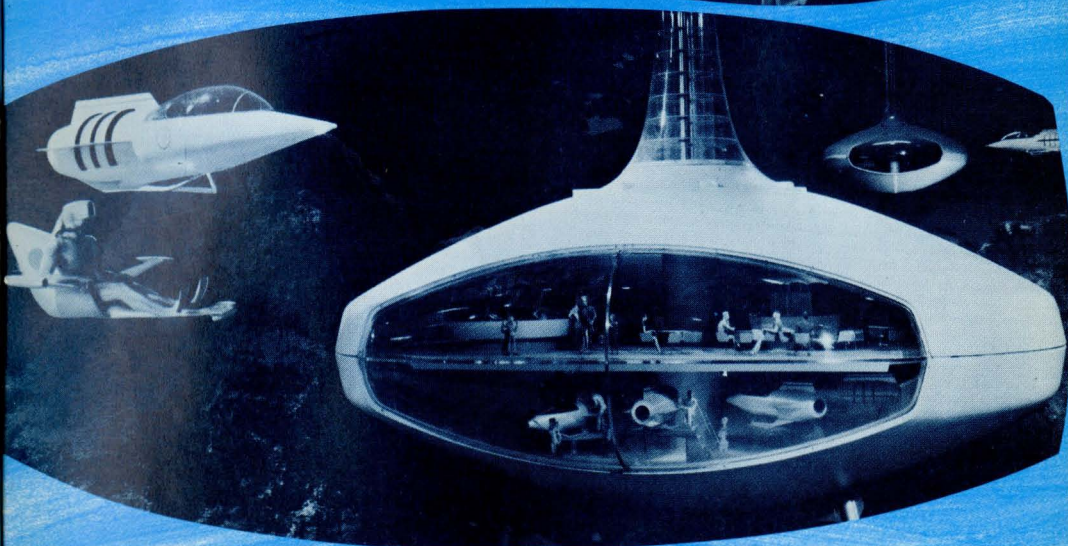
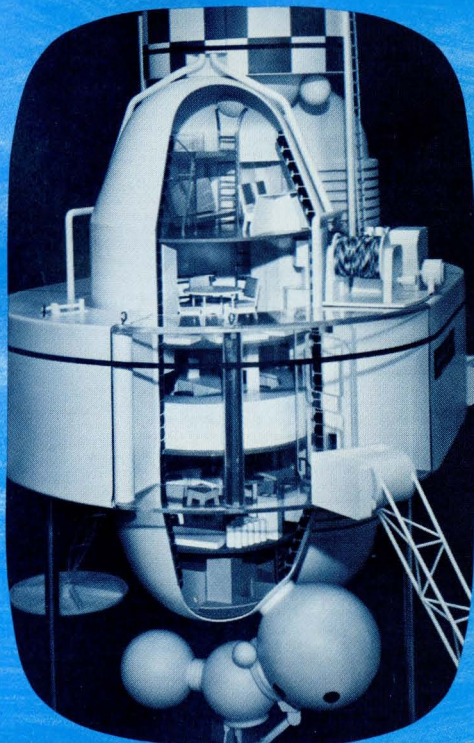
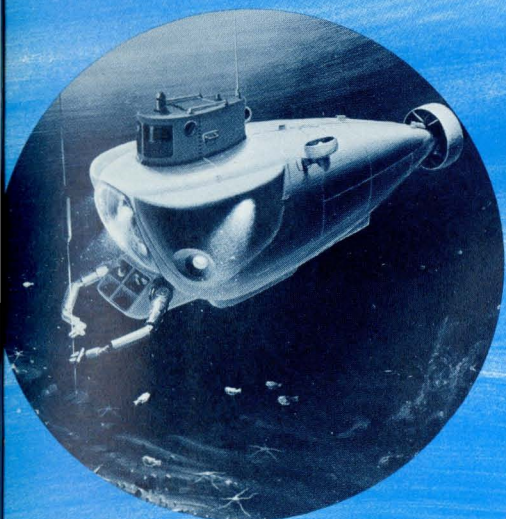




the LOOKOUT

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK



January 1972

THE PROGRAM OF THE INSTITUTE

The Seamen's Church Institute of New York, an agency of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York, is a unique organization devoted to the well-being and special interests of active merchant seamen.

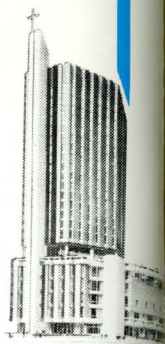
More than 753,000 such seamen of all nationalities, races and creeds come into the Port of New York every year. To many of them the Institute is their shore center in port and remains their polestar while they transit the distant oceans of the earth.

First established in 1834 as a floating chapel in New York harbor, the Institute offers a wide range of recreational and educational services for the mariner, including counseling and the help of five chaplains in emergency situations.

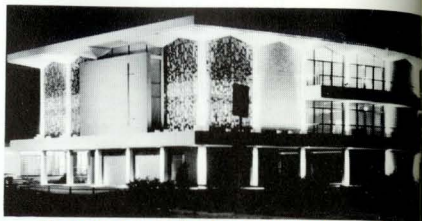
Each year 2,300 ships with 96,600 men aboard put in at Port Newark, where time ashore is extremely limited.

Here in the very middle of huge, sprawling Port Newark pulsing with activity of container-shipping, SCI has provided an oasis known as the Mariners International Center which offers seamen a recreational center especially constructed and designed, operated in a special way for the very special needs of the men. An outstanding feature is a soccer field (lighted at night) for games between ship teams.

Although 55% of the overall Institute budget is met by income from seamen and the public, the cost of the special services comes from endowment and contributions. Contributions are tax deductible.



Seamen's Church Institute
State and Pearl Streets
Manhattan



Mariners International Center (SCI)
Export and Calcutta Streets
Port Newark, N.J.

