



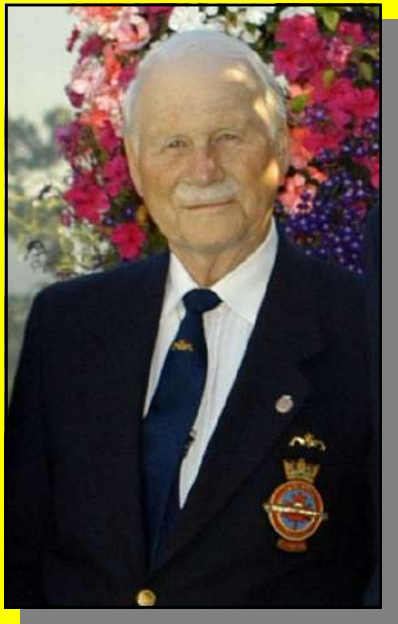
Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society  
Victoria BC Canada  
vmss@shaw.ca  
<http://members.shaw.ca/vmss>



Yahoo! Newsgroup : VIRCB  
Vancouver Island Radio Control Boaters

## VMSS Silent Auction

### Len Gibbs R/C Model



#### LEN GIBBS

**Len is a western Canadian artist well known for his unique style of high realism. His original paintings and drawings have been widely exhibited and nationally acclaimed. Len is usually at Harrison pond every Sunday running his tally-ho submarine. He has donated a square rigged sailboat that is motorized and to be auctioned off and all the monies will be donated to the Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society. There will be other items to be auctioned at a later date.**

**Contact: Bill Andrews.**



## Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society

Christmas Social – December 10, 2009

Call to order: 7:30 pm

Present: 43 members and guests attending at the Gorge Vale Golf Club

**Dave Taylor** welcomed everyone attending tonight's function. It was a good year for the boat club and next year will be as well.

The following awards were presented during the evening:

- **Bill Sturrock** had an Achievement award for **Romain Klaasen**, who could not be present, for 20 years of Binnacle Articles.
- **Mike Creasy** presented **Jack Plummer** with a Special Achievement Award. On the plaque was an actual link of anchor chain from the RCMP boat St. Roch.
- The Powell Cup was awarded to Robb McDonough.
- The Denton Cup was awarded to **Dave Taylor**.
- **Dave Denton** announced that **Ernie Reid** had won the Photo Contest.
- **Dave Taylor** presented the President's Cup to **Bill Sturrock**.

Lots of door prizes were handed out as well as a 50/50 draw was held with the winner taking home \$39.

Respectfully Submitted  
**Scott Munford**, Secretary



## 2010 Executive Committee

<b>President:</b> Barry Fox	294-0350
<b>Vice-Pres:</b> Rob McDonough	598-4619
<b>Secretary:</b> Scott Munford	382-1673
<b>Treasurer:</b> Mike Creasy	965-6487
<b>Show Coordinator:</b> B. Andrews	479-2761
<b>Binnacle Editor:</b> Bill Sturrock	479-0239
<b>Quartermaster:</b> Bob Rainsford	383-2256
<b>CRD Liaison:</b> Rob McDonough	598-4619
<b>Parks Liaison:</b> Mike Claxton	479-6367
<b>Sailing Director:</b> David Cook	388-5994
<b>Librarian:</b> Dave Denton	478-1800
<b>Publicity:</b> Rob Ross	592-6866
<b>Director at Large:</b> Ken Ensor	478-6884



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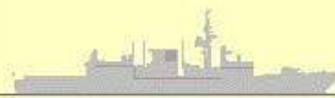
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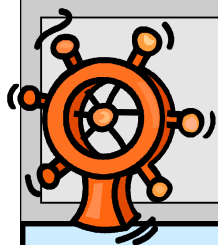
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## The Prez Says...

Changes and new territory. That is a part of our theme from what I see.

New territory comes in the obvious form of our new meeting location. I think you will find our new found digs to be quite acceptable. One of the first things you will find (I hope) is that the library is very accessible. It is in a small hallway just beside the actual meeting room so there is no going up and down stairs to get to it. Before the meeting and during our normal break are good time to take a look at all the material that is there.

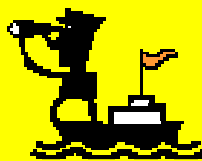
The change on that is that we actually have a rent amount to pay every month when we meet and that will be more in total for the year than we got away with through our honorarium at the old place. So you might see some changes at our meetings to help offset the new cost increase. But we'll try to make that as fun as we can.

As the new Exec gets their feet under them you will see the general membership involved in some more of the business decisions. For some time now, the Exec has made just about every decision on what events to have, where to have them and when they will happen. That process may be a part of why we have trouble getting member commitment to man some of these events. So, shortly we will start coming to the meeting with some of those decisions. Of course, if you vote in favour of having an event it will be a natural assumption you will support and participate in it in some way.

