

Channel Crossings

Vol. 1, No. 3

Winter 2005

Newsletter of the Los Angeles Maritime Museum, San Pedro California



U.S.S. Patoka and Airships

*The story of the Navy's
unique airship
support vessel*

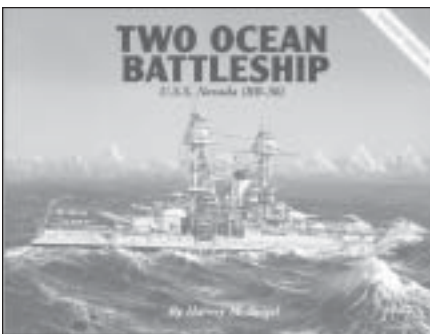
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U.S.S. Los Angeles Roundup

*CA-135 shipmates
gather at the
museum*

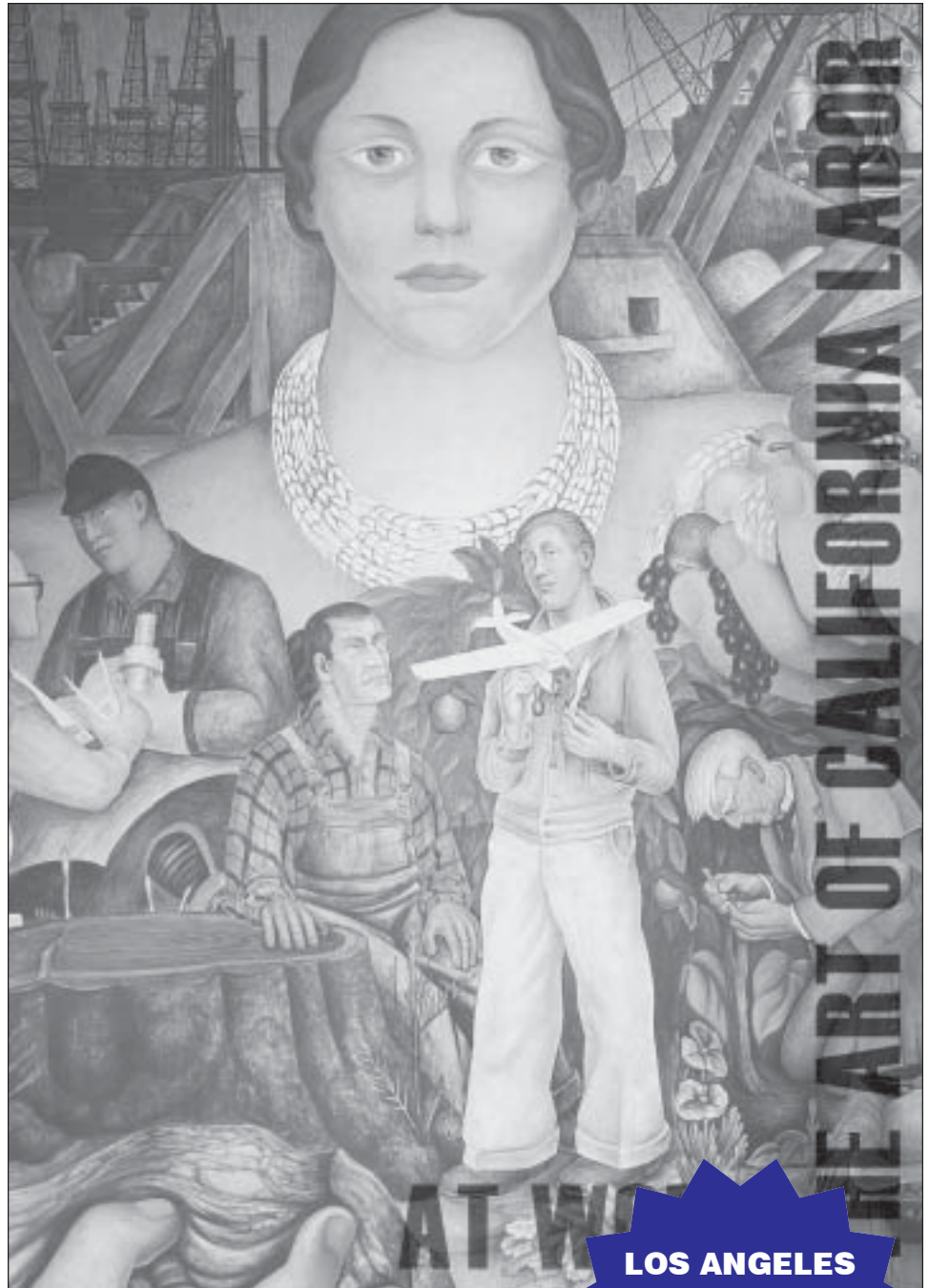
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The Sea Chest Gift Shop