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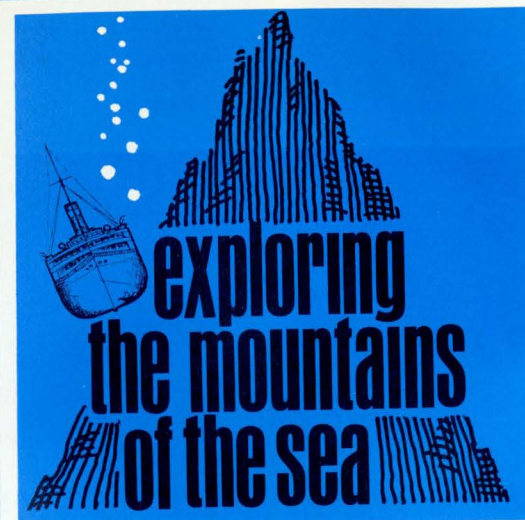
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by Raymond Schuessler

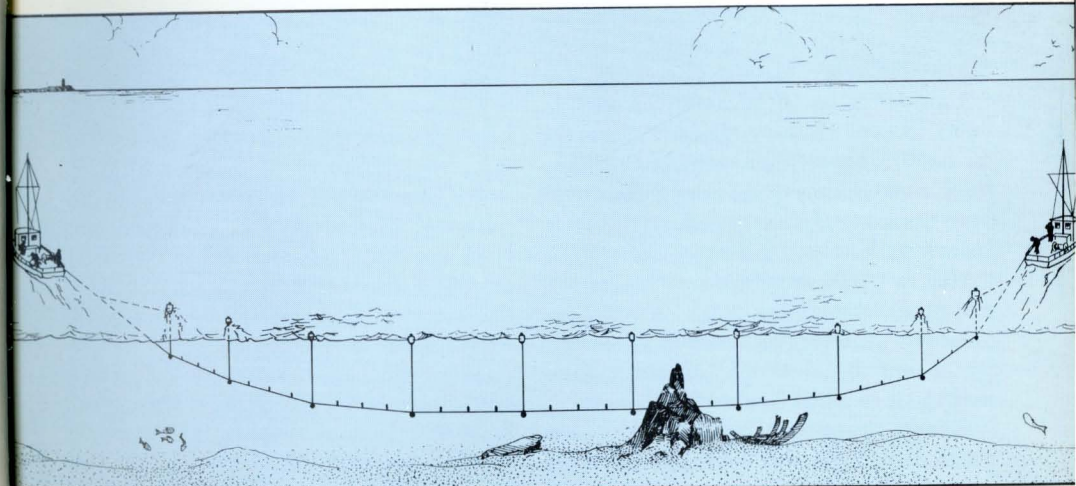
The world beneath the ocean has always been a mystery to man. Actually we have seen more of the surface of the moon than we have of our own earth, since three-quarters of the earth's surface, a region of gigantic mountains, vast prairies and abysmal valleys, is covered with water.

There is economic need also. According to U.S. Navy oceanographer, Robert S. Dietz: "We know there are rich

mineral deposits underwater."

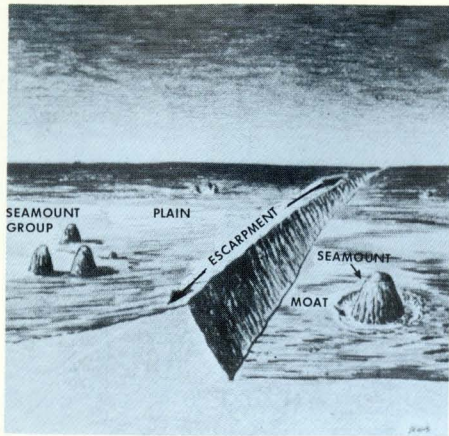
The University of California found a 14 million square mile area on the ocean bottom containing valuable minerals in nugget form in sizes varying from a golf ball to a football.* These rocks average 20 percent manganese, 15 percent iron, and smaller percent-

(*Some scientists believe they are the work of microscopic organisms that can concentrate these minerals through a secret process. They even have visions of ore farms where a specific mineral might be grown.)



A wire drag consisting of a cable supported at an adjustable depth by buoys is towed through the water to locate sunken rocks and other obstructions.

205
3



ages of cobalt, nickel and copper.

It is estimated that one square mile may hold \$1.5 worth of metals. Scientists are now working on a technique to "mine" these nuggets with a huge dredge scoop and hydraulic dredging. They estimate that a ton of these nuggets would be worth \$43, at a mining cost of around \$30 per ton . . . a profitable venture since the area would yield 40 billion tons of manganese.

"Within the next 100 years," said Dr. Hugh Odishaw of the U.S. Geophysical Year Committee, "the oceans can become serious competition of the continents in terms of material resources. We already have plans for remote-controlled robots housing a TV eye which will pick up samples off the ocean floor."

Can we mine these undersea mountains in the ordinary manner as we do on earth? Probably. Jacques Costeau, the French explorer and deep sea diver and his seven man team lived for a month under the Red Sea in watertight "villages" fully furnished with air conditioning, television and telephones. "Sooner or later man will live under water and build there," Costeau predicted.

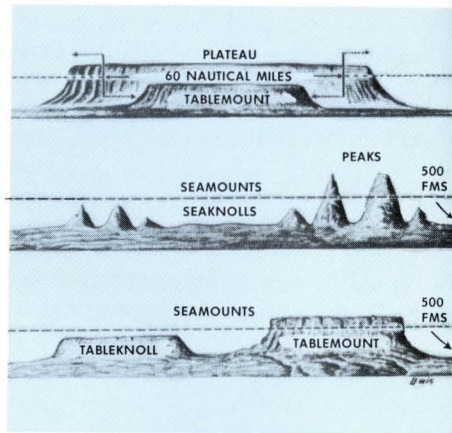
There are other reasons why we must delve into the depths; underwater mountains may be the only safe depository of atomic wastes. We may

learn too that movements of ocean currents could hold the key to weather predictions.

Underwater exploration is still in its infancy. Although we have discovered major mountain ranges, deep trenches, and isolated mountains, only two percent of the ocean bottom is adequately charted.

In 1920 we discovered sonic soundings by which we could measure depth by timing the interval necessary for a sound impulse to travel to the bottom and back. Today hundreds of ships trace a continual profile of the land beneath the oceans.

