

custom house

MARITIMES

AUTUMN 2011



Students in an English as a Second Language class visit the Custom House Maritime Museum.

ONE BIG TABLE

It's easy to forget that the New London Maritime Society sits within an active Homeland Security site. Robert Mills's custom house contains not only the maritime museum, but also the longest continuously-operating U.S. Customs Service office in the country. (Yes, even longer than New Bedford, despite their claims to the contrary.) Our customs connection is a fact lost on many visitors, who have little-to-no personal experience with the service. One group that *does* understand are recent immigrants to this country, like the English as a Second Language class pictured above. Here at the Custom House, we appreciate our U. S. Customs connection, just as we appreciate our newest arrivals to the City.

Join us, Friday, November 11, at 6 o'clock PM, when **One Big Table**, the multimedia initiative dedicated to identifying, collecting, preserving and celebrating American recipes and food stories teams up with the New London Maritime Society for a meal that tells the story of Maritime New London. Curated by **Molly O'Neill**, long-time *New York Times* Columnist and founder of One Big Table, the menu is drawn from the family archives of New London denizens ranging from the earliest Yankee Maritime settlers to the Portuguese, Italian, Irish, Dominican, and African peoples who have worked the water -- and the local home kitchens. Sponsored by the Enders Fund, the event is a fund-raiser for the Custom House. Tickets are a \$75 donation; a \$100 donation includes Molly's new book *One Big Table* (a \$50 value), which she will autograph that evening. For reservations, call 860-447-2501 or email nlmaritimedirector@gmail.com. The dinner is absolutely limited to 45.

Already we have some great recipes & the stories that go with them: from the son of Lucille Showalter, the museum's founder, we have *Plum Duff*--a favorite of New London's whalers; from Amistad America's Donald George, who-like the Amistad captives-is from the region of what's now Sierra Leone, we have *Peanut Butter Soup*; from Chip Anderson, the grandson of a pillar of the former Mariners Savings Bank, we have *Grandma Anderson's Snow Pudding*--a dish the family prepares for every family wedding. Charles Van Over, the scholar and brick oven baker is interpreting breads from a variety of these ethnic groups, while Elisa Giommi of Mangetout will be working with recipes collected by One Big Table to create contemporary versions of some of the finest dishes in Maritime New England. Additional dinner details will be posted on the Custom House Web site as they develop: www.nlmartimesociety.org.

April through December, the Custom House is open Tuesday through Sunday (closed Monday), from 1 to 5 PM. January through March, our hours are Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday from 1 to 5 PM, or by appointment. New London Maritime Society, Custom House Maritime Museum, 150 Bank Street, New London, Connecticut, 860-447-2501

upcoming events

NOVEMBER

11 One Big Table: New London Feast with Molly O'Neill

13 Annual Meeting

14 Art of The Ask workshop

22 Jibboom Club GAM

DECEMBER

3 Winter Celebration



In October, Molly O'Neill visited the Custom House to start work on her One Big Table New London heritage event. Above, George Spreccace helps Molly unload copies of her book. The dinner takes place November 11, 2011.

NEW LONDON MARITIME SOCIETY

President's Report to the Membership

Members and Friends:

This will be brief, deferring to the Annual Meeting to be held on Sunday, November 13, 2-4PM at the Custom House in New London.

PLEASE ATTEND.

This year, 2011, has been very eventful and successful for our organization...both in terms of internal organization and in external impact on the cultural life of this community. We are all about cooperation and collaboration with other similar organizations, while always maintaining our own personal identity. We have been especially successful in our outreach to the schoolchildren of the area, in the attention and tangible support we have received from the community in our role as a community museum, and in our efforts to bring attention to the special role that lighthouses play in the fabric of American society. Regarding the latter initiative, one foreign visitor made the pithy observation that, in this maritime nation, lighthouses play the same role for us that castles and cathedrals play in Europe.

All of this has been largely thanks to our dynamo-Director, Susan Tamulevich, and to our increasingly involved members of the Board of Trustees. My personal thanks to you all.

