Fleet Week 2016!
Matt Lasher, General Manager

This year’s Fleet Week cruises were amazing. There is no better place to be than aboard with us for San Francisco Fleet Week.

Captain Wallace and our crew did a masterful job positioning us directly under center stage for the duration of the air show performances after a beautiful midday cruise around the bay and under the Golden Gate Bridge. The weather cooperated nicely and gave us two calm, clear and warm days on the water. Spending time aboard a ship steeped in rich nautical history adds contrast to the amazing show the Blue Angels put on and the technologically advanced US Navy ships that visit the bay this time every year. Without the service of ships like the *O’Brien* and those that served aboard, the advances these shows display simply wouldn’t exist. The entire experience reinforces the importance of our American maritime heritage.

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Wine Tasting on the Bay
John Campbell

Guests and crew enjoyed a spectacular afternoon Bay cruise and wine tasting aboard the *O’Brien* at the end of August. The cruise featured nine Northern California wineries including Chateau St. Jean, Beaulieu Vineyards, Stags Leap, Etude, St. Clement, Acacia, Beringer, Provenance, and Sterling Vineyards. The wineries generously donated the wine and staff to pour and answer questions from guests about the various selections offered. We were also fortunate to have a delicious selection of fine artisanal cheeses generously donated by Janice Lafranchi Reilly and her husband Kevin Reilly, owners of the Nicasio Valley Cheese Company. Guests and crew noshed on mini baguette sandwiches, salads, cookies and jams from La Boulangerie de San Francisco.

Manning the helm that day was Captain Cevan LeSieur who sailed the ship around the San Francisco Bay. Also on board was Captain Patrick Maloney who narrated the cruise sharing the history of sites such as the Lone Sailor Memorial, Fort Mason and the *O’Brien’s* original berth, the San Francisco Bar Pilots at Pier 9, the BAE shipyard and many more. Who says you can’t drink wine and learn something! Thank you Captains LeSieur and Maloney, and to all who donated to help us make this possible.

We hope to host another wine cruise next year; stay tuned for details!
Fleet Week 2016! (CONTINUED)

The proceeds from all of our events go towards the operation and maintenance of the SS Jeremiah O’Brien. The act of keeping her seaworthy is an increasingly complex and expensive endeavor and a successful weekend like Fleet Week go a long way to preserving her. Fleet Week marks our last cruise event of the year so take comfort in knowing that the money spent to get on board goes towards her preservation.

It takes a large number of people to get us through these weekends and I would like to take a moment to thank everyone.

To our passengers, thank you for your patronage! Our passengers ranged from a World War II military historian and Bay Area Sea Cadets, to the San Franciscan looking for a unique venue to enjoy the airshow. The crowd all had one thing in common, they all had a wonderful time.

To our members and volunteers, thank you for continuing to give time and support to the O’Brien. Behind the scenes it takes countless volunteer hours and lots of resources to get us cruise-ready. Without you all, achieving our goal of preserving the Jeremiah as an operational WWII vessel for future generations wouldn’t be possible.

To our sponsors and the San Francisco community thank you for providing the support that keeps us sailing. The Jeremiah is lucky to count on so many friends that recognize us as a worthy cause.

The journey forward into next year is going to be fun with so much going on. In addition to our annual cruises, John Nichols one of our engineers, is hosting an oiler training course for the Red Oak Victory and our Engine Department volunteers. Kyle Day, our events coordinator, has dozens of overnight visits scheduled with Bay Area Boy and Girl Scout Troops. In addition to all this we will be hosting special events through the winter and spring seasons.

See you aboard!

Fair Winds and Following Seas,

Matt Lasher
General Manager
Help us get to Drydock.

In order to keep steaming with US Coast Guard and American Bureau of Shipping certifications, inspection and repairs once every 5 years are required of the O’Brien.

Well over $1 million will be needed to take the ship to drydock, but this is the only way to keep the ship sailing.

We’ve already raised $600k with your help... but we still need:

- **$270K** - Preparation, blasting, painting and coating of tanks, hulls, masts, forward and aft peaks.
- **$230K** - Repairs to piping, propeller, sea chests, sea valves, rudder, tail shaft, anchor chain, zincons.
- **$70K** - Tug assist to and out of dry dock, vessel inspections throughout duration of dry dock, safety checks, dockage fees.