We once believed that the bottom of the sea was smooth, but we know differently now. The biggest flat area of a few hundred miles is on the bottom

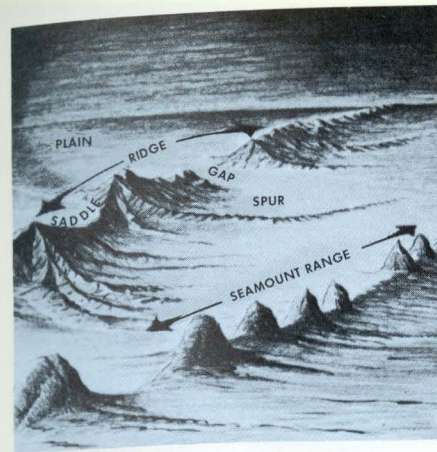


of the Indian Ocean, southeast of Ceylon.

We have found undersea mountains with towering peaks and valleys bigger than anything on land. The Continental Slope around Antarctica has mountains which average 12,000 feet with extremes of 30,000 feet.

At its deepest point near the Marianas Islands in the Pacific, the ocean is 35,640 feet, or seven miles deep.

Even beneath the Arctic ice the Russians found a two mile high ridge. There is a globe-circling chain of un-



dersea mountains 40,000 miles long that covers the entire Atlantic, passing around Antarctica and into the Pacific. The Hawaiian Islands are merely an exposed peak of the mountain chain.

There is the Tonga Trench between New Zealand and Samoa that could hold eight Grand Canyons in its maw.

As our search increases we will need new equipment. The Navy already has developed a camera built to be operated at depths as great as 20,000 feet. As this camera weighs only 125 pounds in water, it can be lowered into the depths quite easily.

Hanging from the camera is a lead weight which upon touching bottom activates a switch. The camera can take as many as 24 pictures during a single lowering. Pictures have been taken as deep as 13,062 feet near San Diego.

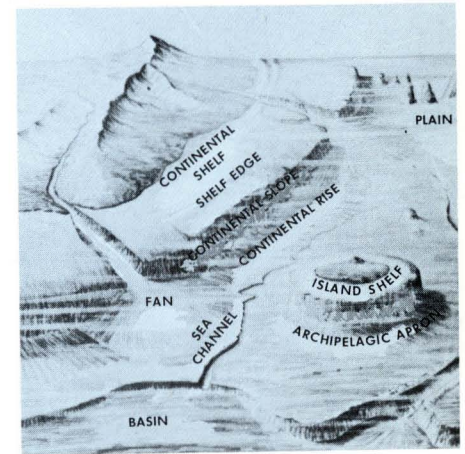
Sea mountains are much more movable and fluid than land mountains. In fact, the effect of the ocean's tides which involve the shifting of billions of tons of water each day can cause all our land to shift about. It is fantastic to think that once many of the mountains and plains were forested lands on dry earth which now must spend their allotted time beneath the seas until it becomes time to rise again.

Once we get to know the sea bottom

we naturally will begin to wonder what lies beneath the bottom. Studies of earthquake waves suggest that the earth's crust is floating on a sea of semi-molten rock.

Some scientists suggest that a soft layer, sixty or more miles thick, is sandwiched between massive layers of hard rock. Its upper surface is thought to lie some thirty miles beneath the oceans. This layer of soft rock may provide the answers to many questions, such as how the locations of the poles or the continents could have changed in the past.

One theory has been that the continents have drifted here and there, or that the earth's crust has slipped over the interior. Jelly-like rock would act like grease around a bearing and per-

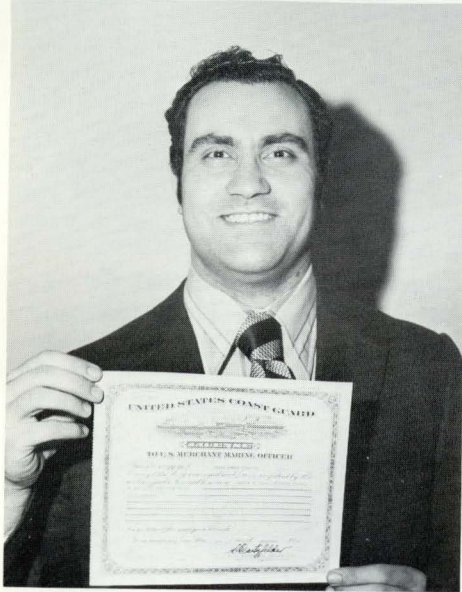


mit such slippage.

Geophysicists now suggest that a soft rock theory may also explain why continents loaded with ice sink so easily and rise again when the ice melts. We know that some parts of Finland are still rising in conjunction with its rising temperatures through the centuries.

In any case we will learn some of the unsolved mysteries of the earth, perhaps the secret of the globe's birth itself by probing the countenance of the sea floor. ■

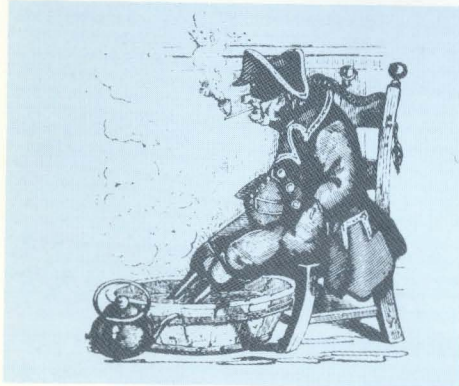
We are a kaleidoscope of the waterfront



The Merchant Marine School of the Institute announced that one of its instructors in deck, Frank E. Ragonese, has recently been given a Master's rating by the U. S. Coast Guard, and which qualifies him to captain a vessel of any tonnage on any ocean of the world.

He is a graduate of the State University of New York Maritime College and of Baruch College of the City University of New York.

Captain Edward A. Strolk has joined the SCI Marine School faculty as instructor for original and upgrading licenses as a pilot, Master or mate for bays, sounds and rivers. He holds a Master's unlimited and first-class pilot's license.



The lobby of the Institute was thronged with crewmen of the *Rotterdam* of the Holland-America Line one day in late December as the men waited in the lobby for transportation to the ship. The sixty-five men, a replacement crew unit flown from Europe, stayed overnight at the SCI and were then bused to the ship.



Photographers sometimes use Institute furnishings, exhibits and equipment as "props" for fashion pictures and other special purposes.