*Two new books
featured in this
month's review*

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**'At Work: The Art
of California Labor'
Opens February 17**

**LOS ANGELES
MARITIME
MUSEUM
25th
Anniversary**



**Los Angeles
Maritime Museum
Channel Crossings**

Berth 84
Foot of Sixth Street
San Pedro, CA 90731
(310) 548-7618
www.lamaritimemuseum.org

Museum Hours:
Tuesday–Saturday
10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
(last entry 4:30 p.m.)
Sunday
12:00 noon–5:00 p.m.
Closed Mondays

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The Los Angeles Maritime Museum is a special facility of the City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks, operating with the financial assistance of the Los Angeles Maritime Museum Foundation, a 501(c)(3) corporation.

The Los Angeles Maritime Museum creates an awareness and appreciation of the maritime history of coastal California, with an emphasis on the contributions of the people and institutions of the port city of Los Angeles.

Director's Message

By Marifrances Trivelli

Happy New Year!

The start of a new year allows us take a cue from the Roman god Janus and look backward and forward at the same time. Looking backward, we realize that 2005 marks the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Los Angeles Maritime Museum!

In 1980, the beloved San Pedro ferry terminal was slated for demolition until the community rallied and a strong grassroots campaign saved the building. What happened next is a great example of what is commonly known in historic preservation circles as “adaptive reuse.”

The building's historic features were preserved, while the interior was renovated to become our museum. From the outside, little of the structure appears to have changed other than the name on the clock. But on the inside, the heavy foot traffic of ferry passengers has been replaced by the happy patter of young feet, traveling through the original waiting rooms, ramp, and queue areas now transformed into exhibition halls.

Looking forward, we realize that the children who came to see the new museum 25 years ago are now returning as parents, to discover maritime history all over again, and introduce it to their own young families.

Our collection of artifacts has grown from the initial transfer of items from the old Cabrillo Bathhouse to literally thousands of photographs, documents, and materials of everyday maritime life. While some old favorites remain, our changing exhibits attract new audiences. We are now able to use technology unknown to us 25 years ago to present more interactive exhibits, ones that will appeal to a variety of ages and interests.

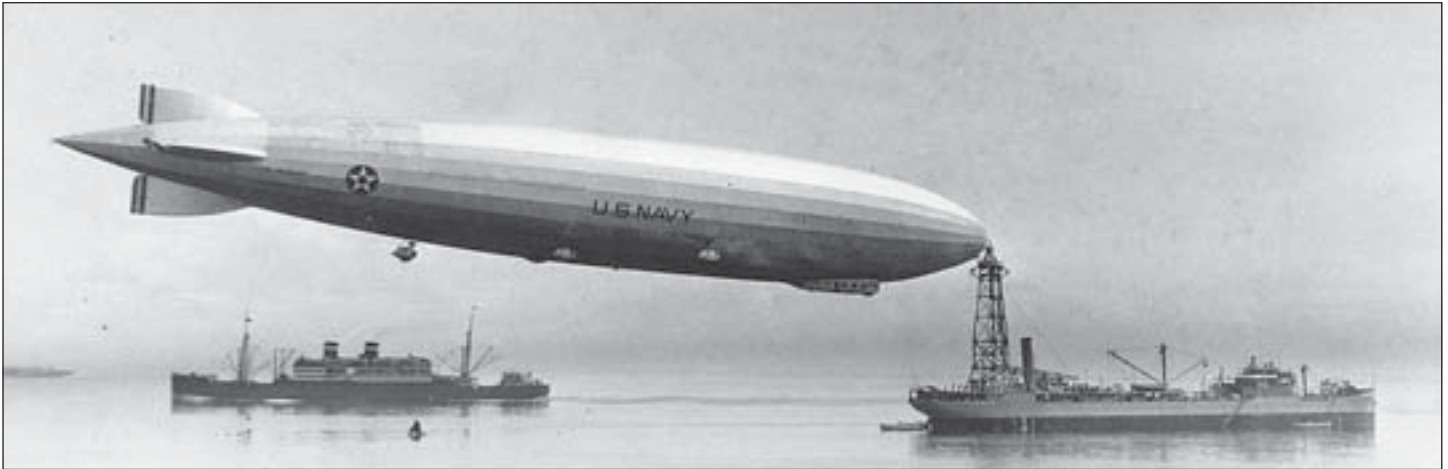
This year, we take our first step in this direction with the grand opening of our long-awaited commercial fishing exhibit. A permanent installation complete with hands-on activities, it will allow us to document the history of our local fleet and canneries in the most engaging way. For the first time, visitors will be able to access our rare audio recordings, film clips, and objects—to hear, see, touch, and even smell.

