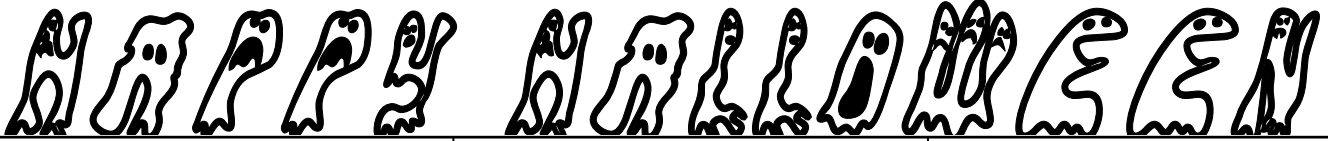


# LST534 Newsletter

October, November, December 2010

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The history of Halloween dates back to the Celts, who celebrate the end of summer and harvest and the beginning of a cold, dark winter. On the night of October 31st, they would celebrate Samhain (pronounced Saw-hane), when they believed ghosts of the dead returned to earth. During this time, they felt close to deceased relatives, even setting places at the dinner table for them. They left treats for them and lit candles so they could find their way home. It's not hard to see how we acquaint ghosts to our modern day Halloween. Modern day ghosts are more fearsome and malevolent, however.

When Romans occupied Celtic territory they combined their rituals with those of the Celts for Samhain. When Christianity spread throughout Europe, Pope Boniface IV designated All Saints Day to honor saints and martyrs. Eventually All Saints Day, All Souls Day and the ancient Samhain, were combined as All-Hallows, eventually Halloween.

As Europeans immigrated to America, they brought their varied Halloween customs with them. In the late 1800's, there was a move to mold Halloween into more of a family and community holiday

rather than one about ghosts and witchcraft. In the early 1920's, the practice of giving candy to children morphed into what we know now as trick-or-treating. Americans spend an average of 7 billion dollars annually on Halloween candy, costumes and decorations.

Halloween has always been a holiday filled with mystery, magic, ghosts, goblins and superstitions. Do you know what was originally carved as a jack-o-lantern? Large turnips and potatoes. That's right. Irish immigrants may have brought their carving traditions with them, but they soon found the American pumpkin bigger and easier to carve, hence a new Halloween tradition was born.

### A Few Tidbits about Pumpkins:

- ◆ Pumpkins are fruits.
- ◆ The largest pumpkin pie ever baked was in 2005 and weighed 2000 pounds.
- ◆ Pumpkins have been grown in North America for five thousand years.
- ◆ Pumpkins are low in calories, fat and sodium. They are high in fiber.

- ◆ The largest pumpkin ever grown was 1,689 pounds by a man in Rhode Island.
- ◆ Pumpkin seeds take between 90 and 120 days to grow.
- ◆ U.S. farmers produce more than 1.5 billion pounds of pumpkin annually.

Although the superstitions and beliefs surrounding Halloween may have evolved over the years, as the days grow shorter and the nights get colder, people can still look forward to parades, costumes, and treats to usher in the winter season.

*Contributed by the History Channel, History.com.*



# LST534 Newsletter

## Olympia, 2-war Naval Veteran, Battles for Survival

The story of an old navy ship.

The USS Olympia, a one-of-a-kind steel cruiser that returned to a hero's welcome after a history-changing victory in the Spanish American War, is a proud veteran fighting what may be its final battle.

Time and tides are conspiring to condemn the weathered old warrior to a fate two wars failed to inflict. Without a major refurbishment to its aging steel skin, the Olympia either will sink at its moorings on the Delaware River, be sold for scrap, or be scuttled for an artificial reef off Cape May, N.J., about 90 miles south.

The 5,500 ton Olympia's caretakers monitor every inch of its deteriorating lower hull and deck, already covered with hundreds of patches. Independent inspectors have concluded that the ship could decay to a point beyond saving within a few years if nothing is done.

"It's an absolute national disgrace. It's an appalling situation," said naval historian Lawrence Burr, author of a book on Olympia. "She is a national symbol, and she marks critical points in time both in America's development as a country and the Navy's emergence as a global power."

Olympia, which gets about 90,000 visitors annually, closes to the public November 22 to await its fate. Visitors to the museum pay up to \$12, which includes the

chance to board the warship.

Since taking Stewardship of the floating museum from a cash-strapped nonprofit in 1996, the Independence Seaport Museum has spent \$5.5 million on repairs, inspections and maintenance, but it can neither afford the \$10 million to dredge the marina, tow the ship to dry-dock and restore it to fighting trim, nor the \$10 million to establish an endowment to care for it in perpetuity. "She's an icon," said Jeffrey S. Nisson, Executive Director of the Historic Naval Ships Association in Smithfield, VA. "She's worthy of being saved."

Efforts to secure private or public funding have been unsuccessful, a stark reminder of recessionary times. Museum officials are reluctantly mulling whether to scrap the National Historic Landmark, said to be the world's oldest steel warship still afloat, or have the Navy sink it off the coast of Cape May. The 344-foot-long protected cruiser ideally should have been dry-docked every 20 years for maintenance. Instead it has been dutifully bobbing—and quietly wasting away—in the Delaware since 1945 without a break from the wind and waves. The waterline is marked with scores of patches, and sections of the mazelike lower hull are so corroded that sunlight shines through. Above deck, water sneaks past the concrete and rubberized surface layers, past the rotting fir deck and underneath, and onto the handsomely appointed officers' quarters below. "She generally looks good for her age, but her expensive pre-

existing conditions make it daunting," said Jesse Lebovics, longtime caretaker of Olympia. "We're still hoping someone will step up. We're hoping an 11th hour reprieve.