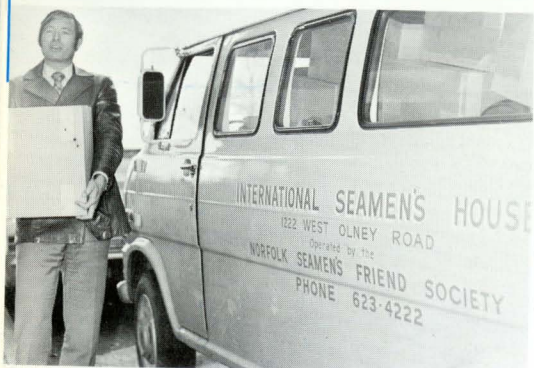
In this instance a working model of a completely rigged ship located on one of the SCI floors was recently used to dramatize the nautical motif of the dresses worn by two attractive models.

The ship model (the wooden one with spars, riggings, etc.) was once the property of Captain Howard Patterson when he operated a marine school

in New York and was used to teach practical seamanship and constructed so the student could practice setting, trimming and shortening sail, tacking and wearing ship, etc., as under actual sea conditions.

The blocks are all sheaved and work easily and all gear is rove off and belayed as customary on actual vessels, in order that students might readily become familiar with the deck arrangements and leads aloft.





Chaplain Clifford A. Olsen of Norfolk Seamen's Friend Society, drove his organization's station wagon to New York to pick up SCI Christmas boxes for distribution to ships in Norfolk.

Honor-guest Werner Bamberger (seated left) and Admiral Manning listen as the citation is read by Captain King.



The auditorium of the Institute was, in mid-December, the scene of a special luncheon honoring Werner Bamberger, ace New York Times marine reporter who, over a year ago, was seriously injured while covering his "beat." He is now on the road to recovery.

Captain Thomas King, Regional Director of the Maritime Administration, presented a document at the luncheon, designating Rear Admiral Harry Manning as a Vice Admiral in the U. S. Maritime Service. MARAD operates the radar school at SCI.

The affair was sponsored jointly by the Propeller Club of the Port of New York and the Shipwrites, a club composed of marine writers of the metropolitan area.



Frank Braynard, Shipwrite's president, makes the introductions.



The old-timers who remember the venerable SCI building which once stood at 25 South Street, may now see its successor, a huge new office building nearing completion, from the street near the new Institute. Photo was taken at the intersection of Pearl and State Street (portion of new Institute building at right). Building in far distance (under American flag) marks the former site of the old SCI. ■

Seamen since the beginning of time have been carvers and whittlers, not only of wood, but often of more exotic materials.

But Al Bosch, a seaman Third Engineer who stays at the Institute when in port, is content to carve what are called "half-model" sail ships from just plain pine wood scraps he finds here and there or picks up at a lumber yard. Maybe he'll try a chunk of mahogany once in a while.

A "half-model" is what is implied—half, not a full dimensional model.

Mr. Bosch recently exhibited some of his work at the Institute (see photo). He estimates he's been working at this particular specialty for about fifteen years.

How did he begin his hobby?

"Well, I once wanted to buy a half-model but when I found out how much

they cost I said to myself, 'Heck, I can make one of those things myself'. And so I did."

This is not to suggest that from then on he began producing models by his own hand and made himself a comfortable living by their sale. Not at all. "Sure," he says, "I'll sell a few now and then to some friends, maybe, but I'm going to be a career seaman and that doesn't leave much room for wood-crafting as a business."

The Bronx-born sailor confesses he spent considerable time as a youth exploring Long Island Sound by sail boat and learned to admire the craft.

If there is any secret to achieving the silken-smooth finish to the models he makes, he says, it is patience, much sanding, "elbow grease" and — shoe polish. He uses transparent shoe polish for the final finish.

"Works just great."

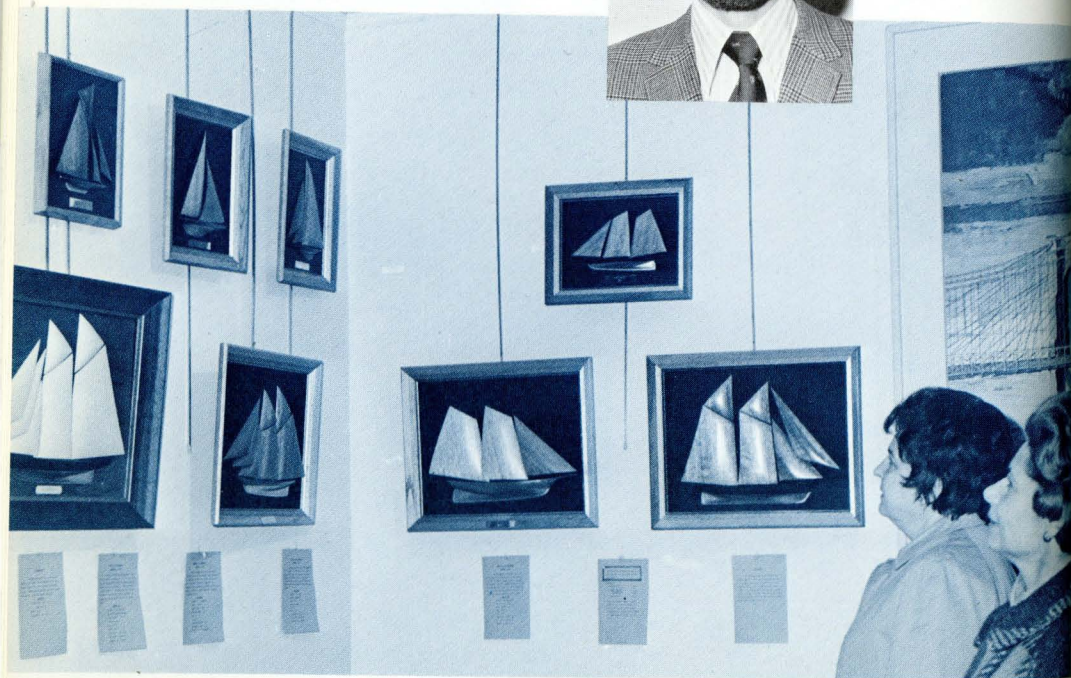
Once you've had a taste of the seafaring life, the sea salt remains in your veins as long as you live.

This is the conviction of Mrs. Ella Jacoby, now seventy-four years of age, retired from the sea, but her interest in the life undiminished. She is also very much concerned in what the Institute does for seamen because she has made an annual monetary contribution to it for the past twenty-five years, motivated by her first-hand knowledge of a mariner's life and the effectiveness of the Institute's work among seafarers.