It is a tremendous task, and we ask the friends of the ship—members of the National Liberty Ship Memorial, people who have sailed with us on voyages around San Francisco Bay, and people who are interested in World War II and the Merchant Marine, to give us a hand. Help us financially with our routine maintenance and our next drydock.

Thank You.
Remembering Marci Hooper
Carl Nolte

The Jeremiah O’Brien lost one of its stalwarts and a key figure in its history on November 2, when Marci Hooper, who was a volunteer and later the business manager, died after a long illness.

Ms. Hooper, who was 68, had a major role in the operation of the ship and did invaluable behind the scenes work to make possible the ship’s triumphal 1994 voyage to Normandy and back for the 50th anniversary of D-Day.

“The O’Brien was very dear to her heart,” said Valerie Lienkaemper, Ms. Hooper’s sister. And Ms. Hooper was very dear to the ship’s crew. Many felt that the O’Brien would not have been able to make the Normandy trip without Marci’s organizing skills, expertise and hard work. Though she was content to let others take the credit, Marci was the quintessential unsung heroine and organizer, making arrangements for fuel, food for the crew, negotiations with the 15 ports the ship visited on the six month long voyage. She even arranged a special commemorative crew sweater presented to President Bill Clinton when he came aboard when the ship was in English waters. Clinton so valued the Jeremiah O’Brien sweater that he took it with him on other trips. Marci received the prestigious William Diffley award from the Historic Naval Ships Asssociation for her work in making the O’Brien a success.

Though Marci Hooper never went to sea, she had a fondness for ships and history which never left her. Her family treasures a picture of Marci as a young girl with her family aboard the museum ship Balclutha in the 1950s. Besides her work on the O’Brien, she volunteered on the old steam schooner Wapama and always visited historic ships on vacation trips.

She also paid her own way to the East Coast to sail with the John W. Brown, the only other Liberty Ship and worked with the vessel while it was under way.

But the O’Brien was her love. She joined the ship as a volunteer soon after the ship sailed down from the Mothball fleet in 1979, worked in the ship’s store and later became office and business manager. After she left the ship she had a new career with Wells Fargo bank.

Marci Hooper was born in San Francisco and was always proud of being a native daughter and was fascinated with the city’s history. She was a third generation San Franciscan, and loved to point out that her great-grandparents were married at Old St. Mary’s Church on California Street in 1889.

She attended St. Rose Academy, City College and USF, and worked in administration at the Hibernia Bank. She believed in public service and volunteered for election campaigns. She never sought the limelight, preferring instead to do the grunt work, stuffing envelopes, making phone calls. She was picked as “Miss Young Democrat of San Francisco” in 1971. Though she died a few days before the 2016 election, she made sure to vote by mail. “Good government was important to her,” her sister Valerie said.

A funeral mass was said for the repose of her soul at St. James Church in San Francisco followed by a celebration of her life at Historic Old Molloy’s bar in Daly City, the site of many traditional Irish events. “She always wanted to have a last party,” her sister Valerie said.
Marci was a great person and worked very hard for the ship. Back in 1992 June and I made our first trip to visit our daughter Sharon in San Francisco and this is when I first visited the JOB then berthed at Fort Mason. The engine room in particular was a time warp for me and very familiar as I had been on many similar ships from Sunderland and as an apprentice, before university, had helped build steam engines exactly as the JOB engine. We learned of the projected Normandy voyage and left some dollars in the oil drum in the officers’ mess. Back home some months later, I read about the search for crew for the Normandy voyage, and wrote to the office requesting a position, any position, in the engine room. (I hold a combined first class certificate, steam and diesel, from our Board of Trade, equivalent of your Coast Guard, plus a degree in marine engineering from Durham University so zip thought I had a chance!) Marci replied but pointed out that as a foreigner I was disallowed due to your infamous Jones Act, but she asked me if I would be a docent in Portsmouth for ten days. Which I did. As I stood on the berth at Portsmouth watching the ship come in I met Marci for the first time. She had single-handedly organized much of the arrangements and celebrations in the U.K. and France and deserved credit for that successful voyage. Marci lived within walking distance of my daughter Sharon and her husband Andrew, so June and I visited several times and had meals with her. Another old friend gone.

