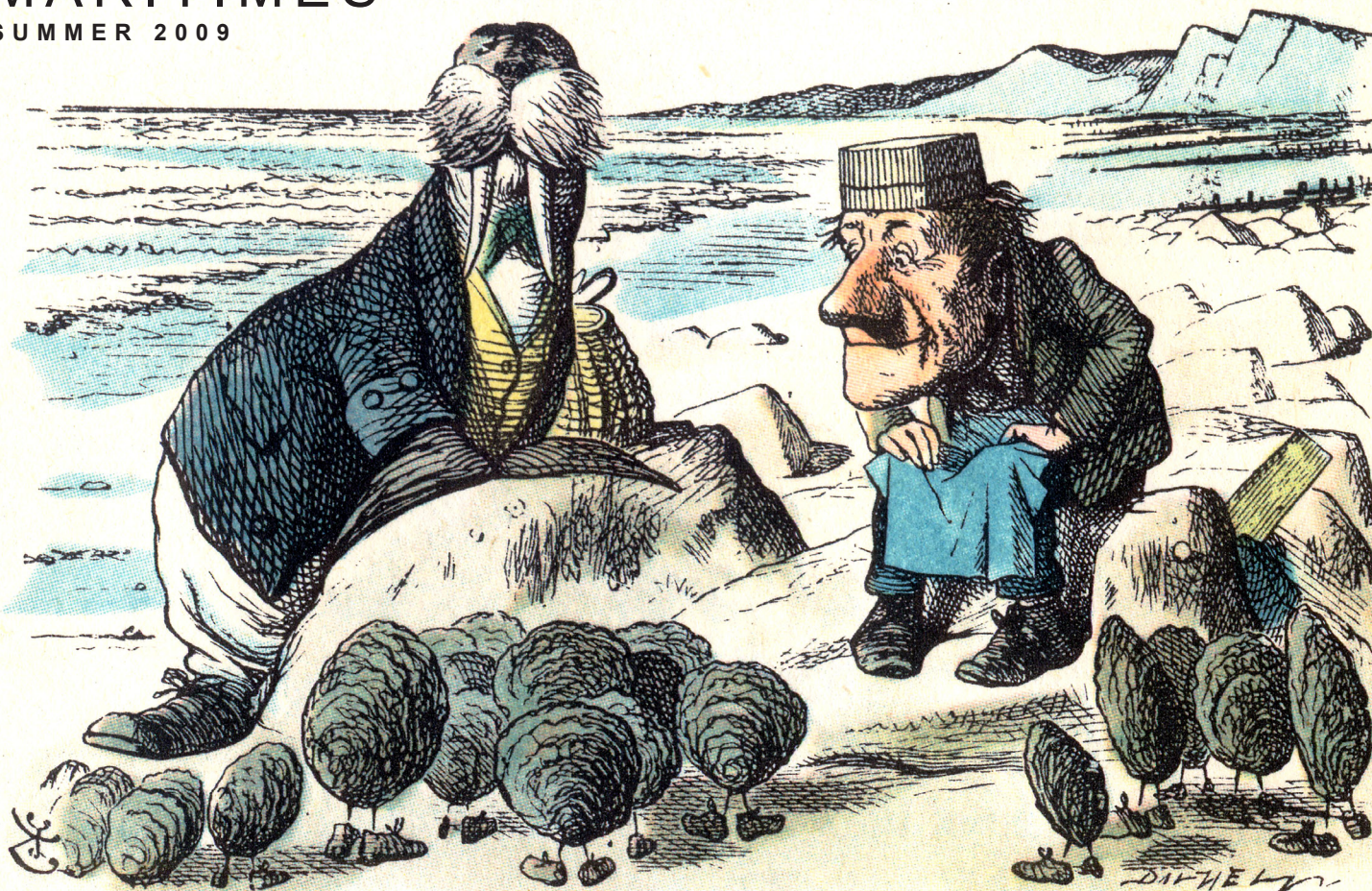


# custom house

## MARITIMES

SUMMER 2009



## THE AWESOME OYSTER

*on view September 12, 2009, through January 10, 2010*

What animal survives being frozen; changes gender several times in its lifetime; has no eyes, no ears, no head? Why it's the Oyster and it's awesome. What's more, it's also Connecticut's state mollusk! Based on a book by Penny Parsekian, and illustrated with artifacts on loan from Mystic Seaport and from our own collection, our new exhibition, **The Awesome Oyster**, opens September 12.

