



# *Shipshape*

Volume XVI, Issue IV

1st Qtr 2013

## **S.S. Milwaukee Clipper** *Annual Benefit* **AUCTION**

*"The Queen  
of the  
Great Lakes"*

*"Your  
Host  
Afloat"*



### *Muskegon Country Club*

**Sunday - May 19, 2013**

**Brunch Served from 11 AM - 1 PM**

**Live and Silent Auctions from 11 AM - 3 PM**

#### **AUCTION ITEMS:**

Generator, WBLU day sponsor, African Safari, The Grand Hotel, Kayak, Lake Express Tickets,  
Power Scooter, West Michigan Symphony Tickets, Port City Princess Cruise

Tim Fitzsimmons - Midwest Auctions

**Ship Tours from 3 pm - 5 pm**

*Door Prizes - Raffle - Cash Bar*

*\$30 per Person - Casual Attire*

*Tickets Available by Calling*

**(231) 722-2375 or (231) 744-5101**



## **Message from the Board of Directors – Spring 2013**

*Hello Friends of the S.S. Milwaukee Clipper!*

*We have exciting news for you this quarter. Our goal to restore and preserve the steamship S.S. Milwaukee Clipper and to create an onboard Great Lakes Maritime Museum to educate and inform the public about our Great Lakes maritime heritage is well in progress. We have received MANY letters of support for her move to Heritage Landing. Please send us yours!*

*On May 19th we will have our Annual Benefit Auction at the Muskegon Country Club. We hope to see everyone there!*

*The Steamship Historical Society of America will have a special presentation on the S.S. Milwaukee Clipper on Friday, May 3, 2013 on the Queen Mary in Long Beach, California. Ralph McCrea will be doing the presentation, assisted by Captain Bob Priefer. You can find more information here: [www.sshsa.org](http://www.sshsa.org). We are encouraged by the national and international interest in the ship. As you know, she was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1989.*

*We are now moving to a board of 13. Anyone who wishes to volunteer as a board member or on a committee or on the ship, please contact any Board Member or call 231-683-1590. We are gearing up for the summer maintenance and tours and need everyone aboard!*

*Please welcome our newest board members!*

### **Mary Valentine**

*Mary grew up in Bay City, but has lived in the Muskegon area for the past 25 years. She was a Speech Pathologist in the public schools for over 30 years, most recently in Reeths-Puffer Schools. After retiring from Reeths-Puffer, Mary served two terms as the State Representative from the 91st District. It was while serving in that capacity that she became interested in the Milwaukee Clipper. "I caught the enthusiasm of those I was working with to find a permanent home for her and am delighted to continue that work." Mary lives in Norton Shores with her husband Phil. They have two adult children and two granddaughters.*



### **John Stein**

*John is an engineer by trade with 47 years in the Aerospace industry. Growing up in Muskegon, he was caught up in the ship traffic on Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake at an early age and created a card index of ship traffic of Muskegon harbor which lead to an interest in the Clipper. John and his wife Barb live on a small farm in Ada; together they raised and showed Registered Belgians Horses nationally & internationally for 35 years. They have one daughter.*



### **Jerry Lottie**

*After 30 years of service, Jerry retired from the City of Muskegon where he worked in the Administrative Division as the Affirmative Action Director. He has extensive skills in public relations and has consulted on a broad range of personnel matters. He has worked as a mediation facilitator for organizations and represented many governmental agencies regarding personnel and labor relations issues.*



*Your current board members are: Captain Bob Priefer, Ray Hilt, Jim Plant, Gene Fethke, John Thompson, John Stein, Mary Valentine, Pam Babbitt, Connie Nesbary, JoAn Pietila, Jerry Lottie, and Andrew Haan.*

*Thanks much to T.J. Parker and Doug Pollock for their time, talents and treasures that they have shared with the Clipper. Our best wishes to them in their future endeavors.*

*Submitted by Connie Nesbary*

The Muskegon Chronicle Special Article read:

## ***“The Clipper --- There was a Lady”***

Written by Chronicle Special Writer,  
Charles Truscott  
September 1970

In this article we cover the career of the Milwaukee *Clipper* since the time that she was rebuilt at Manitowoc, Wis., for her route between Muskegon and Milwaukee.

