

# custom house

## MARITIMES

SPRING 2010



The *Amistad* entering Havana on March 26, 2010. photo: ©2010 Wojtek (Voytec) Wacowski

## Retracing the original 1839 voyage, the *Amistad* Sails to New London on May 20 *New Amistad Exhibition on view at the Custom House*

Join us, May 20 through 22, for **Amistad: Revolt to Freedom**, a three-day celebration presented in partnership with **Amistad America, Kente Cultural Center, Provenance Center, & the City of New London**. As you may know, the original *La Amistad* was a Cuban ship that sailed from Havana in 1839 on the voyage that gave rise to the famous U.S. Supreme Court case – the first such case to set African captives free.

On May 20, the schooner *Amistad* will sail into New London harbor, marking the end of its historic recreation of *La Amistad's* original 1839 sail from Havana, Cuba to New London, Connecticut. The story of the *Amistad* is always a good one for us to remember: New London is the only American port to which *La Amistad* ever sailed; it is where a New London abolitionist first spoke up in defense of the ship's captives, and New London's U.S. Custom House is where, ultimately, the ship & its cargo were auctioned after the conclusion of the trial. The moral here: small players can have a profound effect.

We are extremely fortunate to have received a generous, near-\$10,000 grant from the **Connecticut Humanities Council** to install an award-winning *Amistad* exhibition created by the **Connecticut Historical Society**, and which we just brought back from a month-long installation at **United Nations** headquarters in New York City. The UN visit was a special, celebratory pause between the exhibition's first home in Hartford, and its final home: New London's Custom House Maritime Museum. We are very pleased to announce that renowned British historian **James Walvin**, of the University of York, will be our guest speaker at the opening event on May 20. His talk will be 'Why we should remember - and honor - the *Amistad*'.

See the full event details at [www.nlmaritimesociety.org](http://www.nlmaritimesociety.org)

April through December, the Custom House is open Tuesday through Sunday (closed Monday), from 1 to 5 PM.

### special events

#### MAY

20-22 *Amistad: Revolt to Freedom*

22 Chowda' Fest & Silent Auction

23 *Squalus* Memorial

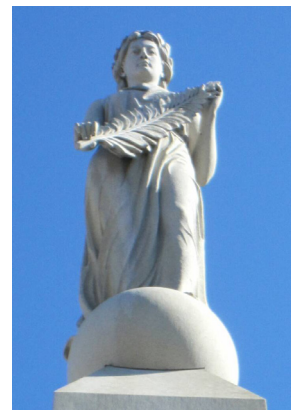
#### JUNE

4 'Love is...' Cabaret

5 *Parade Parade*

#### JULY

3 Benedict Arnold!



## President's Report to the Membership NEW LONDON MARITIME SOCIETY

Greetings, and thank you for your loyalty to and interest in the activities of the Custom House Maritime Museum. I have good news...and better news.

The good news is that, in contrast to the experience of many museums in the country (described in *Museums Magazine* recently as "Annus Horribilis"), 2009 was a good year for us. Were these large and famous institutions too dependent on the income from their large and famous endowments to run a tight ship? Here we live close to the soil and the sea, dependent on our own efforts and our own "esprit d'corps". Thus, we did not eliminate exhibits or reduce staff... "mothball the museum". On the contrary, and thanks to the excellent efforts of Susan Tamulevich and of our revitalized Trustees, we increased the number and quality of our programs and exhibits. By maintaining a tight Operating Budget, thanks to John Desjardins, and by using "sweat equity" and a sense of individual ownership in the organization, we have enhanced our position in and attractiveness to the community at large.

The better news is that we are well-positioned to have a banner year in 2010. Some of our 2010 major attractions include:

- The opening of a new *Amistad* exhibit at the United Nations Building in New York City on March 24, then at the Custom House on May 20 with arrival here of the *Amistad* from its trip to Cuba;
- Our 2nd annual Chowda' Fest & Silent Auction, celebrating National Maritime Day, on Saturday May 22;
- A remembrance of The *Squalus* Tragedy on May 23;
- Dedication of the Parade in New London on June 5, a Cabaret evening June 5 at the Custom House, & exhibits on the Parade and the Work Vessels for Veterans organization;
- A Benedict Arnold performance on July 3;
- Sail Fest on July 10 & 11;
- An encore performance by John Mock on August 1;
- A possible bus trip to the South Street Seaport Museum this summer;
- And a 250th anniversary celebration of New London Harbor Lighthouse and of our stewardship of that great site.