We've been gratified by the numerous donations in response to our community-wide search for fishing artifacts and photographs. In February, you will be able to see many of these items exhibited in our preview area prior to the formal opening of the exhibit scheduled for late 2005.

While all this is happening, the *Bridge to Breakwater* project is revitalizing our waterfront. When all is complete, the Museum will be the centerpiece of a “new town square” at Sixth and Harbor. Watch for future issues of *Channel Crossings* to keep updated as this exciting project progresses.

But in the midst of all of this activity, it's also a time to remember that our exhibits and outreach activities are only possible because of private donations and membership support. While we're pleased to report our membership numbers are increasing, it's always a good time to share this newsletter with friends or family who share your enthusiasm for the Maritime Museum. Encourage a friend to join today. Remember—there are plenty of exciting opportunities to support the Museum as we embark upon our next quarter-century.

Come grow with us!



Airship U.S.S. Los Angeles moored to U.S.S. Patoka. (Courtesy Naval Historical Center)

The U.S.S. PATOKA and the Navy's Airship Program

By Dennis Hagner

One of the problems facing a commander during war is determining the location and strength of the enemy. During the Battle of Jutland in World War I, the German Navy came close to losing its battle fleet when they inadvertently stumbled into the entire British Home Fleet.

After the war, the U.S. Navy turned to aircraft for fleet reconnaissance. Airplanes were one technology employed, but at that time they were fragile and of limited range. Therefore, the Navy investigated lighter-than-air craft, dirigibles (airships with a rigid structure), and blimps (smaller airships without a rigid structure) to fill this role. The story of the U.S.S. PATOKA played an important support role in the airship program, including West Coast operations.

Airships, especially dirigibles the larger of the two types, had longer ranges and greater endurance than the airplanes of the day. In the 1920s, the Navy commissioned the construction of four dirigibles to be evaluated as long range scouts to support the fleet.

Delivery of the four began in 1923 with the *U.S.S. Shenandoah* and continued through the 1920s and 1930s with the *U.S.S. Los Angeles*, *U.S.S. Akron*, and *U.S.S. Macon*. Dirigibles require special mooring equipment, so in 1924 the Navy modified the *U.S.S. Patoka* (AO-9), a navy oiler, to serve as the tender for the new dirigibles.

Built in 1919, the *Patoka* served as a Navy oiler in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Adriatic, during World War I and the early 1920s. She now was modified by installation of a distinctive mooring mast, 125 feet above the water; additional accommodations both for the air- and ground-crews of the dirigible; stowage for the helium, gasoline, and other supplies necessary to support the dirigible's operations with the fleet; as well as handling and stowage facilities for three seaplanes.

In 1924, the *Patoka* and *Shenandoah* reported to Commander Scouting Fleet to begin evaluation of Navy dirigibles for fleet reconnaissance. With the Scouting Fleet, the *Patoka*

served as the fleet base for the *Shenandoah* (1924-1925), the *Los Angeles* (1925-1932), and the *Akron* (1932).