For ten years, beginning in 1929,



SEAMAN AL BOSCO



she worked aboard some famous passenger liners as a beautician after coming here from Germany. Some of the ships included the *Morro Castle*, *Grips-holm*, *Bergenland* and the old *Rotterdam*. Others, also.

Her husband, a native Bermudian, was lost during the war while serving in the British armed forces.

Like many another retired sea-person, Mrs. Jacoby felt she had to have a hobby and turned to making hooked rugs. She said she has produced around two dozen of them in all shapes and sizes, some of them of her own design, most with nautical overtones.

The other day she decided to surprise Dr. John M. Mulligan, the Institute Director, and brought him, as a gift for his office, a hooked rug with a sail-ship design she had made.

Delighted with the rug, the Director, in turn, decided to surprise Mrs. Jacoby. He proposed that the Institute exhibit her rugs some time in February (Feb. 24-March 14) and that she teach some of the Women's Council volunteers how to make hooked rugs which can be sold from the SCI lobby gift shop.

Now everyone is delighted.



the pearl fisher

by Alan Major

Pearls have often been associated with glamor and adventure. Pirate booty, perhaps. Royal jewelry. Beautiful women. Elaborate plots and counter-plots. Fiction writers have devised countless tales of mysteriously-missing Oriental pearls of great price.

It is unknown when pearls were first used as ornaments and charms. The ancient Egyptians collected fresh-water pearl mussels from the Nile and used the shells to hold face paint and cosmetics. The Nile oyster has been found in the Pharaoh's tombs.

Pearls and pearl shell were obtained from the Red Sea, the shell also being used to make ornaments. The Egyptians offered pearls to some of their goddesses, the pearls also being worn by both Egyptian men and women with shell, coral, precious stones, gold, etc., particularly as neck ornaments.

But even to the Egyptians pearls were an expensive luxury and were only worn as a sign of their wealth by the richest people. It is believed that King Solomon imported pearls from the northeast coast of East Africa where the Egyptians also obtained them.

In the 7th century B.C. pearls were first used in Persia, obtained from the Persian Gulf, the ladies of the court wearing them in nose-rings.

The Greeks and Romans also used pearls, the Greek men, as did Persian noblemen, wearing a pearl earring in their right ear. According to Pliny, pearls became popular in Rome, being used to decorate Roman temple altars.

Julius Caesar gave a breast-plate adorned with British pearls to the goddess Venus. Roman soldiers also wore a pearl to protect them from injury or death in battle.

Cleopatra is said to have swallowed one pearl now valued at over £80,000. One reason why pearls were in demand was superstition, it being believed they averted misfortune and brought good luck. According to ancient Hindu literature pearls ensured long life, while Buddhists added to their religious merit by accumulating pearls.

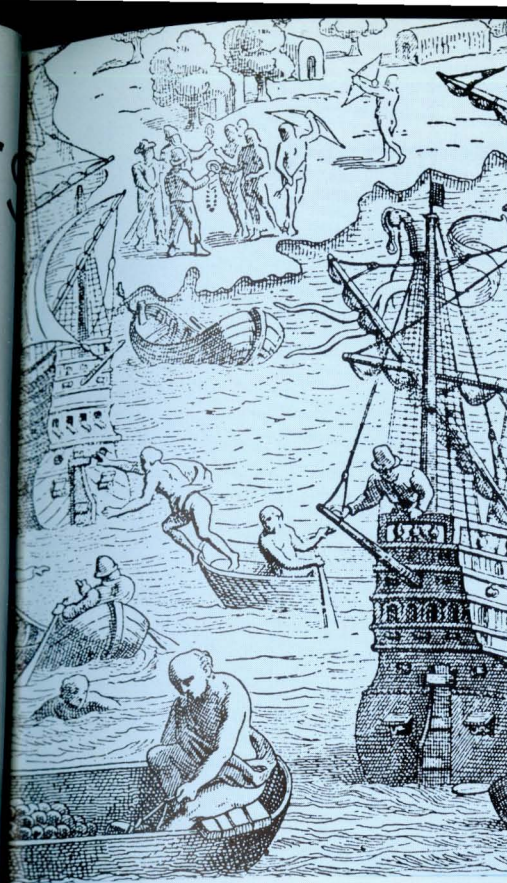
When Marco Polo visited India six centuries ago he saw pearls being placed in the mouths of dead people to aid their resurrection in the next life, the same custom being witnessed in China.

In both countries pearls crushed to powder were used as medicine to prolong life. The mythical Chinese dragons were supposed to spout out pearls as well as breathe fire. The pearl, according to Chinese legend, was supposed to get its lustre from the moon, the latter being called a "night-shining pearl". According to Buddhist legend, magic pearls in it cause the sea to ebb and flow.

Pearls have been found in pre-Columbian graves in North America. When Mexico was first visited by the Spanish they found the Mexicans decorated their temples and gods with pearls.

In Peru the Incas used pearls as artificial eyes for their mummies, as the Egyptians used pearl shell. Among primitive peoples pearls were thought to be formed from drops of rain and early Christians believed pearls were formed from "angels' tears".

Until recent times it used to be thought that pearls "sicken" and lose their lustre if the wearer falls into bad health, this probably arising from the days when pearls were regarded



as life-givers.

In some parts of the world the obtaining of the pearls was virtually a death sentence for the men who did it. In the Persian Gulf and coast of Arabia pearl fishing was undertaken during the monsoon season when this kept craft close to shore. Hundreds of large and small vessels, dhows, etc., took part. The craft anchored over the banks where the oysters were found at a depth of 60 to 70 feet.

Then each diver put a nose clip made of sheep's horn to his nostrils, took a deep breath with his mouth and went down in the water, clutching a net or basket, weighted with a heavy stone, the latter being hauled up as soon as the diver reached the bottom. He had no diving gear or safety devices at all except a knife to protect himself if suddenly attacked.

The diver himself groped along the sea bed, eyes open, scooping as many

oysters as possible into his basket or net, before, with lungs near busting, he tugged on the rope and was hauled quickly to the surface.