We are working to enhance our accommodations for the expected greater number of members and visitors at these events. AND WE NEED INDIVIDUAL HELP FROM YOU, OUR MEMBERS, FOR THESE EVENTS. Please contact Susan to offer your services before and during the events of your choice. In addition, PLEASE SEE THE NLMS 2010 PROJECT LIST of interesting assignments for which we need personal help from you, our greatest fans.

Please accept my personal thanks for your agreement to volunteer. Your organization is entering a vibrant period of growth and contribution to the cultural life of this region...but only with your help.

George A. Sprecace, M.D., J.D., President and Board Chairman



### COMMEMORATING THE HEROIC RESCUE OF THE U.S.S. SQUALUS *Exhibition on view through May 23*

Every day, driving past the 1895 Soldiers and Sailors' Monument on the Parade, looking out beyond the train station to the waterfront, one is reminded of New Londoners' close associations with the sea and consequent ties to each other.

A case in point is our new exhibition, *Commemorating the Heroic Rescue of the U.S.S. Squalus*. The show was suggested by **Brian McCarthy**, who years before, was moved by a talk at the Custom House by the last survivor of the *Squalus* disaster, **Carl Bryson** of New London.

This year, the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the *Squalus*, Brian wished to keep Carl's story of that heroic rescue alive. Working with volunteer **Tobey Leske**, (who took on the role of exhibition curator), Brian rounded up objects related to the event: **Allyn Donath**, Carl Bryson's daughter, loaned her father's Naval cap, hand-written memoir, and photographs; collector **Ed Uditis** had a *Squalus* 70th-anniversary commemorative dive helmet and several submarine artifacts; diver **Jay Kane** produced a full Mark V deep-sea dive suit. Brian, himself, contributed a *Squalus* model, sub-rescue flag and other artifacts. NLMS trustee **Jim Reyburn** wrote the wall text.

Visitors to the exhibit these past weeks have told stories--some personal, some gleaned from readings--about Carl, the *Squalus* and submarine life. One Navy diver stopped in to show us his tattoo. Others remembered Carl out at local dances with his good friend, Frenchie. It's with exhibitions such as this, drawn from the community, we're reminded of our many unseen maritime connections among us all.

Susan Tamulevich, director



Seeing our deep-sea helmet in the window, a Navy diver stopped in to show us his!

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS & Event Highlights

**Commemorating the Heroic Rescuer of the USS SQUALUS & Tribute to Carl Bryson** - through May 23. A 70th anniversary remembrance of the *the* sinking and never-before attempted rescue in 1939 of 33 crew members of a submarine; and to one survivor: Carl Bryson of NL.

**Working Vessels for Veterans** - The story of a Noank charity - Opens May 29, 2010.

**New London's Front Door: THE PARADE** - Opens June 5, 2010.

MAY

**12 Oyster Trip 10AM to 5 PM** See aquaculturist **Don Bell's** collection of all things Oyster and hear **John M. Kochiss**, author of *Oystering from New York to Boston*, on this special oyster excursion. Call to register: 860-447-2501. Fee \$35, \$25 for members.

**14 Cribbage Fridays, two sessions: 1-3 and 6:30-8:30 PM.** Beginners welcome. FREE for members, \$3 all others.

**20 Opening 'Amistad: A True Story of Freedom';** reception for **Amistad America**; & presentation by historian **James Walvin**, University of York: 'Why we should remember - and honor - the Amistad'. **6 to 9 PM.** Space limited. Call for reservations: 860-447-2501.

**22 2nd Annual Chowda' Fest & Silent Auction** in honor of **National Maritime Day. Noon to 2:30 PM** outside under the Custom House tent. Tickets \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door, children age 12 and under \$5.

