighthouses meant tours to both Race Rock and Ledge were paused for the season -- a disappointment all-round. Maintenance at the museum was put off, too, as we work towards the ultimate goal of replacing of the roof.

At the Custom House the *Briney Bank Border* -- a garden alongside the museum -- baked to a crisp, while I worked from home much of the summer following a surgery. In truth, my absence was not all-bad. Our docents stepped forward and ran the day-to-day show with fantastic success! We have a super capable team -- friendly, funny, lovers-of-history all!

Now the season has turned and summer's plans are bearing fruit. A new cedar gate constructed by Arrow Fence was installed at the entrance to **Harbor Pequot Lighthouse**. This gate, a lighthouse brochure, and bronze entrance sign are all thanks to a gift from a steady supporter of NLMS, **Louise Novitch**. In September, an anonymous lighthouse lover sponsored **ServPro of New London** for six hours of intensive cleaning at **Race Rock** -- something we haven't been able to do since receiving the light ten years ago. The rusting railing at Race was measured; we hope to have a replacement constructed on-shore this winter and installed in 2025. And after decades of deferred maintenance, some serious restoration work has commenced at **Ledge Lighthouse**. There's a cost overrun with no time to spare, so we've established a **Go Fund Me** campaign to garner support. Please help!

This fall we celebrated **Lafayette** (in song!) on the 100th anniversary of his return to the US. Author **Winsome Bingham** and historian **Manisha Sinha** both spoke out about the importance of voting. We were proud to host them. It is our 16th year presenting **Local History & Landmarks** to New London's third graders. There's **Jibboom, Open Mic**, and lots more music. Our **2024 Annual Meeting** takes place Saturday, December 7, followed by a new tradition: **Tubas at the Custom House -- A Holiday Singalong**, which was so much fun last year. **Harbor Light tours** continue year-round. Tickets still just \$5 for New Londoners.

The life of a museum worker is essentially one of service. The NLMS trustees, docents, volunteers and I are here for you, and wish you all *Happy Holidays*.

--Susan





■ **JIBBOOM CLUB #1**, meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 1:30 PM. Join us for a talk, good company, coffee & cookies. Sponsored by the Maco Family Fund, the gatherings are FREE and open to all. **November 19, December 17, winter break January-February.**



### special events - community case, music, the annual meeting, & tubas!

on view through December 8

■ **Community Cases - Richard Stremme: The Scrimshaw/Tattoo Connection**  
Educator and tattoo artist Richard Stremme's collection illustrates the connection between/and origins of American scrimshaw and hand poke tattoo.

*Photo, below: Sailor made objects, including: decorated hooks, needle cases, pulleys, baleen and ivory awl, mustache brush, charm bracelet and fraternal medalion composed of both whale and walrus ivory.*

■ **JIBBOOM Club #1 with Captain Greg DeBrule.** Greg owns **Black Hawk Fishing**, in Niantic, and will talk about his life on the water. The event is FREE and open to all. Please come and bring a friend. Sponsored by the Maco Family Fund. **Tuesday, November 19, 1:30 PM**

■ **Open Mic at the Museum**, meets from 6-9 PM the last Sunday of the month: Share your original music, poetry, prose, stand-up, or just say what is on your mind. Open Mic welcomes performers of all kinds. *You never know who will show up!* Perform, or just enjoy. By donation. **November 24, December 29, January 26.**

■ **NLMS Annual Meeting (followed by Tubas at the Custom House - our Annual Winter Celebration)** Hear What's Up, vote on NLMS trustees, eat cake! **Saturday, December 7, at 2:30 PM.**

■ **Tubas at the Custom House - our Annual Winter Celebration -- it's a Holiday Sing-a-long, with tubas!** Admission by donation. **Saturday, December 7 at 4 PM.**



Be the first to know - sign up for weekly email news blasts: [nlmaritimedirector@gmail.com](mailto:nlmaritimedirector@gmail.com)

The Custom House Maritime Museum - your local, independent, community museum - open year-round - telling the stories of New London's waterfront!





## Support Urgent Repairs for Ledge Lighthouse!

Iconic landmark, New London Ledge Lighthouse, is getting some long-overdue attention. Initial work on Ledge Lighthouse began in October, funded with grants obtained by the Ledge Light Foundation. Having opened up one wall, it appears the conditions are a bit more serious than initially thought. Built in 1909, the structure's interior steel beams have rusted, the expanded metal pushing against the bricks, causing cracks in the exterior that are letting water in! We must replace the rusted iron beam and fix the worst exterior cracks. But because the damage is so serious, the costs now are estimated to run \$25,000 over budget. Additional repairs must be made right now while the wall is open.



Scan to donate to NLMS's fundraiser: "Support Urgent Repairs for Ledge Lighthouse" or mail a check to NLMS-LL, 150 Bank Street, New London, CT 06320. Thanks!



■ **Climb HARBOR LIGHTHOUSE year-round.** The views at the top are spectacular! We meet at the lighthouse, then climb 116 steps to the lantern room – the oldest and the tallest lighthouse on Long Island Sound. Sign up online at <https://bpt.me/6299893>; or send an email to schedule your tour: [nlmaritimedirector@gmail.com](mailto:nlmaritimedirector@gmail.com). *Photo, left: Christina Corcoran.*

Through December, thanks to grants from both Veolia/New London Water Authority and Chelsea Groton Foundation, visits to Harbor Light are just \$5 for New Londoners.



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, & 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

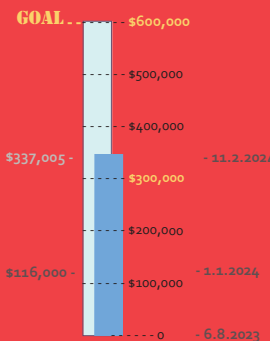
**N.L.M.S.**

I'm donating \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Custom House. \_\_\_\_\_ Contact me about leaving a legacy.



## A NEW ROOF FOR NEW LONDON'S 1833 CUSTOM HOUSE MUSEUM!

New London Maritime Society's 40th Anniversary Campaign



New London's beloved 1833 Custom House is under siege from relentless leaks in the roof and interior gutters. Recent repairs have stemmed the leaks, but the current metal roof is worn beyond repair, exacerbated by climate change.

Replacing the Custom House roof will cost \$600,000+. Please make a 100% tax deductible donation to **NLMS's 40th anniversary New Roof Fund**.

The New London Maritime Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, tax ID # 061086688.

Thanks to two generous grants from the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund, and to your welcome contributions, we're already halfway there!

Visit the Custom House MUSEUM Gift SHOP

Our MUSEUM SHOP offers all kinds of unique gifts. We also have an extensive selection of books on maritime, local history, Freedom, and lighthouse topics.

Our gifts have an extra feel good factor: when you shop with us, your purchases support the museum exhibitions & educational programs. Photo: whale bath mat.



[nlmaritimesociety.org](http://nlmaritimesociety.org)  
local friendly authentic



We thank our partners & sponsors - Anthony and Elizabeth Enders Fund - Charter Oak Credit Union - Chelsea Groton Foundation - Community Foundation of Eastern CT - Frank Loomis Palmer Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee - Kozmik Music Services - LLoyd Beachy - Ludwick Family Foundation - Maco Family Fund - Louise Novitch - Robinson+Cole - Veolia/NL Water Authority - Yankee Remodeler. *Thank you, all!* Photo, below: Third-grade students visit the Custom House with NLMS's Local-History & Landmarks program.