The time down varied from half a minute to a minute or more, making ten dives or so straight off, by one section of the diving party before resting, while a second party of divers waited their turn to dive. The basket of oysters were flung on board the craft with a shout to Allah, in the hope their catch would be good, but the oysters were heaped up on board ship to allow them to die.

The pearling fleet was usually within reach of a port or land so it returned to shore at the end of each day's pearling. This was because the craft were so crowded with men there was not enough room for all to sleep on board. After a wet day's diving the divers were usually glad to sleep on the warm sand.

Because of the tough life it was a short one for most divers. While diving they could not eat solid meals by day, but had to exist on drugged coffee and some rice or fish, as an evening meal, after diving for the day finished.

Many of the divers got the "bends" due to returning to the surface too fast and died. Others were killed by exhaustion, accidents or disease.

The luckless ones were buried that night somewhere on the shore when the pearl fishers returned to land the crews. If they had any money due to them this was retained and paid to their dependents.

More modern methods of diving eased the task considerably, but because money could be gained from pearls, attempts were made in France, Germany and Italy to manufacture artificial ones. Some of them were poor imitations, using fish scales. Japan finally succeeded in producing pearls by culture methods which have virtually killed worthwhile commercial fishing for naturally-produced pearls.

THE UNSINKABLE "LUCKY" TOWER

by Edward A. Graf

Frank Tower did not consider himself particularly lucky on April 10th, 1912. But he did feel somewhat fortunate in having gained berth on the maiden voyage of the White Star liner, *Titanic*, as she departed Southampton.

The little oiler knew she was not the fastest ship afloat, with a top speed of twenty-four knots, but he knew she was the largest and the grandest, displacing sixty-six thousand tons. She featured Turkish baths, spacious public rooms and period furnishings. Besides all that — she was "unsinkable."

Tower was one of 2,201 persons aboard the luxury liner as she drove through the North Atlantic bound for New York. He oiled engines in the bowels of the ship; engines driven by the *Titanic's* twenty-nine boilers, and he liked to feel he was important in the operation of the fine, beautiful, monstrous liner.

At 11:40 p.m. on April 14th, as the *Titanic* ploughed on through the bitter cold grey-green Atlantic, Frank Tower, secure in his bunk, felt the slight jar as the great ship ripped herself

apart on a submerged iceberg south of the Grand Banks and fifteen hundred miles from Ambrose lightship.

When she went down a few hours later she took 1,503 souls with her. But Frank Tower, the little oiler, was saved and was taken aboard the *Carpathia* at 4:00 a.m. on April 15th.

On May 28th, 1914, the Canadian Pacific Railway's 14,191-ton ship *Empress of Ireland* was eight years old. She was not a large ship by any standards but she was one of the most comfortable liners plying the Atlantic at that time. On her bridge, when she departed Quebec City that afternoon, was 41 year-old Henry George Kendall and in her engine room was an oiler called Frank Tower.

Only now he was known to his mates as "Lucky" Tower — for they all knew he had swum away from the *Titanic* but two years before.

The *Empress* churned down river toward the Gulf of St. Lawrence and by 1:30 a.m. on May 29th, she dropped her pilot at Father Point, 185 miles down river from her point of depar-

ture. At 2:00 a.m., Cock Point gas buoy, seven miles from Father Point, could be seen through the fog patches from the bridge of the *Empress*.

First Officer Frank Jones was worried about the fog and the narrow confines of the river and sent his quartermaster to summon Captain Kendall to the bridge. At this same time, "Lucky" Tower had been on duty in the engine room for one half hour.

When Kendall reached the bridge he could see another ship approaching through the fog on its way up-river and brought his own ship to a full stop. Five minutes later, in spite of warning from the *Empress*, the other ship, the Norwegian collier *Storstad*, grossing over 16,000 tons, struck the starboard side of the *Empress* abaft the watertight bulkhead dividing the two boiler rooms.

Within a few minutes of the collision, "Lucky" Tower and the rest of the "black gang" knew the ship was doomed and they struggled up the listing ladders to the boat deck. In fifteen minutes, the liner turned over on her beam ends and sank beneath the muddy, swift waters of the St. Lawrence.

She took with her over 1,000 passengers and crew to their deaths. "Lucky" Tower, however, hung on to a makeshift raft and was taken aboard the tug *Eureka*, an hour later. The next day in Rimouski, Tower swore he would never sail again — and probably meant it.

Friday, May 7th, 1915, saw the Cunarder *Lusitania* with 1,257 passengers and a crew of 795 approach the Irish coast after an uneventful voyage from New York that had begun the previous Saturday. Captain William T. Turner was in command of the 32,000 tonner and a stocky little oiler called "Lucky" Tower was on the engine room gang.

At 1:40 p.m. Captain Turner recognized the familiar landmark, Old Head of Kinsdale. He estimated he was offshore ten miles and would ar-

rive at Liverpool on the morning of May 8th.

Kapitan Walther Schwieger, thirty-two-year-old commander of the German submarine U-20 had other ideas. He kept his U boat just beneath the surface of the placid seas. As the *Lusitania* came on, passing within a few hundred yards of his forward torpedo tubes, Schwieger gave the order which sent the deadly 40-knot cylinder of destruction on its way.

The hit was perfect, from Schwieger's point-of-view, and as he watched transfixed at his periscope, he saw the liner "heel to starboard, at the same time diving deeper at the bow."

In eighteen minutes, the *Lusitania* had completed her death throes and rested on the sandy bottom at 300 feet. She took almost 1,200 persons with her — but she did not take "Lucky" Tower.