During these years, most of the *Patoka's* service was in the Atlantic and Caribbean; however, in 1931, she traveled to the Pacific coast of Panama to support the *Los Angeles* in fleet exercises and in 1932, she traveled to the West Coast to support the *Akron* in her cross country flight and tour of the West Coast. During the 1932 tour, the *Patoka* and *Akron* called in southern California with the *Patoka* anchored at the Port of Los Angeles.

Improvement in durability and range of aircraft carrier based planes, and the loss of the *Shenandoah* over Ohio in 1925, the *Akron* off the New Jersey coast in 1933, and *Macon* off the central California coast in 1935 and the decommissioning of the *Los Angeles* in 1932, led the Navy to abandon the use of dirigibles by the mid 1930s.

While airplanes and aircraft carriers would fulfill the Navy's major air reconnaissance role in the coming war, airships continued in Navy service. Blimps performed anti-submarine patrols during World War II and served as early warning radar platforms into the 1950s. With the 1960s, the Navy retired its blimps, ending the era of Navy airships.

With the ending of dirigible use by the Navy, the *Patoka* was decommissioned in 1933. Recommissioned in 1939 as a seaplane tender (AV-5); her first port-of-call was San Pedro for fuel and oil.

Patoka served out World War II in both the Atlantic and Pacific as an oiler, stores ship and mincraft tender. She was decommissioned a second time, and stricken from the Navy List in 1946, being sold to Dulien Steel Products Company, Seattle for scrap in 1948.

However, the name *Patoka* continues in service being given to a Coast Guard river buoy tender based on the Mississippi River.

Dennis Hagner is a Marine Environmental Supervisor with the Port of Los Angeles, maritime historian, and member of the Museum's Foundation Board of Directors.

U.S.S. LOS ANGELES Shipmates Reunite at Museum

The Navy cruiser U.S.S. LOS ANGELES (CA-135) was a regular visitor to Los Angeles and Long Beach harbors during her 30-year career. Today, the ship's mast is a landmark in John S. Gibson Park and her former officers and crew have formed an association enjoying a close relationship with the Maritime Museum.

During the last weekend in October 2004, more than 70 Association members (many of whom are longtime members of the Museum) and their families gathered at the Maritime Museum for the weekend to renew friendships and raise funds for the museum.

The weekend's festivities began with a VIP reception in the Navy Hall, followed the next morning by a general meeting and membership drive. One of the most moving moments came when shipmates Bob Diyorio and Dutch Jordan presented the U.S.S. LOS ANGELES recommissioning flag to

the museum.

This flag had been kept for many years by the late Thomas McMullen, who, at the end of his life, urged Diyorio and Jordan to preserve the flag and find it a good home. They decided the Museum was to be the flag's permanent home and we are proud to receive this donation.

The rest of the afternoon saw shipmates and families enjoying a harbor cruise aboard ANGELS GATE tug and behind-the-scenes tours of the museum. The museum added 33 new members and received a donation of \$1,500 to pay for replacement flags on the mast and upkeep of the U.S.S. LOS ANGELES collection.

For more photos of roundup weekend and information about the U.S.S. LOS ANGELES CA-135 Association, see www.uss-la-ca135.org.



Shipmate Harry Thomas is captain for a day aboard ANGELS GATE.

TOP LEFT: Association President Jim Whitt (left) presents fellow shipmate Norman Booth a plaque in honor of his longtime support. (Harry Thomas photo)

BOTTOM LEFT: Museum Director Marifrances Trivelli receives the recommissioning flag from Bob Diyorio (center). Museum staff member Albert Alcalá is at right. (Harry Thomas photo)



U.S.S. Los Angeles (CA-135) was first commissioned in July 1945 and decommissioned in 1963.

'At Work: The Art of California Labor' Opens February 17

Together with the Harry Bridges Institute, we are pleased to present a new exhibit "At Work: The Art of California Labor." Museum and Institute members are cordially invited to attend the opening reception at the Museum on Thursday, February 17, at 7:00 p.m.