From Pat Burke
Marci was there at the beginning of the 4th of July event when the crew would watch the fire works from the ship at Ft. Mason and then just figured that we could make some money off of the event. She worked like crazy to make the Normandy trip happen, without her we wouldn’t have been able to go. She kept things going while we were away, went to England on her own dime just to be with the ship, and helped with the Clinton Commander-in-Chief sweater, which President Clinton was seen wearing on separate occasions after the Normandy visit. She was a really good office manager.

From Linda Greig
My reminiscences of Marci started after the ship returned from Normandy, since I joined the crew after the voyage. I worked in the office when it was at Fort Mason and although Marci had left the organization by then, her presence was very obvious by way of numerous letters, photos and mementoes of the Normandy trip bearing Marci’s name. Since Marci left the NLSM we have been through numerous managers, all of them could have learned a lot from Marci!

One day about five years ago, Marci and I met for drinks at the Buena Vista, the traditional SF bar at Fisherman’s Wharf. As a third generation San Franciscan she knew all the good places to go. I said “Marci, we want to take the ship back to Normandy in 2019 for the 75th Anniversary of D-Day, do you have any advice?” She said, “well, do you have a spare $5 million laying around?” Then we launched into a conversation of how in 1993 she had drummed up money, support, pledges, licensed crew, connections and anything else she could get her hands on to enable the ship to make that voyage. Using her own funds, she traveled to Europe to make plans how and where the ship could make the trip. Logistically it was a very very long shot, but Marci’s determination never flagged for a minute and she made it happen! She is the unsung heroine of the Normandy trip!

From Rudy Horak
Marci was a True Waterfront person... a favorite of mine... right up there with Tom Patterson.

From Walt Jaffee
Marci was a dear friend. When I started volunteering on the O’Brien she encouraged me and had me write Steady as She Goes for a few years.

A lot of the reason the Normandy trip was so successful is that Marci dedicated herself to getting everything on track. She went over in advance of the voyage to pave the way; finding out who to meet, arranging pier space and events, setting up contacts for the crew, arranging for helpful contacts to greet Adm. Tom Patterson and Capt. George Jahn. I know she spent a significant amount of her own money on travel and accommodations so she would have enough time to do all that she did. I always felt like she wasn’t appreciated for that. She deserves a special place in all our memories for her dedication to the Normandy voyage, the ship and the crew.
From Jo Lawrence

Marci was with the ship from the start. She ran the ‘slop chest’ when it was just a few items set up in the officer’s mess on steaming weekends, and she ran the office for many years. Without all her groundwork in preparation for our sailing to Normandy in ’94 we would not have had such a great reception in England and France. Almost all her work was behind the scenes and I don’t think she got the credit she deserved. From an old San Francisco family, Marci developed a love for historic ships and history in general from an early age. She loved this city and she loved the Jeremiah O’Brien.

From Odette LePendu

To Marci Hooper, the most courageous, intelligent, hard-working human being who took over as manager of the JOB in 1992.

Stoically she screened each potential crewmember who signed up to man the JOB and the potential whole galley. Ah, those darlings who loved the ship like my husband, Francois LePendu.

In France with all the crewmembers Francois was very active doing translations and acting as interpreter during the 50th anniversary of D-Day. At his return home to San Francisco, he kept the JOB at the top of his priorities. The crew were the ViPs of San Francisco, they were heroes of WWII!

When I worked as a volunteer, Marci had me open all envelopes from France, read, translate and write thank you notes for all the donations that the French people had sent.

We remain very close friends with the French, and they come all the way from France to celebrate and honor D-Day.

Dear Marci, I honor you as Miss Jeremiah O’Brien. We will miss you terribly.

Ed Von Der Porten:

My memories about Marci on the Normandy voyage twenty-two years ago are strangely muted. I remember her regular presence during the English part of the cruise, which my wife Saryl and I participated in, but no outstanding moments. Perhaps that is the best memory of her there. She quietly, or as quietly as Marci could do anything, got the organizing done, so we were not aware of the complexities of managing so difficult a project and just assumed that “Marci has it in hand.” And she did. She was the key person to make the cruise happen, although others stood in the limelight. That is all the more remarkable given the diverse characters she had to manage, from the Admiral, through a certain newsman, on down.