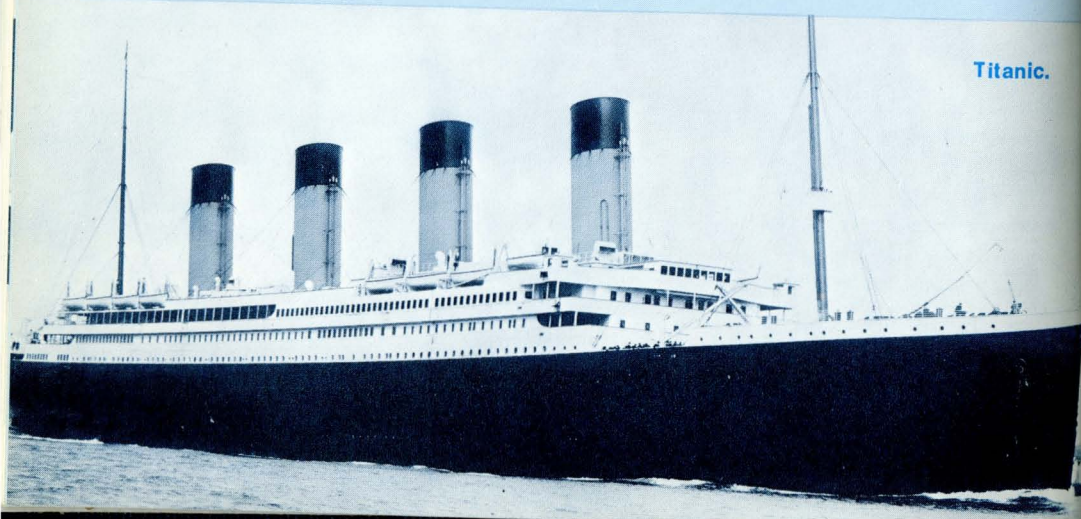
Tower, unafraid and undaunted, was landed at Liverpool and when he was paid off and had reinforced his tired, wet bones with a tot of rum, he signed on another freighter. But by now Tower's fame had spread and the mariner's telegraph warned, "Tower is a Jonah — don't sail with him!"

It was the same everywhere. No one would sail with "Lucky" Tower and he disappeared into the sleazy anonymity of the Liverpool docks.

Some say Tower grew a beard and changed his name and sailed again. Some say he was aboard the *Lamport* and Holt liner *Vestris* when she departed New York on November 10th, 1928, never to dock again.

Others who knew Tower well say he oiled on the Ward liner *Morro Castle* as she sped northwards from Havana on that cold, windy night of September 8th, 1934. To end up a smoldering, rusted hulk; a funeral pyre for 134 persons.

But then mariners are a superstitious lot. Maybe he figured three times was enough.



Titanic.

Seafarers in ships passing along the West Coast of South America, seeing the towering mountains not far inshore, seldom realize that, at one spot where the coast of Peru trends to southeast, there are ships up there in the Andes, even steamships like those they are voyaging in.

The Andes mountains are like a backbone to the continent of South America; they sweep from end to end of the western part, their sky-reaching peaks, often snowclad, rising within sight of the coast of Peru and Chile. Over twelve thousand feet above sea level, in a depression in the midst of the mountains, is the highest navigable body of water in the world, Lake Titicaca.

The lake, 122 miles long and 47 across at its widest part, lies on the border between Peru and Bolivia. On this lake with its 3,200 square miles of water surface steamships cruise two-and-a-half miles above the ocean.

From the dawn of recorded history there were boats on this inland sea, most of them used for fishing, but some for transport of goods and pas-

sengers. Today many boats of identical design and materials are still in use. They are made of tortora reeds which grow in profusion in some of the shallower parts of the lake. Bundles of these reeds are lashed together to form the hulls, and the larger boats are often equipped with masts carrying sails made of the same reeds.

Anthropologist and valiant mariner, Thor Heyerdahl, years ago noted how these Lake Titicaca reed boats resembled boats used in Africa on the Nile, and on Lake Chad — boats made of papyrus reeds. The resemblance was so close that only an expert could tell them apart, and even constructional details were alike. From this Heyerdahl theorized that ancient mariners from the Mediterranean shores of Africa had voyaged in papyrus reed boats to South America centuries ago.

To prove the possibility of his theory he decided to cross the Atlantic in a reed boat. The first attempt at this daring voyage in a papyrus reed boat he named *Ra* was made in 1969. Heyerdahl and his companions left Safi, Morocco, on May 25th. They were

forced to abandon *Ra* in sinking condition short of Barbados after sailing 2662 miles from Africa. *Ra* had been built with the aid of some Lake Chad boat builders.

A second attempt was made in 1970. This time the Norwegian anthropologist got some men from the Lake Titicaca region to help him construct his boat which he named *Ra II*. Setting out again from Safi on May 17th with his crew, *Ra II* reached Bridgetown, Barbados on July 12th. The reed boat constructed as the mountaintop mariners of Lake Titicaca build them, successfully crossed the ocean, sailing 3270 miles in 57 days.

Not only are there primitive reed boats navigating on Lake Titicaca, but wooden-hulled boats, and also steamships. The first steamships on the lake were the iron-hulled *Yavari* and *Yapura*. Fabricated in England in 1862, the structural parts and engines were transported by ship around Cape Horn to Africa and Peru. The railroad did not run far inland in those days, and it was an almost superhuman effort

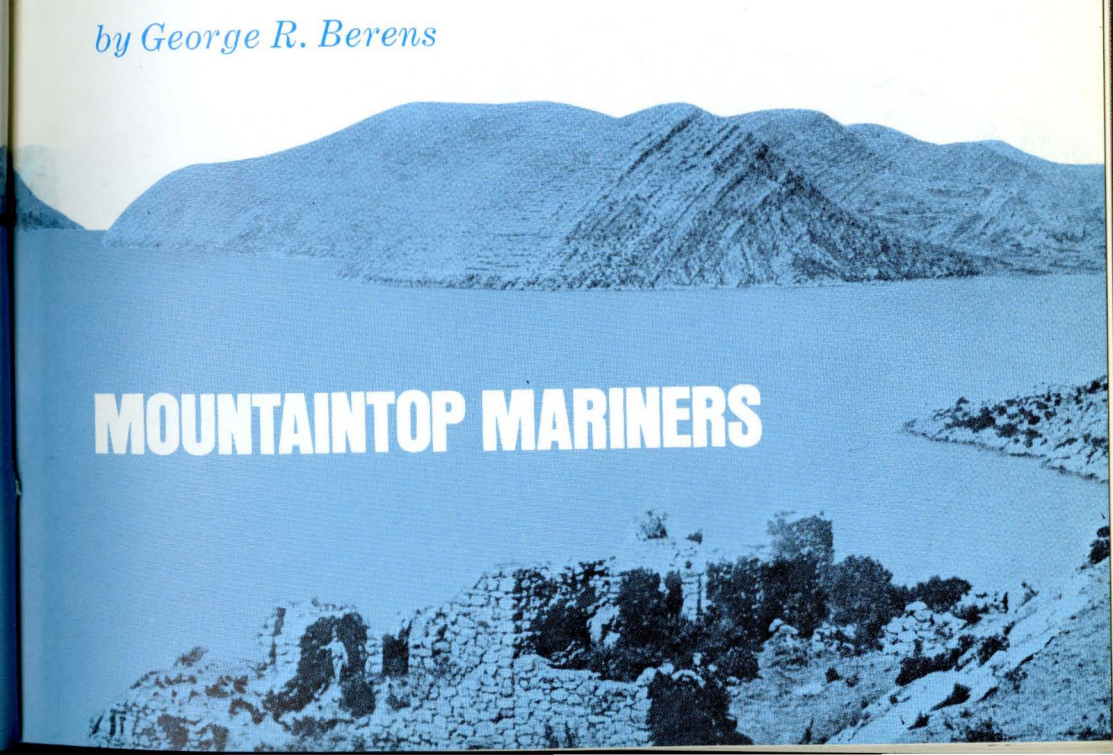
that saw these ship parts transported across the rugged mountains to Puno on Lake Titicaca by mules over trails that climbed to seventeen thousand feet before dropping to the lake. In Puno the parts were put together to make these two steamships each over a hundred feet long. They cruised the lake regularly for eighty years, and are still in existence.