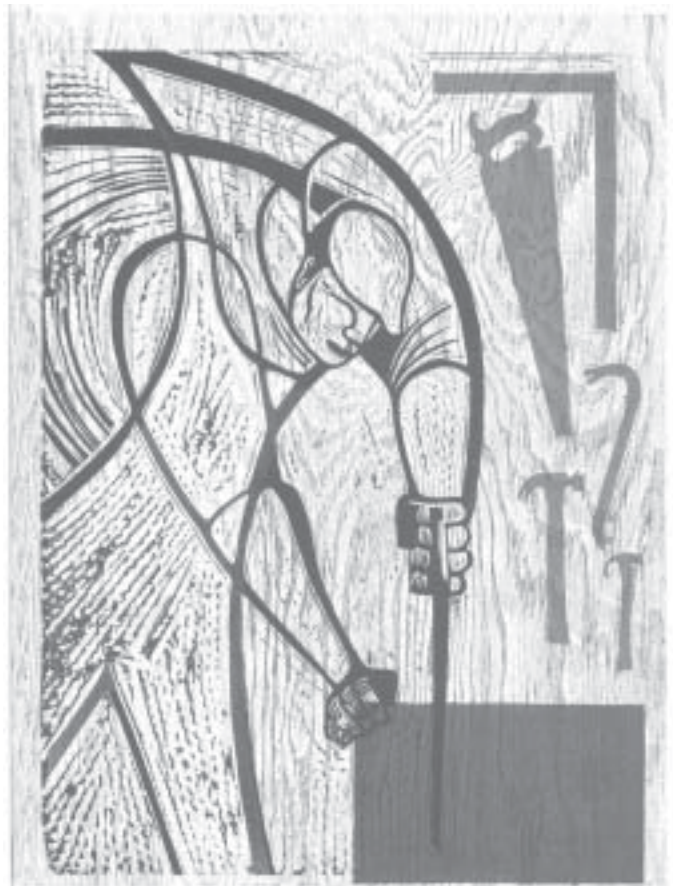
During the 20th century, California witnessed several pivotal events in labor history. At the same time, talented artists dedicated themselves to illustrating these struggles and triumphs through mediums such as photographs, prints, woodcuts, and murals.

The "At Work" exhibit will include works by Diego Rivera, Dorothea Lange, and Emmy Lou Packard, courtesy of the California Exhibition Resource Alliance, complemented by never-before exhibited photographs and paintings from the collections of the Maritime Museum and the Harry Bridges Institute. Our visitors will have a chance to experience these pieces not only for their artistic merit, but for what they can teach us about the history of labor in California.

A series of public programs will accompany the exhibit. Featured speakers will include Lauren Coodley, author of *Orange Groves and Jails: Upton Sinclair's California*, and Ian Ruskin performing his one-man interpretation of the life of Harry Bridges.

For information, visit www.lamaritimemuseum.org or www.harrybridges.com.

Major funding for "At Work" was generously provided by the James Irvine Foundation, The Walter and Elise Hass Fund, and San Francisco State University. The exhibit will run through mid-April.



"Carpenter" Emmy Lou Packard, 1950

Welcome New Members!

Douglas and Claire Addison	Austin and Violet Birzer	Jerry and Dorothy Sidwell
Louis and Suzanne Dominguez	Robin Booth	Harry and Faye Thomas
Linda Golden	Paul and Carol Close	Jerry and Reba Fox
C. Eugene Church	David J. Cochrane	Fred D. Jones
Bill Dahlquist	Bob and Barbara Diyorio	Darwin and Sue Jordan
James and Margaret Hastings	Bob Ellis	Bert and Billie McFadden
Janis L. Hatlestad	Howard Gentry	Tom Penderghast
Captain Frank and Emily Iacono	Joseph and Betty Katzer	Robert Rose
Raymond T. Kaiser	Donald Leach and Nancy Kolte	Bobby and Ardyth Rowell
Paul H. and Grace M. Nielsen	Robert and Ellie Mott	Dave Stone
Russell and June Olney	Robert and Wanda Schramm	John Pitts
Dottie Park		

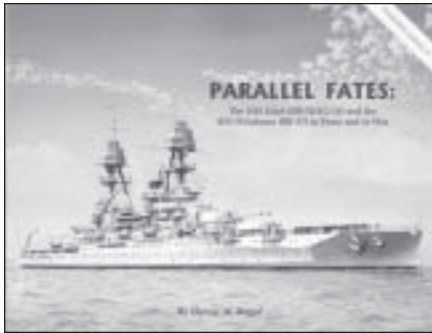
And thank you to those who have recently renewed their support ...