Also on view beginning in September is an exhibit culled from our library collection & archives and curated by library volunteer extraordinaire, Brian Rogers. **A MARITIME SAMPLER: Selections from the FRANK L. MCGUIRE LIBRARY** brings to light some of these rare & rarely-seen treasures.

We like to keep things interesting at the Custom House. In addition to special changing exhibitions, we hold classes (adult & youth), talks & the occasional symposium. We now rent our facilities for private parties (and have installed a small kitchen for caterers). We're always looking for new ways to keep up with the expense of maintaining a community museum so, beginning in July, we instituted a \$5 admission fee. Members, however, still visit for FREE.

Visit this month to see our current exhibitions: **Thomas Locker: Sea, Trees & Sky; Knots & Fancy Ropework: Alton C. Beaudoin Master of Knots;** and **53 Views of New London Harbor Light.**

Above and right : Tweedledum and Tweedledee, from *Through the Looking-Glass*, by Lewis Carroll, John Tennill illustrations colored by Fritz Kredel.

Find out more about our programs at [www.nlmaritimesociety.org](http://www.nlmaritimesociety.org).

### special events

#### AUGUST

30 Members Concert  
John Mock: *From the Shoreline*

#### SEPTEMBER

6 last day: Knots & Fancy Ropework;  
Thomas Locker: *Sea, Trees & Sky*

12 Exhibition openings:  
Awesome Oyster,  
Library Treasures





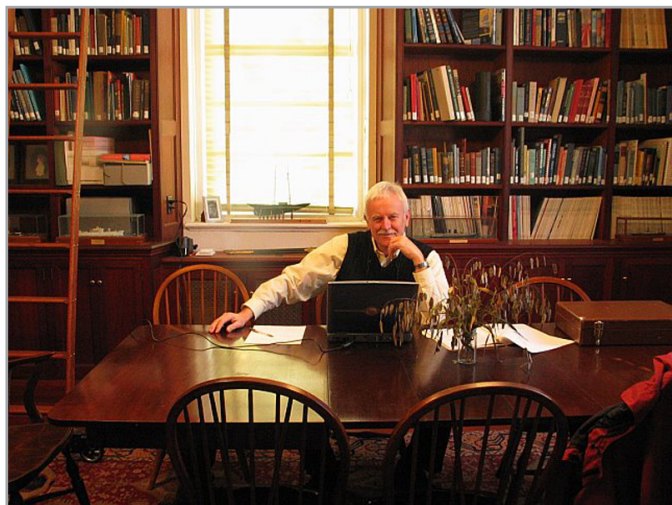
## from the PRESIDENT

AHOY THE SHORE. As all Trustees and all NLMS members know, my recent letters to them have stressed Board responsibilities and member opportunities in support of our “Gem On The Shoreline” and its many activities. Remember, as Gimbel’s said to Macy’s (or vice versa): “Fast nickels are as good as slow dollars.” And that includes personal participation. But I digress. The thrust of this report is the several important projects that we are working on at the Museum.

- We have obtained City funding to construct a handicap ramp from the courtyard into the lower level of the Museum building. Plans (by Roger Clements/Benjamin Martin) are done, bidding is in process, and construction should be completed by mid-October.
- We are actively marketing private rental opportunities for our unique museum spaces. Host a dinner in the cozy Jibboom Room; hold a seminar in the spacious Amistad Gallery. We’ve installed a kitchen and have an ongoing cooperative effort with a major local hotel.
- We are about to obtain on loan some of the fine large ship models crafted by Mr. Montesi and showcased at Lyman Allyn Museum.
- We are negotiating to use nearby store windows to showcase the museum, funded in part by a revitalization grant from Pfizer.
- We are negotiating with the Amistad America organization with the goal of closer and on-going cooperation.
- We are about to undertake stewardship of the historic New London Harbor Light on Pequot Avenue, with the cooperation of the neighbors and for the benefit of the Greater New London Area.
- All of this is in addition to the many excellent and regularly offered programs and exhibits at the Custom House Museum. Please remember to check our Web site for museum news & program updates: [www.nlmaritimesociety.org](http://www.nlmaritimesociety.org).