One memory from 1992 or so, I was new to the ship and went to see her with a wild idea. Saryl and I had run down a rumor and a vague lead to find a huge cache of World War II and Korean War model kits of ships, airplanes and military vehicles in a barn on a farm in the Willamette Valley in Oregon. They had come from a model wholesaler’s overstocks of half a century earlier and were there at the time of his death. They were for sale by his heirs. I suggested that we buy some and sell them on the ship to fund our planned shipboard museum. Marci decided to make this a big event for a ship that lay obscurely at a pier at Fort Mason. She borrowed (possibly from the Maritime Museum Association) $5,000 to buy as many ship-model kits as we could and arranged a special Saturday sale to the public. We had no idea if it would work, but an article in the Chronicle, probably arranged by Marci, gave us an amazing day. When I arrived well before the 1000 opening time and lined up my volunteer sales force from a local model club, there were people lined up on the pier. I grabbed Gene Anderson, gave him a clip board, and told him to take names in order of the visitors’ arrival on the pier. At 1000 sharp, he let the first ten buyers, some of whom had flown in from southern California, up the gangway and into Number Two hold. Marci and I decided on the spot that we had to ration the kits to forestall a possible riot on the pier. Each purchaser was permitted to buy only five kits. There was no protest. Then the next ten were let aboard. Same arrangement. At precisely 1200, the last satisfied purchaser and the last ship-model kit went down the gangway and Marci had $10,000 in her till.

We had taken all the names and addresses, so Marci reinvested in more model kits, this time including airplane and vehicle models in addition to the ship models. We had another pier side event after sending out postcards to the previous buyers. We continued the sales aboard the ship during cruises after the two special sales, and eventually sold more than 4,000 kits and earned just over $30,000 for the ship’s museum in thirteen years, as well as providing an interesting experience for our cruise visitors.

We took kits to Europe and sold them at the four port stops in Great Britain.

We also kept kits for our future museum, and we arranged for other museums to acquire kits that they could use. The Curtis Aviation Museum in New York purchased one of every kit of a Curtis airplane that we had in our list. We sent a model kit of the battleship Texas to the USS Texas for its collection. We provided old kits for the Hiller Aviation Museum’s gift shop.

All this was possible because Marci thought big and acted decisively.
Bargenquest Memorial Bench Commemoration

We are so honored that Brian Bargenquest has donated a memorial bench aboard the Jeremiah O’Brien in the name of his father, Milton J. Bargenquest.

“When the US entered WWII my father originally enlisted in the Army, and was assigned to the Tank Destroyer Battalion and its OCS program,” said Brian. “However, anti-tank forces became a lesser priority and he was mustered out (with an honorable discharge) as he was also over 30 years-old.”

Still wanting to serve, Brian says his father joined the Merchant Marine in early 1943, went through rushed training at the Merchant Marine Academy and was assigned as Purser on the SS Joseph K Toole, a munitions ship. A highlight of their tour came at the battle of Lingayen Gulf, where their Navy gun crew brought down two kamikazes, one some 50 yards from the ship. They salvaged some of the wreckage and the ship’s machinist fashioned wrist and watch bands for the crew inscribing the event and date.

Milton J. Bargenquest is survived by his son Brian, and his grandson Kirk Bargenquest and family, which include great grandchildren Luke, Zachary, and Chloe.

There are still a few benches left. If you’d like to reserve a memorial bench aboard the SS Jeremiah O’Brien please contact Matt Lasher, General Manager, at matt@ssjeremiahobrien.org or contact him at 415-544-0100.

All the Way from Australia— Assistant Chief Engineer Bruce Reilly

Bruce Reilly, based in Sydney, Australia is a highly qualified and experienced Marine Chief Engineer (steam and motor), and a world recognized automotive engineer and specialist in laser truck wheel alignment equipment. He and his son operate a Design/ Patent/Invention, Manufacturing and Export Sales company with Training Worldwide in 28 Countries.