J. Peter Baumgartner	Jane Bartik	Harold Lee and Barbara Johnson
George Blahnik	Yanny Billing	Larry and Jean Lofthus
Sandra Forman	Donald J. Blain	Dr. Steven L. Mandel
Dr. Noah Modisett	Frank and Raquel Borden	Robert H. Martin
Kenneth Velten	David, Alice, and Denise Bryson	Caroline Medan
Harvey M. Beigel	Gwen Butterfield	Charles and Mary Meyer
Norman and Joyce Booth	Mark Clemente	Robert W. Morris
Edwin and Maureen Burt	Richard and Lois Corian	John A. and Janice Olsen
Captain Bill and Lori Catlett	Frank R. Dair	Edward S. Olson
Helen S. Darby	Robert Filter	Charles Orr
Neal Hudson	Donald and Gerri Flynn	Richard E. and Pat Paramore
Robert R. Johns	Captain E. Norman	Torrance and Tina Parker
Elvin D. Lytle	and Suzanne George	Glenn and Darlene Peasley
Richard and Anna Miller	Richard and Rachel Gladson	John R. Powell
J. Scott Rohrer	George S. Goodelle, Jr.	Bill Rankel
Captain John N. Ryan	Ben J. Halfon	Christine Rybak
Val and Sheri Schnabl	Charles Heil	Carl and Sue Schumacher
Joe and Fumi Senn	Tom and Dorothy Hollywood	Robert Schwemmer
Paul Shadle and Brigitte Arden	Paul O. Husebye	Les and Christine Strong
Milton and Bella Weiner	Robert L. Jones	Chris and Ellen Velline
Phil Wentz	Paul H. Keil	Gloria Wall
Richard W. and Yvetta A. Williams	Dorothy E. Kelly	Jack and Melissa Wall
Dale Thompson	Derek and Mary Ann Kendall	Ernie and Laura Weber
Anne A. Allen	Dale Kind	Marilyn J. Whelan
Sol Ayoob	Robert Kostrenich	Jim and Carolyn Whitt
Michael and Rebecca Barnes	Bunny L. Kussman	Jayme Wilson

What's New in the Sea Chest Gift Shop

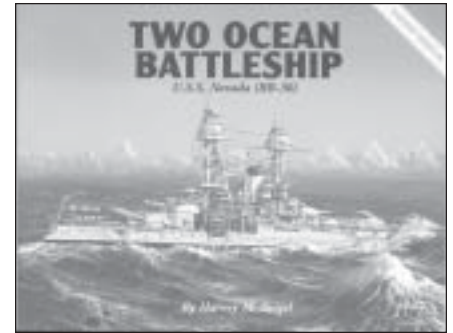
Local author and historian Harvey M. Beigel has just produced two new titles: *Two-Ocean Battleship: USS NEVADA (BB-36)* and *Parallel Fates: The USS UTAH (BB-31/AG-16) and the USS OKLAHOMA (BB-37) in Peace and War*. Both are published by the Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, and available now for \$12.95 each in the Sea Chest Gift Shop. Museum members will receive a 10 percent discount.

Readers who have enjoyed Harvey's earlier books, including *USS LOS ANGELES: Cold War Sentinel* and *The Fleet's In: Hollywood and the Navy in World War II*, will not be disappointed with this detailed history of three famous battleships.



Combining original research alongside period photographs and contemporary renderings, Beigel traces NEVADA's storied career as namesake of the Nevada class of battleships, the heroics of Pearl Harbor, and her ultimate use as an atomic target ship. In *Parallel Fates*, Beigel intertwines the histories of the UTAH and OKLAHOMA as two Navy ships with different roles, sharing homeports in San Pedro and Long Beach, and finally moored together at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Stop by the Museum today and discover these two more reasons for shopping at the Sea Chest. Remember—all gift shop proceeds directly support the Maritime Museum. Watch the mail for announcement of Harvey Beigel's illustrated talk and book signing later this spring.