On another personal note, if I were to be re-elected next month and again next November, it would allow me to complete five years of service that should consolidate our organizational gains. Of course, that choice is entirely yours to make. SEE YOU AT THE ANNUAL MEETING.

George A. Spreccace, M.D., J.D., President



Nathan Hale's 4th-grade Lighthouse Kids visited the New London Harbor Light in early October.

NLMS Annual Winter Celebration

Join us December 3 at 6 o'clock for cookies, hot cocoa, & song as the New London Maritime Society welcomes winter with a festive family concert featuring Tom Callinan, Connecticut's first Official State Troubadour.

Tom will perform an eclectic mix of original and traditional nautical and New London-related songs, as well as holiday favorites. Marking the two-decade milestone of his being dubbed State Troubadour, this evening, Tom will release his 14th and 15th albums: 'Commemorations' [People, Places, & Things Worth Knowing About], and 'I'll Take New England Any Day'. Songs include *The New London Ledge-Light*, *Thanks To Wyland*, *The Battle Of Stonington*, *Christmas On The Shoreline*, *In Search Of THE WHALE*, and *Long Island Sound's Good To Me*, among others.

And don't miss our special holiday lighthouse lights display!



In January we will present the work of Anne Kubitsky.

GRAYCIE'S CATCH

A STORY ABOUT GRATITUDE, CONSERVATION, & WAYS TO HELP

Opening at the Custom House after the holidays. Watch for Anne's enrichment workshops for youth, ages 10 to 12.

News From the Frank L. McGuire Maritime Library

The recent installation of a new computer in the Frank L. McGuire Maritime Library is cause for celebration on two counts: not only will we have quick access to the wealth of maritime and bibliographic information available through the Internet, but for the first time we can read our microfilm records of New London's 19th century customs collectors. An 'Image-Mouse' microfilm reader-printer, in tandem with the computer, is poised to serve as a window into these detailed chronological records, obtained some years ago from the National Archives center in Waltham, MA. After a little practice with the system, and relocation of the microfilm collection to the Customs Office across the hall from the library, we will be able to welcome researchers who wish to look at these handwritten records of ship manifests and other customs-related documents originating in New London. More details on the new service will be announced in coming weeks.

Since our last report, the cataloging backlog of gifts and purchases has been steadily reduced by library volunteer Laurie Deredita. For the past year and a half Laurie has been adding our holdings to the statewide online library catalog, "iConn," an information resource available to anyone who has a borrower card issued by a Connecticut public library. After some technical problems are resolved on our behalf by the administrators of iConn, Laurie will then begin to enter into the catalog the more than two hundred books and pamphlets that she has identified as unique to our library. The inclusion of these uncommon materials in the statewide catalog will greatly enhance our value as an information resource for all of Connecticut.

Another library volunteer, Carol Rogers, has been sorting the papers and clippings we've been receiving in installments from Archibald Chester, a long-time participant in the work of the Custom House Maritime Museum. The subjects of Archie's papers and clippings reflect his wide-ranging maritime interests, some of which date back to the days when he kept an old-fashioned scrapbook. The largest concentration of material to date pertains to submarines and the Electric Boat Company. Once the papers and clippings are arranged we will prepare a Finding Aid that outlines their subject matter for the benefit of future readers.

The Frank L. McGuire Maritime Library will be open weekdays (except Monday) by appointment as of Tuesday, April 5. Researchers, readers and browsers are most welcome. Please call Brian Rogers at (860) 572-0291 to discuss your interests and make an appointment.



Brian Rogers, Librarian

Brian Rogers demonstrates the Image Mouse.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- November 11 Friday, 6-8 PM, One Big Table - A New London Feast, with Molly O'Neill, fund-raiser; dinner ticket is \$75, \$100 includes book.
- November 13 Sunday, 2-4 PM, NLMS Annual Meeting, *FREE* for members, \$8 all others.
- November 14 Monday, 9 AM-noon, *Art of The Ask* - a skill-building workshop with Harriet Grayson, \$65.
- December 3, 6 PM, Winter Celebration with Tom Callinan. Join us for cookies, songs & good cheer. *FREE* for members, \$8 all others.