Since her rebuilding in 1940, the “Clipper” as she has been affectionately known, has been an integral part of Muskegon’s tourist economy, bringing countless tourists into the area over the years. When it was announced, on Sept. 11, 1970, that the *Clipper* had been retired, an era in passenger traffic was brought to a halt—an era that had been started in 1849 by Capt. Eber Ward and his little steamer *Champion*, and continuing down through the years with various other companies, such as Goodrich, Crosby Lines, Wisconsin & Michigan Transportation Co., and the Pere Marquette Line Steamers, ending with the Wisconsin & Michigan Steamship Co., formed in 1933 by a merger of Wisconsin & Michigan Transportation Co., and the Pere Marquette Line Steamers.

On June 3, 1941 the *Clipper* arrived in Muskegon on her maiden voyage at 7:45 a.m. She was greeted at the Mart, formerly the docks of the Goodrich Transit Co., with a civic ceremony, which included speeches by the Chamber of Commerce officers, the Harbor commission, and music furnished by the Muskegon High School Band, not to mention the shouts of the crowd and shrill tooting of factory whistles. On that eventful day the *Clipper* remained in Muskegon until 11:44 a.m. when she departed for Milwaukee, and then to Chicago where she was put on display. She originally carried 930 passengers and 60 automobiles.

For the first few years of her career the *Clipper* carried on this service year around, but in the late 1940, the company purchased a second vessel, the *Highway 16*, originally an LST, for transporting cars across Lake Michigan. During the 1950s the *Clipper* was used during the summer months for tourists, and then in the winter to ship automobiles. During this time, she also had an elevator installed on her main deck to allow her to transport more cars and raising her capacity from 60 to 120 autos, but lowering her passenger capacity to 900.

By 1963 winter traffic had dropped to a point where the *Highway 16* was able to keep up with the changes in trends of tourists, but always retaining the look of “class” befitting the “Queen of Lake Michigan.”

On Sept. 4, 1970 my wife and myself, and our guests, Mr. & Mrs. Gerald R. Dickinson of Fremont, made a round-trip crossing on the *Clipper*. Little did I know at the time that it would be the last time that I would ever make a trip on her. While on the *Clipper*, I was able to meet with her “skipper”, Capt. Carl Regan and an old friend of mine, Capt. Joseph A. Testyon, last master of the *South American*, as well as a number of other old friends from the South, including Capt. Barney Olsen, and purser Ted Webster. Through the courtesy of F.J. Knoblauch, we were able to visit the pilot house, engine and boiler rooms, where I was able to film her machinery in operation. Given the retirement of the *Clipper*, I am pleased that I was able to do this, as there is no longer a quadruple expansion steam engine in operation on the lakes, and it is very doubtful that *Clipper’s* engine will ever move her through the blue water of Lake Michigan again. The crew members of the *Clipper*, even though they were faced with the bleak outlook of not having the *Clipper* in service another year, were helpful in giving us a tour of the ship, and giving me bits of information on her service that I previously did not have.

On Sept 8, 1970 the ax fell, so to speak, as the board of directors of the Wisconsin & Michigan Steamship Co. decided to permanently retire the *Clipper*. Rising costs, and the need for extensive repairs, were cited as reasons for the decision. This year, it should be noted, as the most successful that the *Clipper* had had. But, no matter how business increased, there was no way for the *Clipper’s* service to be improved.

As this was being written, the *Clipper* remained tied up at her Muskegon dock. What the future holds for her is doubtful. It is my belief, she would lend herself well to a floating restaurant, and maritime museum, both of which would no doubt be an excellent drawing card for Muskegon, also retaining the *Clipper* for years to come. Perhaps the ‘money men’ in Muskegon could look into this.

The future of the route is also in question. Presently the line is continued with the *Highway 16*, which doesn’t carry passengers. Mr. Knoblauch, when I questioned him about use of the *Aquarama*, also owned by the line, he wrote that he couldn’t definitely say as this depended on a number of problems, as yet, still unsolved.”

So with this in mind, it is my hope that these problems can indeed be solved and that this route again will be carried on in the fine tradition that The *Clipper* has so capably maintained. Farewell, *Clipper*!

*(Thank you, Mr. Truscott, for your deep feelings and sincere optimism for the future of our Great Lady.)*

**You thought I had forgotten about the auction items, didn't you? I put them back here, so you'd be reminded again about the fundraiser May 19<sup>th</sup> at the Muskegon Country Club. It's always a sell out, so call and get your tickets. Here's a few more items, in addition to those listed on the front cover, that you can bid on during the silent or live auction:**

- Barry's Greenhouse
- Arnold's Ferry Line-Mackinac Island
- S.S. Badger Crossing
- Tall Ship's in Traverse City
- S&G Shooters-Filet Knife
- Coast Guard Festival
- Gift Certificates from multiple local restaurants!