Two local nonprofits—Friends of the Cruiser Olympia and The Cruiser Olympia Historical Society—are striving to drum up money, manpower and publicity from other historic preservation groups, veterans organizations, and corporate sponsors. "We don't want to see the ship reefed and the museum doesn't either," said Jay Richman, President of Friends of the Cruiser Olympia. We're optimistic that a bunch of small groups working together for a common cause can save the ship."

Olympia steamed out of San Francisco in 1892 and served most notably as a flagship of the Asiatic Squadron in the Spanish-American War. It's vertical reciprocating engines, refrigeration system and hydraulic steering previewed the technological advances to come; its vestigial sails and oak-paneled-officers' quarters marked the passing Victorian era.

From Olympia's bridge on May 1, 1898, during the Battle of Manila Bay in the Philippines, Commodore George Dewey uttered the famous command: "You may fire when you are ready, Gridley." The Spanish fleet was decimated, making Dewey—and the Olympia - national heroes.

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In a letter home after the victorious battle, Capt. Charles Gridley wrote: "We did not lose a man in our whole fleet, and had only six wounded, and none of them seriously.... The Olympia was struck seven or eight times, but only slightly injured, hardly worth speaking of." The ship was later active in the Atlantic, Caribbean and Mediterranean, served as a Naval Academy training vessel, and took part in the 1918 Allied landing at Murmansk during the Russian civil war.

It's final mission was bringing home the body of World War I's Unknown Soldier from France in 1921. The vessel was decommissioned in 1922 and was largely forgotten until it was nearly scrapped in the 1950's—and local citizens rallied with donations and labor to bring it back from the brink.

Olympia opened as a museum in 1958 but funding woes and threats of sale or scrap have been part of its history ever since. The Seaport Museum itself has weathered its own share of storms, most recently in 2008, when a former president of the organization was convicted of bilking the Institution of more than \$1 million. Meanwhile, two other beleaguered vessels nearby are similarly awaiting saviors; the USS New Jersey Battleship across the river in New Jersey and the historic 1950's cruise ship SS United States three miles downriver.

"There's a lot of need out there, and the economy makes it worse...but we really can't wait," Lebovics said.

*By Joann Loviglio, AP News*

## TIDBITS

The top speed of a reindeer: 32 miles per hour. How long would it take a reindeer to fly around the globe at that pace—778 hours. Thank goodness for old St. Nick who has figured it all out.

## In Memoriam

Duncan Robey 1920 - 2010

Duncan Robey died peacefully on Aug. 21, 2010 at his home in Yakima, Washington. His wife Carole said Duncan knew his time was near, so he asked her to deliver messages to a select few people. That's just like Duncan; planning ahead. I remember when we interviewed Duncan in 1998, I found him to be soulfully deep. He would wait long seconds before answering a question, making sure he spoke the words that he intended to speak. The world was definitely a better place with Duncan in it. He will be missed by many. Duncan—rest in peace.

## HOLIDAYS

### October

12 Columbus Day  
31 Halloween



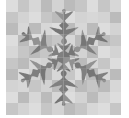
### November

2 Election Days  
7 Daylight Savings Time Ends  
11 Veterans Day  
25 Thanksgiving



## December

2 First Day of Hanukkah  
7 National Pearl Harbor Day  
21 Winter Begins  
25 Christmas  
31 New Year's Eve



## BIRTHDAYS

### October 27

Johnny Medeiros  
c/o Sheila Sexton  
1505 NE 55th Street  
Ocala, FL 34479

### October 31

Oscar Cress  
9701 E. Hasket Dr.  
Dayton, OH 45424-1615

### November 11

Albert Straka  
643 Foothill Road  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

### November 27

George Popham  
6375 Juniper Drive  
Missoula, MT 59802

### December 5

Norris Long  
Ocean Trail Nursing & Rehab  
630 N. Fodale Ave.  
PO Box 10249  
Southport, NC 28461

### December 20

Wayne Jens  
4275 Owens Rd.  
Apt. 136  
Evans, GA

### December 25

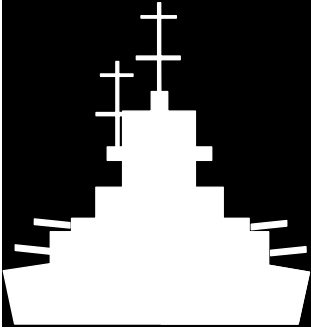
William Ayes  
221 Westwood Avenue  
Jackson, TN 38301-4321



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## LST534 Newsletter

# Just for Fun

### A Seniors View On Accumulating Wealth:

Silver in the hair.

Gold in the teeth.

Stones in the kidneys

Sugar in the blood.

Lead in the feet.

Iron in the arteries.

And an inexhaustible supply of Natural Gas!

### NAUTICAL TERMS

*In memory of James Richard Drew who contributed to this column until his passing.*

Cast Off—To let go

Midship—Approximately in the location equally distant from the bow and stern

### **Editor and Comments:**

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*Credit: Going around the Internet*