Three newer, larger steamships ply the sometimes stormy waters of the lake today. The *Olianta* is the largest. Two hundred and fifty feet long, of 2000 gross tons, she was built in England in 1930, and transported to the Peruvian seaport as were her predecessors, except that the steamships that carried her parts came through the Panama Canal, and by then there was a railroad from the coast to Puno, which made the transportation of the steamship parts over the mountains less difficult.

So, up there high in the mountains, fresh-water mariners voyage in their craft just as the salt-water seamen do over two miles below them. ■

by George R. Berens

MOUNTAINTOP MARINERS



A Salute to Our Neighbors

Tenth of a series of brief articles on some of the organizations and institutions established in Lower Manhattan very early in its history, all of them nearby to Seamen's Church Institute of New York.

BROOKLYN BRIDGE



Painting by George Gray, from Institute collection

In legend and story, in painting and photo, in poetry and prose, the Brooklyn Bridge has inspired and evoked more praise and comment than any other bridge in America.

The first to span the East River, this beautiful suspension bridge is even today the most picturesque of all the bridges spanning the rivers and harbors of New York. The majestic stone towers with their buttresses and pointed Gothic arches are a remarkably clear statement of structural de-

sign and stand in sharp contrast to the graceful sloping sweep of the cables.

It is a milestone in the history of American engineering. This great structure, with its arcaded stone approaches, was the longest suspension bridge in the world from the time of its completion in 1883 until 1903.

It has an overall length of 6,016 feet, and the bridge itself is 133 feet above mean high water. It was a structural triumph attributable to the genius of John A. Roebling, the designer, and to

the construction skill of his son, Washington A. Roebling.

One of the ingenious methods introduced by the Roeblings in the construction was the pulley-and-reel system which made possible the spinning-on-site of the great cables supporting the bridge.

"The New York City Guide", WPA American Guide Series, in describing the structure said: "The promenade still draws its visitors, lyrical, noisy, or inarticulate. In the famous 'view' of the bay and sky line, tourists encounter the original of a long-familiar picture post-card panorama; while the high arched towers and vast curving cables of the Bridge itself are rediscovered daily. . . . On summer days old ladies, invalids, Sunday morning strollers, unemployed men, and wandering boys and girls absorb here the indolence of space, sun and water.

"Employees of downtown office buildings seek at the Bridge during lunch time and after work a session with the outer world. At twilight, the conventional beauty of the setting attains such intensity that even . . . lovers are sublimated. And in the wastes of night, so passionate is the contrast between the deserted and melancholy Bridge entrances and the moonlit altitude of the passage itself, that the solitary pedestrian feels himself drawn into association with all the extravagances of the poets."

Like the Hope Diamond, the Brooklyn Bridge has been haunted by tragedy. Twenty men were killed in building it. The designer, John A. Roebling, had his foot caught in a trolley slip during the first year of construction, and died of gangrene. His son and daughter-in-law took over; so did the jinx.

Young Washington Roebling, in sinking the caisson, got the "bends" (then known as "caisson disease") and was crippled and twisted in pain the rest of his life.

His wife, Emily, carried instruc-

tions from her husband's bedside to the workers for the eleven years it took to finish the job.

The bad luck didn't end there. Every Sunday on the pedestrians' promenade, the bridge used to be like Fifth Avenue at Easter. One of those Sundays, a gang of pickpockets started the rumor that the bridge was collapsing. The crowd stampeded to the exits, and twelve people were killed before the police could quiet things down.

Erected in an era when horsedrawn vehicles were the prevailing mode of transportation, Brooklyn Bridge nevertheless could be adapted to serve the automotive age. Originally the bridge carried cable cars in the center lanes, the outer roadways being available for vehicles.

As rejuvenated, the bridge provides three lanes for cars in each direction instead of the two formerly available. Each roadway is 30 feet wide, making possible three 10-foot lanes. The old two-lane roadways were only 16 feet 7½ inches wide, restricting each lane to little more than 8 feet.

The design for transforming the span into a strictly vehicular bridge was approved in 1949.

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission said "the Brooklyn Bridge has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

"The Brooklyn Bridge is one of the outstanding suspension bridges in the world; it is much admired for its singular beauty and architectural significance not surpassed by any of the later bridges spanning the East River. It represents a milestone in the history of American engineering and its presence still lends prestige to our city."

Address Correction Requested

IN QUIETUDE

In quietude this day
eased the birth of dawn
silently the moon
closes its lips at night.

In quietude the ships
sail on from place to place;
seas along the coast
ebb and swell their tides.

In quietude the Lord
without sound or word
brings infinite calm
to a homesick sailor's soul.

D. M. Pettinella

THE RESTLESS SEA

The restless sea comes home across the sand
And every promontory leans to greet
This wedding of the water and the land,
In clean, cool curves of silver at my feet.
The tide comes in, the tide goes out. No more
I stand and watch the ebb and flow alone;
This same sea, breaking on another shore
Unites me with a world I have not known.

Nonee Nolan