**And MANY MORE**

- \*Shoreline Inn & Suites
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- \*Irish Music Festival Tickets
- \*Coopersville Train Tickets
- \*Wines from Michigan

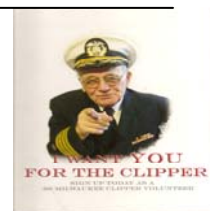


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Well, a quick update on the Captain, he spent the winter in Arizona, will be meeting up with Ralph McCreia in San Diego for the presentation on the *Queen Mary*, then home in time for the auction – as always “HE WANTS YOU FOR THE CLIPPER”!

Come on Board – Tours begin Memorial Day Weekend.

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Dear Everyone,

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I am compiling *Clipper* stories for a large picture “coffee table” book. My request to you is to write down your experiences about our Big Girl. E-mail your writings to me at [mlplant@comcast.net](mailto:mlplant@comcast.net), or mail them to me at 3009 Memorial Dr., Muskegon, MI 49445. Even phone me for a chat. 231-744-5101.

*The Clipper Story-- Part One is titled "The Ship and her people" – Part Two is "The Volunteers and Their Boat" . Dear volunteers past and present, (Board members don't forget that you are volunteers, too.), The Clipper story is everyone's' story, Please, if you all could put together the part you have played in this story, it will be so much richer if everyone could be counted on to contribute. Please respond to this plea at your earliest convenience.*

Thank you so much.

MaryLouise Plant



### NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you, thank you ---- This past newsletter brought in a bunch of new e-mail addresses. But I'm still waiting to hear from many more. Also we had some winter addresses returned. If you know your ‘forwarding address for winter/vacation’ please give me a call or send me a short note. Even though you have your mail forwarded through the postal service, our “non-profit” mailings **DO NOT** get forwarded. They get returned to us with extra postage due. Which means, we've paid twice for your returned newsletter. In some cases, I just have to delete you from future mailings.

Which again, brings us back to the need for your e-mail address ([dpfol@earthlink.net](mailto:dpfol@earthlink.net)). PLEASE, it is so vital to the future distribution process of the newsletter, get your e-mail address to me. If you don't have e-mail, send me a quick note or call (231-798-4231) – Also, PLEASE put something in the “Subject” line. I don't open up e-mails without subjects. I received some last time – maybe it was yours. Cutting costs is a top priority and when we send out over 700 flyers, those are expenses we can't afford. PLUS with e-mail you get to see the newsletter in full color!!! PLEASE RESPOND

Thank you for your cooperation.

[dpfol@earthlink.net](mailto:dpfol@earthlink.net)

Sandra Ferski, Editor

This is a note sent to us from **Steve Sattler**, out of Delaware, Ohio. Steve sent his e-mail address and this little story: - Enjoy!

*I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you, the staff of Shipshape, and all those who in any way support the Clipper. I am not certain of the exact year, but I distinctly remember a voyage I took on her with my parents back in the early 50's. That experience served to entrench in me a lifelong love of ships and of the people who make up the maritime industry. My grandson and I visited the Clipper about 6 (maybe 7) years ago. Captain Priefer happened to be onboard and the three of us had a great talk up on the bridge. He told me, based on the date I gave him, he probably was one of the mates the last time I was aboard (I was about 12 years old at the time).*

*Thanks again for everything. We dearly love Shipshape and will definitely visit the Clipper again the next time our wanderings bring us close to Muskegon.*

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Another....Sent in memory of **Frank Mullen's**: Dear Sirs, hope that some of the enclosed will be useful to your organization and it's goals of preservation of the *Clipper* and its memories. I married Frank's daughter, Eileen, and worked in the Soda Bowl during the summer of 1958 – we married in 1961. My time on the boat was instrumental in deciding to settle down and go to work, as I had plenty of time to think on the back of the fantail watching "the surf".

Luther & Eileen Sander

*Excerpts of FRANK MULLEN'S obituary from the Milwaukee, WI Journal Sentinel*

His life reads like a Depression-era movie, the kind that would have been showing when Frank showed up in Milwaukee: Kid comes to town looking for work, gets a job as an office boy at a steamship company. He works and works and the promotions keep coming. And then, one day, he's an executive at that company. It happens in the movies, and it happened to Mullen, who died Sept 27, 2012 at age 99 – about a month shy of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

His first day in Milwaukee he wanted to see the lake, and as he was walking past an office building, he saw a sign: "Help Wanted – Office Boy". Mullen got the job with the Wisconsin & Michigan Steamship Co. For the next 36 years, he saw the lake, but he saw a lot more of the office. He ended up in a position called Traffic Manager, one of two men who ran the office. Mullen was in charge of the workers on the ship and in charge of getting carmakers in Michigan to send their cars here on the *Milwaukee Clipper*, rather than by train.