EVERY MONTH

- Third Tuesdays, 1-4 PM, Jibboom Club #1 Gams - Reviving Jibboom Club #1 with maritime talk, good friends & cookies.
- Wednesday, 5-6 PM, catch our TV show *CUSTOM HOUSE MARITIME MATTERS*, on New London Metrocast cable, channel 25.

Director's Report

Every year at the museum feels like a new ball game. We have rallied and worked together. Change is hard, but together we have welcomed change, experimentation, controversy, hard work, and somehow—even after having endured the limit-stretching activities of July's Lighthouse Weekend—we are undaunted. In fact, I have never seen the museum—and by that I mean all of you—happier or more full of enthusiasm. Good work, good press, good vibes—it really makes a difference!

We have forged strong relationships with organizations throughout the region. July's multi-faceted *Sentinels on the Sound - Celebration of New London's Lighthouse Heritage* showed how well we can organize on a broad, regional level. One year after taking on New London Harbor Light, we have established a new focus at the museum. The next step, working with state offices, is to create a Connecticut Lighthouse Trail, with New London at its hub.

I am extremely proud of our year-old *Lighthouse Kids* program, in which we work with teacher Jody Barthel, the New London Public Schools, and this year also with Fishers Island School. Having young students at the museum has infused this place with a wholly different energy, and I see its effects every day out in the community. Providing enrichment in the sciences, math, art and local history, *Lighthouse Kids* is something that deserves to grow; the program is developing our future cultural stewards! The *Lighthouse Kids Sea Shanty Chorus* is a positive example of New London youth the entire City can take pride in.

The Amistad story remains a primary story at the Custom House. Last year we became the first Connecticut site on the national Network to Freedom; this year we became members of the Connecticut Freedom Trail Committee. The Custom House was one of only six Freedom Trail sites featured by New Haven's International Festival of Arts & Ideas *Freedom's Journey: Poetic Reflections on African-American Legacies* last June.

The Amistad, Sentinels on the Sound, and Customs Office exhibitions are all being revamped, with plans for a New London Harbor Time Line exhibition well underway. After a long series of preliminary steps, this year, the collections are finally getting proper attention. Librarian Brian Rogers and Collections Manager Rob Bowman are working to get more of our collections and library holdings online through our website. The website, itself, has gotten some attention. Watch a short video about it at www.connecticutgetonline.com/success#%21505065.

All this work is done by our very dedicated & flexible volunteers--Brandy, Eleanor, Ivan, Carol, Brian, Tom, Mariea--some whom have carved out niches in which they—and we—can flourish. But we have another category of solid long-term volunteers upon whom the basic workings of the museum hangs: head docent Bill LaRoue is first in this category; he is the public face of the museum. And there is Archie Chester, Rob Pittaway, Russ DeMarco, and John Desjardins who are reliably on the job every week, each with their specialty! Alice Houston regularly steps in with a brilliant idea or key introduction. Carolyn Leuze and Vinnie Belbruno are cheerful workers, always ready to pitch in—and they cook!

Our trustees have stepped up in major ways: Morgan McGinley with the sponsors, Jennifer Hillhouse with events like TagSale@SailFest & our trip to Salem, Rob Groves with the lighthouse window displays. Thanks to John Johnson, we hosted a whaling exhibition from the New Bedford Whaling Museum this fall. New trustees Dan Danielsen and Jim Fleishell are bringing new faces to our events and needed expertise to our problems. At a distance honorary trustees like Elizabeth Enders, Richard Salews, and George White are always willing to pitch in.

Somehow, things keep veering towards the positive, and for that I thank you all!

Susan Tamulevich



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___ 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 (NLMS) mission is to preserve New London's U.S. Custom House and Harbor Light and promote & interpret the maritime history of the port of New London and the surrounding region through museum exhibitions and educational programs.

150 Bank Street, New London, Connecticut 06320, 860-447-2501

Thank you to our Members/Donors/Volunteers/Awards - since May, 2011 🐟

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