Our club is pretty lucky in that we have a lot of continuity within the Exec every year. We are also fortunate to have a real good core of people who do stand for those positions. That sure makes the club operation flow much more easily.

As I write this I am looking out the window at sunshine and a pretty nice day. I think I should go sailing. That ability to go sailing virtually year round is something that I don't think everyone appreciates as much as they could. You don't have to go very far to the east of here to find frozen water that will be that way for a good time longer. So while most of the rest of the country sits in their workshops working on their boats, we are out using them. That is a terrific situation, for us.

The Christmas Party and Awards Ceremony was a pretty resounding success this year. A very good turnout, a fabulous meal and we all got to enjoy



## ON THE RADAR

INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS

### Westshore Mall 29,30,31 January 2010



**Meetings: Second Thursday 7:30-9:30**  
4050 Carey Road  
Next is February 11, 2010



**POWER: Sundays 10 – 12**  
Harrison Model Yacht Pond (HYP)  
Dallas Road at Government Street



**SAILING: 1st and 3rd Sundays 1 – 3 PM**  
Beaver Lake  
Next is January 17th, 2010



**LANGFORD LAKE NAVY**  
**Wednesdays 9:30**  
Langford Lake, Leigh Rd at Trillium

the evening and walk away at the end of the night with no clean up duty. I think that is a tradition we need to keep going.

After all the fuss about where ever we might actually be for the club Christmas Boat Parade it turned out to be a great evening at Harrison pond. Lots of boats all lit up and maybe 50+ spectators stopping by to watch. Well done by all the skippers and a good publicity job by **Ron Armstrong**. Pretty successful.

I'll be off the page soon so I'll quit for now before the editor starts cutting me up. See you at the meeting and on the water.

-Barry





## THE SUB SUBJECT

I HAVEN'T YET RECEIVED THE INFORMATION I'M SEEKING from the San Diego Maritime Museum. So, in order to keep the ball rolling, I went for Plan "B" and decided on a rerun of the September 1999 column. It was in the series of reports on museum submarines that I had visited: in New Westminster (the Russian Foxtrot B-39, now named Cobra), the USS Pampanito (SS-383/AGSS-383), in San Francisco, and USS Blueback (SS-326) in Portland OR. To show the geographics of The Binnacle's readership, I attach a heavy-duty critique from a Russian in Salmon Arm and my polite but unrepentant response to it. That's life. You can't win 'em all, and it makes for pleasant reading. Now I wonder what flak it may draw this time around.

Accompanied by wife, son and two granddaughters, I devoted part of Boxing Day 1997 to being rushed through the so-called "Russian" sub (U-521), a piece of junk, dropping copious bucks (\$7.00 for me and less for my escorts), and snapping pictures. But my camera must have sensed something. The snaps didn't turn out all that well, 'cause I hadn't put in a film. The bear for punishment that travels with me drove me back on February 1 of last year (1998). There had been no improvement during the five or so weeks that had lapsed between disappointments No.1 and 2. The guide said (and seemed to know) very little on both dates, the tour was as fast and as unsatisfactory the second time as it had been the first time but, whoopee, now my pictures did turn out well and clear. Even the Cyrillic notices are plain and clear, but not understandable.

Perhaps, prejudice may have played a role. Why, for starters, was she advertised as a "Russian" sub? Her 1971 launching goes back to the days of the Evil Empire, when "U.S.S.R." and "Soviet" were part of our vocabulary. So, O.K., that's nit picking. Still, the hoped-for public appeal that may have lurked in the "Russian" moniker didn't do the trick. The owner-syndicate went belly up, U-521 was auctioned off to a Los Angeles-based group and, going by the Times-Colonist, may be towed to Victoria, for chris'sake. What if she sank in Active Pass? Would that thrill B.C. Ferries? Not all that likely.

Breathing easier now, I may as well jot down a few words about the U-521 sub, which the NATO gang had labeled a Foxtrot. The 300.1 foot long object was cobbled up by Sudomekh Krasnaya Sormova Shipyears, in Sverdlofsk (see why Russian and Ukrainian school kids fail spelling tests?) in '70-'71, commissioned in 1974 (three years to fix the leaks?) and decommissioned (all in one piece, by golly) after 19 years, in 1993. U-521 has or had three Tatra diesels, three shafts with a screw on the end of each, and three electric motors. Three, three and three must have made it easier to balance the very dented brute. Anyway, it says she trucked along at 18kts. Surfaced, and 16 dived. Not too shabby, what? Meanwhile, no one hides the fact that she represents and un-

mitigated knock-off of the Nazis' Type XXI. Just a few small differences here and there: for starters, the bodies at Sudomekh took a leaf out of the British Admiralty's book on subs, and made 100 percent sure to uglify the Type XXI's fine lines. Next, where the German workers may have used grinders, files and squares, the Sudomekh honchos must have issued torches, sledgehammers, picks, axes and guesses to their comrades. No kidding: I hadn't seen purer, clearer, fuller strength lack of pride in workmanship. Had the boat been mine, I'd have plastered Mickey Mouse decals all over. That way, I'd have know for sure why people could still laugh, after they'd parted wit seven loonies.