JUNE

**1 FIRST TUESDAY Heritage Workshop 6:30 PM. Tom Sanford** talks about paddling in sculls, canoes & kayaks. \$10, \$8 for members.

**5 Parade Parade 2:00 – 8:30 pm.** A Regional Celebration and Rededication of New London's historic Parade Plaza. Free at the Parade Plaza in downtown New London. Info: 860-447-9490.

**5 "Love Is..." Cabaret fundraiser** with singer, entertainer **Gary Baillargeon. 9 PM.** Music, desserts & wine prepared by *Just Desserts, etc.* Tickets \$35. Space limited. Call 860-447-2501 to reserve a table.

**11 Cribbage:** Two sessions 1:00—3:00 & 6:30—8:30 PM. Beginners welcome. *FREE* for members, \$3 all others.

**18 THIRD THURSDAY 6:30—8:00 PM.** \$8 suggested donation, FREE for members.

**11 Introduction to Cartooning Basics, 10:30 AM—NOON.** with graphic novelist Jon Buller. Ages 8—16. Fee: \$15. Materials included.

JULY

**3 Cartooning Workshop, 4 sessions July 3, 10, 17, 24, 10:30 AM—NOON.** with Jon Buller. Ages 8—16. Fee: \$45. Materials included.

**3 Rendezvous with Treason - 2 PM** - a dramatic interpretation of the lives of **Benedict Arnold**, our nation's most notorious traitor, and his accomplice in treason, **Major John Andre**. Tickets \$15. Space limited. Call 860-447-2501 to reserve your tickets.

**6 FIRST TUESDAY 6:30 - 7:30 PM Heritage Workshop.** \$10, \$8 for members.

**9 Cribbage: Two sessions 1:00—3:00 & 6:30—8:30 PM.** Beginners welcome. *FREE* for members, \$3 all others.

**15 THIRD THURSDAY 6:30 - 8 PM. Jim Gallagher** discusses Currach Construction, in advance of New London's Celts & Currachs event scheduled for Saturday August 28. \$8, *FREE* for members.

**22 Reception for Celtic fiddler Eileen Ivers.** See the Web site for details: [www.nlmaritimesociety.org](http://www.nlmaritimesociety.org).



I'M JOINING THE NEW LONDON MARITIME SOCIETY!



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

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

Individual \$25  Family \$35  Contributor \$50  Sponsor \$100  Patron \$1,000 - **Membership year begins May 1**

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 quarterly newsletter.

*The mission of the New London Maritime Society's (NLMS) Custom House Maritime Museum is to preserve New London's U.S. Custom House and Harbor Light & promote and 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, [nlmaritimemuseum@gmail.com](mailto:nlmaritimemuseum@gmail.com), [www.nlmaritimesociety.org](http://www.nlmaritimesociety.org)*

Come to the 2nd Annual *Chowda' Fest & Silent Auction* - right after the Hope Week Parade on Saturday, May 22 - National Maritime Day. Support the Custom House while sampling local restaurants' entries for best rendition of that hot, salty, delight known as Clam Chowder.



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- & special thanks to our wonderful volunteers!

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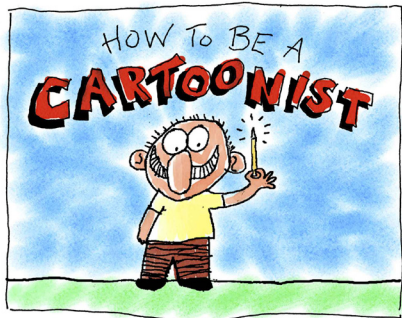
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In June & July, graphic novelist Jon Buller is back to teach an introductory class and an intensive series of four classes on cartooning. Ages 8 to 16. To register call 860-447-2501

Join us Saturday, July 3 for *Rendezvous with Treason* - a dramatic interpretation of the lives of Benedict Arnold, our nation's most notorious traitor, and his accomplice in treason, Major John Andre. Tickets \$15. Space limited. Call 860-447-2501.



Members/Donors since December '09

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

Below: waterside view of the US Custom House in 1877

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



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