



*The Friends of PNSM
The Wheelhouse*

Volume 1, No 4

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October 1, 2022

Welcome to the Fourth Issue of *The Wheelhouse*, a Newsletter published quarterly by **The Friends of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum.**

Please visit the Museum and see our website for additional information.

In this issue we bring you messages from our **President, Gary Bahena**, a History Column from our **1st Vice President, Steve Milner**, and a Report from our **Treasurer, Robert Fogel**.

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President's Message

Greetings, Friends.

In this issue of *The Wheelhouse*, we bring you updates on the 2nd Annual Paddle Battle, the Oral History Project and a possible \$1M restoration of the Lightship.

And please visit the Events page on our website to learn more about our amazing Oral History Project – a joint effort with The Friends, the Museums and the IC Norcom TV Production students.

The Friends. We're back! Thank you to all of you for making it possible.

In this issue we also highlight these Activities: **In the Water** (Paddle Battle 2), **In the Can** (Oral History Project), and **In the Works** (Lightship Restoration). Plus: **Underground Railroad Sign Dedication.**

THE FRIENDS OF THE PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD MUSEUM

NNSY History

By: Steve Milner, First Vice President

NNSY had its own U.S. Marine Corps Tun Tavern

A 'TUN' IS AN OLD ENGLISH MEASURE FOR A CASK, BARREL OR KEG OF BEER.

In the last century, the U.S. Marine Corps security contingent guarding Norfolk Naval Shipyard facilities, also had another Corps tradition—its own “little” Tun Tavern.

Legend has it that the U.S. Marine Corps began in 1775 at the original Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, which served as its first recruiting site. A historical marker designates where Tun Tavern was located at what's now known as Penn's Landing in honor of William Penn, who founded that state.

NNSY's Marine barracks, offices and brig were housed in the shipyard's Buildings M-22 and M-32 for more than 70 years —until this unit was disestablished in 1978.

(Continued next page)



Marines on Parade field in front of Building M32

Upcoming 2022 Events

Speaker Series (RESCHEDULED): See a sneak preview of the **NNSY Oral History Project**, Tuesday, October 18, 6-7:30 PM, Portsmouth Public Library (Churchland Branch)



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NNSY had its own U.S. Marine Corps Tun Tavern

(Continued from page 1)

Its commanding officer lived in Building M-1, across the former parade ground in front of today's Building 1500, the Norman Sisisky Engineering and Management Building.



Building M-32's offices were renovated and modernized in 2018, under the supervision of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC). The former Brig, which now serves as a food-service facility for shipyard workers, also was modernized and is known as the Gosport Café.

I still remember the disappointment of a small group of U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam War-era veterans I toured through our shipyard's administrative area, about 20 years ago. This was a special tour for the then-civilians who used to be stationed at our shipyard.

When they asked to see NNSY's "Little" Tun Tavern, their former recreational area, I showed them a small structure, designated Building M-23. It was located near Building M-22. It later housed a McDonald's restaurant, before it was demolished in 2011.

I recall that as I escorted the six or so Marine veterans through M-32, in non-sensitive areas then in use, they would point out where their different facilities were located.

This Marine detachment also fired the Nine O'clock Gun nightly when it was located in front of Bldg. M-32.

~ Steve Milner
First Vice President

Treasurer's Report

As of September 30, 2022, The Friends had \$113,055.43 on hand. During the next 12 months, we are funding continuation of the Oral History Project with the IC Norcom CTE TV Production students, textile conservation of old uniforms and the installation of a new air conditioner in the Lightship.

Speaker Series:

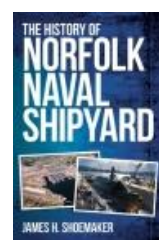
December 7 – The State of the Shipyard – Senior Leader Roundtable

Our **December** Speaker's Series event will be held on Wednesday, December 7, at 6 PM, at the Churchland Branch Library.

The topic will be The State of the Shipyard (NNSY).

Speakers will be **Capt. Dianna Wolfson**, Commanding Officer NNSY (yes, the NNSY CO!); **Rear Adm. Mark Hugel** (Ret.), former Commanding Officer NNSY, and a current Member of the Friends of PNSM; and **James Shoemaker**, author of History of the Norfolk Naval Shipyard and former senior production civilian.

What a topic on this **Pearl Harbor Day**. Thank you to Mark Hugel for organizing this event.





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Activities Update:

In the Water

The 2nd Annual Portsmouth **Paddle Battle** splashed into the water on September 10 and was by all measures a tremendous success.

In only its second year, the Paddle Battle doubled or better its number of Race Registrations to 60+, its number of Racers to 40+, its number of Sponsors to 30+ (including our three VIP Sponsor Tent food providers).

The value of Sponsorships increased to \$18,000+ (up 50%). We expect the net proceeds from the Paddle Battle to more than double.

Racers came from as far away as West Virginia and the DC Metro area.

Plus, we were finally able to get the **Challenge Cup** off. The Challenge Cup is planned to be an annual Kayak race among our four local Navy and Coast Guard Commands. This year saw the USCG 5th District, Base Portsmouth, and our own NNSY compete with the win going to NNSY.

Visit the Paddle Battle website page for more info and to look at the fantastic photos of the event - <https://www.friendsofportsmouthnsm.org/paddle-battle>.

We've included a few Paddle Battle pictures here.





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In the Can (as they say in the movie business)

Come catch a sneak preview of the NNSY/IC Norcom **Oral History Project** (rough edit). Ten NNSY families were interviewed about their lives at NNSY and in Portsmouth. Come watch and hear October 18, 6-7:30 PM at Churchland Branch Library.

The first rough edit of the Oral History Documentary we are hoping to produce is “in the can.” Eleven hours of interviews was cut into 4 ½ hours. We will be working with the IC Norcom TV Production students and their teacher, **Jasmine Painter**, this semester to get this further slimmed down to 1 hour +/- so we can present it to the public.

On top of that, we will be working this coming Fall and Winter with **Dr. Alexander Benitez**, our new terrific Director of Museums, and a professional crew of Museum Exhibit developers to convert much of the 11 hours of taping into a new Museum Exhibit for the Shipyard Museum.

We have been speaking with the Mariner’s Museum about how they go about creating interactive digital exhibits and have learned much. Come see a sneak peak of a part of the rough cut at our October 18 Speaker’s Series.

In the Works – She’s a beauty in need of a lot of work.

That’s best how to describe our **Lightship Portsmouth**. Some of you may be aware that The

Friends, with a little help from **Mayor Shannon Glover**, were the driving force behind getting the Lightship’s bright red hull repainted last year.



That was just the lipstick – now comes a complete makeover. The Friends have identified a \$500,000 Federal matching grant available to restore the Lightship and have obtained confirmation from the Feds that the Lightship meets the strict eligibility standards.

Working with Dr. Benitez, and the wonderful people at Colonna’s Shipyard who have volunteered a lot of time so far, we are finishing up a rough budget estimate of what is needed and what it will cost (we are trying to stay below \$1M) and are about to embark on a fundraising drive.

The plan is for the City to contribute ½ of the \$500,000 match and for The Friends to raise the other half. Talks are already under way with potential maritime industry donors. The Grant application is due December 20. Stay tuned.

Freedom Seekers Remembered: Underground Railroad Sign Dedication

On a beautiful Friday Morning, September 9th, a new marker was

dedicated on the Portsmouth Path of History. The Olde Towne location is at AME Emanuel Church on North Street.

On hand were church elders, a cappella singers, city leaders, Members of the Friends of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum, and other interested visitors.

The Church was available for touring.