In conclusion, is there any other non-profit organization in the region that is doing a better job in behalf of the citizens of New London and the entire region? “Who loves ya, Baby?”

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



Several donations and bequests have recently expanded the scope and depth of the maritime history resources of the Custom House’s *Frank L. McGuire Library*. Much of the collection, which has been developing over the past ten years or more, is now listed in the iConn system operated by the Connecticut State Library. We will gradually be adding the new acquisitions to the listing as time and resources permit. Most of these have come as a gift of Robert Bachmann of Waterford, and from the estate of Dan Wolverton, a long-time supporter and volunteer at the Custom House. Other useful material has come from Jennifer Hillhouse and Roger Clements, both new volunteers. A major donor of books for several years prior to 2009 has been Archie Chester, who has enriched the collection with many important titles in memory of family members. Among the rarest materials in the Library are engravings of maritime New London in the 18th and 19th century from early newspapers, the gift of Elizabeth McGuire Enders.

The mission of the Library is to honor the memory of the late Frank L. McGuire, a founder of the New London Maritime Society, with a collection of books, available to the public for in-house use, that relate to the maritime history of New London and New England. These books are complemented by more general reference materials on ships, navigation, yachting, whaling, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard, U. S. Customs, and many other relevant topics.

Brian Rogers, Library Volunteer

## from the DIRECTOR

A primary responsibility of any museum is to safeguard its collections. This spring, we made great strides in accomplishing that goal thanks to a generous gift from Yale University Art Gallery of thirty beautiful oak collections storage cabinets. A host of hard-working volunteers and Coast Guard cadets reorganized and cleaned spaces in the museum’s two lower levels to make room. Rogovin Moving & Storage donated transporting the cabinets from New Haven. Board member Fred Calabretta oversaw the cataloging. Now, four months on, the museum collections finally are organized, stored and accessible in these cabinets, in a clean, dry, dedicated collections room. We’d like to especially thank Joe Branco and Richard Moore at Yale University, who started the ball rolling with their remarkable and much-appreciated gift.



This month, the New London Maritime Society receives an unusual gift: stewardship of **New London Harbor Light**, Connecticut’s oldest and tallest lighthouse, pursuant to provisions in the National Historic Preservation Act of 2000. The lighthouse is registered on the National Register of Historic Places. Supervised by the Coast Guard, it will continue to mark safe passage for ships off our shore. Thank you GSA and NPS! Watch our Web site for Lighthouse events!

Susan Tamulevich

## AUGUST

**17 Heritage Workshop 6:00—7:00 PM. 40 Years of Charter Boat Fishing.** Steven Basil, of Old Lyme, will tell about his 4 decades as a charter boat fisherman in Long Island Sound. He'll describe the fish found there & specific fishing techniques, and recount the many changes he has witnessed over the decades. Admission \$10, NLMS members \$8.

**20 Third Thursday 6:30—8:00 PM. Toshi Plays New London: A New Season for the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra.** Toshi-yuki (Toshi) Shimada, recently selected as the fifth music director of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, presents an inside look at his career, his vision for the ECSO, and the upcoming season. Stephan Tieszen, ECSO Concertmaster, will accompany Toshi and bring his 18th-century violin with him. Tickets are \$6; *FREE* for members.

**30 Members Appreciation Concert 4:00—5:00 PM. JOHN MOCK: From the Shoreline.** Renowned musician and photographer John Mock presents his unique multimedia maritime concert. Admission \$6; *FREE* for members.

## SEPTEMBER

**8 Heritage Workshop 6:00—7:00 PM. Patterns from the Past: Researching History with Paint Analysis.** John B. Vaughan, Principal of Architectural Conservation Services (ACS) of Bristol, RI, will discuss the field and laboratory methodology of paint analysis, drawing on examples from the three Robert Mills' Custom Houses in New Bedford, Newburyport, and New London. Admission \$10, NLMS members \$8.