Frank and his grade school sweetheart, Nellie, settled in Bay View and raised two children. They lived there until 2005, were married for 73 years when Nellie died in 2009. .... In 1970, the Clipper ship retired, and so did Mullen. At 58, he was out of a job. Not having a college education, he sent resumes out, but nothing for someone his age. He struggled until he was able to get Social Security, because he didn't have health insurance, nor Medicare and he didn't have a job. Somehow they made it. He just winged it, his daughter said. Those people who came through the Depression, they knew how to save and they knew how to stretch a dollar.

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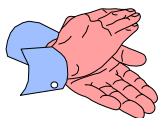
A note from **Randall R. Pilak**, who worked with **Frank Mullen**. It was originally sent to Frank's family and they forwarded it to us.

Randall starts his story.....My father called me and asked what I was doing? I told him nothing, and I asked what he needed. He asked the same question several more times, with the same 'nothing' answer, he then told me to go down to the *Clipper* Line. That is when I had my first real contact with Mr. Mullen, and it came to being a rite of passage for us guys to do some driving at the *Clipper* Line.

I could not believe they would actually pay us to come down and drive all the "hot" cars out of Detroit. Our favorite was always the pep talks Mr. Mullen would give us at the start of each tourist season. The one that still stands out was in 1967 when he got us all in the office and forcefully told us to drive these cars like they were our own! That afternoon, as the *Clipper* was backing out, and we waited for her to blow "all clear", so we could leave, we sat in our cars under the ramp. Jo-Jo Ganader (Frank's son) in his 1966 Corvette Stingray, Roland Decker in his 1966 Mustang, Arnold Hassert with his pin striped Mustang GT, Wayne in his '66 Dodge Charger fast back and me with my 1966 Formula S, Barracuda. The next day we were all in the office again. Frank had to made adjustments to his pep talk of the day before, after seeing what we were driving. It could not have been easy on him keeping all of us young guys under control, seeing as we only had very few brain cells to divide up between us.

Know that forty-two years have gone by and we still have fond, warm memories of your father. After the "*Clipper*" stopped running, I just lost track of everyone....mostly, the people who "mattered" like Mr. Mullen.





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Remember all items donated are tax deductible, we are a 501©3 organization.

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**MICRGRAPHICS**, who prints the Newsletter and does the mailings; **LAKE SIDE  
EMPORIUM**, and **S & G SHOOTERS** who support our efforts by displaying a  
canister for donations, and has a supply of newsletters for distribution;

You can always get a copy of the newsletter at **The Convention and Visitors  
Bureau**. Not to leave out all the other local businesses who support the  
Spring Auction. We always have multiples of businesses who donate items  
for the fundraiser. Thanks to our generous supporters - without them, we  
really would be "Dead-in-the-Water"!

Thanks to all.



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### Support the restoration and preservation of the S. S. Milwaukee Clipper – A National Historic Landmark!

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Please accept the enclosed donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in support of the efforts of S. S. Milwaukee Clipper Preservation, Inc. in memory/honor of \_\_\_\_\_.

Earmark these funds for the following project(s): \_\_\_\_\_ (Call for suggestions)

Please place my name and address as listed below on the mailing list for **Shipshape**, the quarterly newsletter.

I would be willing to volunteer my time to the following *Clipper* activities:

|                                   |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Fundraising                       | Publicity        |
| Working on the newsletter         | Maintenance      |
| Museum/Gift Shop assistance       | Restoration work |
| Security at the Clipper dock site | Other _____      |
| Archiving                         |                  |

I would like to volunteer ! Please contact me at the address below with more information.

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PO Box 1370  
Muskegon, MI 49443-1370  
OR

Send the above information via email to: [milwaukeeclipper@gmail.com](mailto:milwaukeeclipper@gmail.com)

The S. S. Milwaukee Clipper Preservation Inc, a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation, was organized in April, 1997 for the sole purpose of restoring and preserving the steamship S. S. Milwaukee Clipper and to create an on-board Great Lakes Maritime Museum to educate and inform the public about our Great Lakes maritime heritage.

Your continuing donations and volunteerism will ensure our success!

Thank you for your support!



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[dpfol@earthlink.net](mailto:dpfol@earthlink.net)

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