Bruce started his career at 15 in Fitting & Machining with BHP Billiton Steelworks in his hometown of Port Kembla New South Wales. Eventually, he went deep sea with the BHP “Iron Clipper” (36,000 DWT 14,000 BHP) after the first of many full time three-month courses in his career of Marine Engineering. He moved up from 7th to 6th to 5th Engineer rapidly.

During the Vietnam War he served as an officer in the Australian Army as Chief Engineer of an ex US Navy WWII Tank Landing Ship (LSM) and on one occasion in 1965 was berthed at a Saigon Wharf, next to a WWII Liberty Ship and got together with the vessels Chief Engineer.

“I always had an interest in the Liberty Ships contributions to WW2,” said Bruce. “In 2009 I discovered the SS Jeremiah O’Brien and fell in love with this marine engineering marvel! Joined the volunteer crew and am now a life time member with Assist Chief Engineer status.”

Bruce travels to San Francisco four times a year to work on the O’Brien and is grateful for the cabin and meals on board the ship to help defray these costly trips. He spends many long hours prepping and painting the deteriorated, peeling, 70-year-old faded paint in the engine room from funnel top to lower deck giving the O’Brien a wonderful professional finish.

Thank you Bruce for all of your hard work!
THANK YOU DONORS!
Thank you to all our donors for helping to keep the SS Jeremiah O’Brien sailing.

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LETTERS

My November “Professional” arrived yesterday and as is my habit, my first read was the always perceptive and knowledgeable article by Michael Grey, MBE.

However on this occasion he suggested that the Liberty Ship of WW2 was DESIGNED for only a single voyage. Not possible, this Sunderland ship design was for a normal life expectancy as was the NEM triple expansion engine which powered it. The origin of this misstatement was some politician who suggested that if one voyage carrying war supplies for the Allies was completed before the ship was destroyed by the enemy, then it’s construction was justified. Not the same thing.

The Liberty SS Jeremiah O’Brien, home port San Francisco, built in 1943, whilst obviously commercially un-economic, is still today in full class with ABS and the US Coastguard 73 years later. She also completed a Transatlantic voyage from SF to Portsmouth and back in 1994 with no problems. Single voyage? I think not!

Regards, David Aris, IMAREST (Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology) member since 1955. (0161931)

Dear Eliz,

I just received (and finished reading) the current Summer issue of SASG. I can’t help but feel emotional when I read your “Fond Farewell.” It was nicely expressed and my whole family will miss you when we board the Jeremiah once again. We all wish you the BEST with the same Fair Winds and Following Seas. Yes, it will be nice for you to be with and enjoy more time with your family.

I am enclosing a check for our O! Girl… the Jeremiah O’Brien Dry Dock Fund in your honor Eliz. We will always remember you and all you have done for us.

Affectionately,

Norm Balko family

When the JOB arrived at Fort Mason, May of 1980, masters, mates, and pilots provided security. I stood security watches for a period of time. I am retired from APL, my last command was the C-10 Class Containership President Truman, call sign WNDP. Also sailed master with US Lines and Delta Lines.

Captain Thomas J. Picha

WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS!

BOOK A SPEAKER TODAY!

Enlighten and entertain the members of your next club meeting with one of our knowledgeable speakers from the SS Jeremiah O’Brien. Learn about the history of the Liberty ships and stories about the O’Brien’s past and present. Call us at 415-544-0100 to book a speaker for your next meeting!
Chevron Volunteer Day

Thank you to our Chevron volunteers for coming out this fall to paint our main decks! Jeffrey Moore, Advisor of Policy, Government and Public Affairs at Chevron, coordinated the day’s event with the help of Brian Goldman, also a Chevron employee and volunteer on the O’Brien.

Shipkeeper Phil O’Mara prepped the areas to be painted and showed the volunteers what to do. The volunteers wasted no time getting the #1 and #2 tween decks cleaned and painted. The day was a great success and the O’Brien received an additional cash contribution of $2000 from Chevron.

We look forward to partnering with Chevron volunteers again soon!

You can volunteer! We are always looking for more people to cook, clean, repair, show visitors around the ship, help with our overnight program, or help in the office.

Call us at 415-544-0100 or download a volunteer application at ssjeremiahobrien.org.