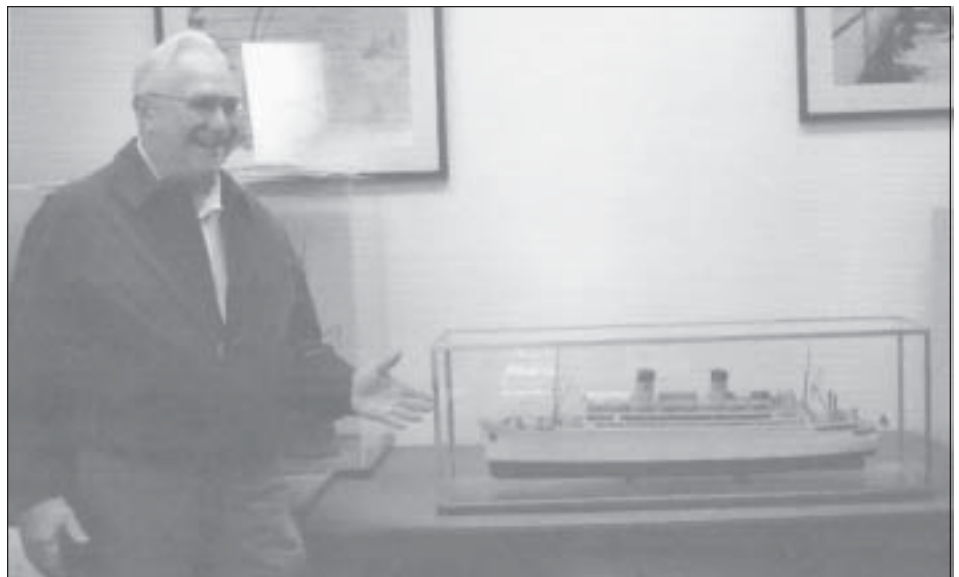
Museum Receives Model of S.S. LURLINE

The Maritime Museum is fortunate to have a large group of ship models on display. We are always seeking to improve our collection by featuring models representing ships with significance to the harbor area. The recent donation of a model of the S.S. LURLINE fits perfectly into this category.

Growing up in San Pedro in the 1940s, young Joseph Ursich often visited the docks to admire the steamship LURLINE during her regular runs on the San Francisco-Los Angeles-Honolulu route.

Built in 1932 and owned by the Matson Steamship Company, LURLINE was a glamorous white-hulled steamship which could carry over 400 first class passengers. She was the third Matson ship to be named LURLINE and even today her name brings back memories of fun-filled cruises and tropical vacations.

At age 13, Joe Ursich began a two-year project to create a model of LURLINE, relying on plans provided by his brother and encouragement from his boatbuilder father, Vito Ursich. The scratch-built model depicts LURLINE as she appeared in just prior to World War II, when she was painted grey and used



Joe Ursich with his model of LURLINE, now part of the Museum's collection. (Jessica Barnes photo)

as a troop transport. Though the model is over 60 years old, the sharp details and vibrant paint scheme appear like new.

While Joe grew up to graduate from the California Maritime Academy and work as a commercial fisherman aboard the ANTHONY M. and ROBIN HOOD, the model of LURLINE stayed safely at home. In December, Joe donated the

model to the Maritime Museum, explaining "there's no better place for it to be and I'm just so pleased they accepted it." He plans to bring his grandchildren to visit soon and see it on display.

So, the next time you pass our models on the ramp, be sure to enjoy LURLINE, the latest addition to our miniature fleet.

Los Angeles Maritime Museum
Berth 84, Foot of Sixth Street
San Pedro, California 90731

Support the Maritime Museum Today!

Help us preserve our maritime past for the education and enjoyment of future generations. Museum members receive: free subscription to *Channel Crossings*, invitations to special events, a ride on the historic *Angels Gate* tug, and a 10% discount in the Sea Chest Gift Shop and Book Store.

- \$25 INDIVIDUAL \$40 FAMILY \$100 SPONSOR
 \$500 BENEFACTOR \$1,000 PATRON/CORPORATE*

*Recognition on Donor Board

- I am interested in becoming a Volunteer, please contact me.
 I would like to purchase a gift membership. I have enclosed the name and address of my friend/family member. Please send a letter to my friend/family member announcing my gift and send me an acknowledgment letter.
 My company will match my gift. A completed form is enclosed.

- New Membership Membership Renewal
 Gift Membership

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