**9 Adult class: Childrens Book Illustration Workshop,** with Jon Buller. Wednesdays, **September 9, 16, 23, 30, 6:30-8:30 PM.** Whether working to produce a book for your grandchildren or a portfolio to submit to a major publisher, you can hone your illustration skills at this four-session workshop. The goal is to complete a book dummy (picture/text layout of the story with rough sketches). You may illustrate your own idea or a classic nursery rhyme. Fee: \$60. To register call: 860-447-2501.

**10 Cribbage:** Two sessions 1:00—3:00 & 6:30—8:30 PM. Join our **Cribbage Thursdays**, held the 2nd Thursday of every month. Beginners welcome. *FREE* for members, \$3 all others.

**12 Exhibition Openings 6:00—8:00 PM.** Two special exhibitions: **THE AWESOME OYSTER**, in the Maritime Gallery, and **A MARITIME SAMPLER: Selections from the FRANK L. MCGUIRE LIBRARY** in the West Gallery. *FREE*.

**17 Third Thursday 6:30—8:00 PM. A Jibboom Roundtable: Oystering in Long Island Sound.** Join us for a lively discussion with area oyster farmers & chefs. Tickets are \$6; admission *FREE* for NLMS members.

**19 Youth Class: Introduction to Cartooning Basics. 10—11:30 AM.** Graphic novelist Jon Buller will teach an introductory workshop on Cartooning. Ages 8—16. Fee: \$15. Materials included. Call 860-447-2501 to register.

**19 Special event, Halfway to St. Patrick's Day, 12 noon—2:00 PM.** Join the Ancient Order of Hibernians to reflect on the visit of the Irish Training ship, *Asgard II*, to New London in 1985; look at the life of Irish-born Commodore John Barry, Father of the US Navy, (in keeping with the Maritime association of the John P. Holland Division, we will recognize the National AOH commemoration of John Barry Day--usually Sept. 13); and remember Robert Emmet, who in 1803 was hanged and decapitated in public view for physically objecting to the 1800 Act of Union, which forced Ireland to be totally ruled by England. *FREE* for Hibernians and NLMS members, \$5 all others.

**29 Youth Class: Cartooning Workshop. Tuesdays, October 20, 27, November 3, 10. 3:30—5:00 pm.** In this 4-session class, cartoonist Jon Buller teaches the techniques necessary to create a graphic novel. Class size is strictly limited to allow time for one-on-one direction. Ages 8-16. Fee:\$45, Materials included. Enrollment limited to 15 students. To register call: 860-447-2501.



I'M JOINING THE NEW LONDON MARITIME SOCIETY!



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☐ Individual \$25 ☐ Family \$35 ☐ Contributor \$50 ☐ Sponsor \$100 ☐ Patron \$1,000

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Benefits of membership include invitations to special events, discounts to educational programs and Museum Shop purchases, 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 to promote and interpret the maritime history of the port of New London and the surrounding region through museum exhibitions and educational programs.*



The winners of this year's **Reid MacCluggage Black History Award** have been announced. First prize went to **Martias L. Francone**, of East Lyme High School, for the novella, *Capt. Paul Cuffee*. The jurors found it "engaging" and "well-researched." Second prize was awarded to **Katie Todd**, of Montville High School, for her poem, *Arise Amistad*. The jurors commented the work was "powerful poetry" and that Katie had a "good ear for words." Congratulations!

Next spring, the *Amistad* will sail to Havana, Cuba, as an officially sponsored U.S. public diplomacy initiative. The *Amistad's* arrival will coincide with next year's **International Slavery Remembrance Day** (March 25, 2010), an annual event sponsored by the United Nations that recognizes the legacy of the Atlantic Slave Trade. The last segment of this tour will be when the ship retraces the original *Amistad's* 1839 voyage from Cuba to land in **New London** at the **Custom House** (tentatively in mid-May). Coinciding with the arrival, we are planning a series of special events including the opening of a new *Amistad* exhibition, donated to the museum by the Connecticut Historical Society. Call us if you'd like to help with the planning: 860-447-2501.



This March, we received an astounding bequest of \$100,000 from **Pauline Onyx**, a longtime member of the New London Maritime Society, who died in 2006. A computer programmer at the Navy Underwater Sound Lab, Pauline often bicycled from Waterford over to the Custom House Maritime Museum to attend programs.

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