Another thing that hurt my eyes were the plywood partitions and paneling in the crew quarters. It looked as if the varnished wood was recycled from packing crates, or it may have been the rejects of a packing crate shop. Rough stuff. Count the knots, and win a prize.

It may well be that either the vendors or the new owners removed some of U-521's equipment, because there was not one periscope in sight, the radio room was as empty as a wasps' nest where the queen had pulled out, and in the engine room there wasn't a motor in sight. It looked as spacious and as empty as a ballroom before a dance. And I was suspicious of three plywood panels on the floor. Maybe they covered the holes left by the three Tatras?

Should you be tired of my tirade, I'll turn positive for a few brief moments.

The tour guide did know a few things all right. He mentioned that the four stern tubes could be loaded only from the outside. That isn't or wasn't all that unusual. The unusual is that, before loading those four torpedos, the Foxtrot's bow tanks had to be flooded so that the stern tubes' doors would come up above the waterline. Meanwhile, six bow tubes were rechargeable from indoors. That makes it unlikely U-521 was ever caught with not a fish ready to launch.

On one of the reserve berths in the torpedo room, there was one torpedo on display. It was painted green, had a very smooth finish, and sported a bronze screw that was impeccable in all regards. "The Soviets made this?" I asked. Indeed they did. In fact, bringing it into Canada had been quite a hassle. Customs had insisted on an inspection by an R./C.N. expert—just...to make sure.

Finally an unexpectedly nice touch: on the table in the officer's ward room sat a gorgeous samovar coffee urn. I'm not sure it came with the boat, but it was a nice touch. Oh, and by the way, the guide was fair enough to tell me that the controls column and its half wheel had come from a scrapped Canadian frigate. The original one was taken out in Sverdlofsk.

I talked to a former R.C.N. submariner who had also visited the Foxtrot in New West. He, generally, was

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

happier with what he'd than I am. He mentioned, for example, that the pressure hull where it had been cut for public access showed some excellent, nicely welded steel. From that and other impressions, I gather that the then Soviets and now Russians do not subscribe to the "What looks good usually is good" maxim. Obviously, their priorities in manufacturing differ from what we are accustomed to.

Next month, failing more info on the (now) Cobra, I'll come up with something—possibly reports on my visits to Pampanito and Blueback. Cheers and sorry I couldn't come to the December 10 party. Thought of you all that evening.

**Romanus Unicum.**



Ed. Note. This letter was posted in the guest book of our website.

I was rather saddened to read an article by Romain Klaasen, "The Russian Sub at Westminster". The author admits that "prejudice may have played a role" in his forming a negative opinion of the tour and the sub itself. However, it is not his experience I am saddened by. Rather, it is the tone of the article and the thinly disguised animosity toward the former Evil Empire and the present Russia. It is the sweeping generalizations like, "Russian and Ukrainian kids fail spelling tests", or the Russian workers' lack of pride in workmanship". It is very unfortunate that you allowed this uncerecermonious tirade to creep into the context of our otherwise wholesome hobby.

Aleksei Romanov <rossia@shuswap.net>

Salmon Arm, BC Canada - Saturday, September 25, 1999 at 02:53:58 (PDT)

November 22, 1999

Mr. A. Romanov, c/o The Binnacle,

Dear Sir:

Thank you for commenting on my September 1999 "The Sub Subject" column-published on our website and in our club's Binnacle.

Based on your reaction to my flippant, cavalier writing style, I now regret naming Russian and Ukrainian children. That could have been kept more general, I admit. I could have referred to difficult (to me) spelling, as well as the (again; to me) added complication of the Cyrillic alphabet. If, however, you had read all or some of my 14 earlier columns, you would most all likely have noted that I try to raise chuckles among my closelyknit V.M.S.S. membership/readership. So far, that group's feedback has been gratifying.

As far as my criticism of the boat is concerned, I cannot alter my views. To my eyes, it is one terrible example of industrial production-beyond words in this age. In spite of that expressed opinion, you may have overlooked my positive remarks about the sample torpedo, the gorgeous samovar and the second-hand praise for the pressure hull's welding.

Incidentally, last week I was told that at some time after my two visits, the American guide was succeeded by a youthful Russian woman. Apparently, she was well informed, and added greatly to the knowledge and enjoyment visitors derived from their tour.

Yours truly,

Romain L. Klaasen (Romanus Unicum)

# Old Wood & Rusty Iron Dread Nought –

by MIKE CREASY



Why do we have a navy? After all, Ottawa is a long way from salt water, and navies are expensive! In the early days of British North America and the Dominion of Canada, the Royal Navy had ships at Esquimalt and Halifax to protect us and

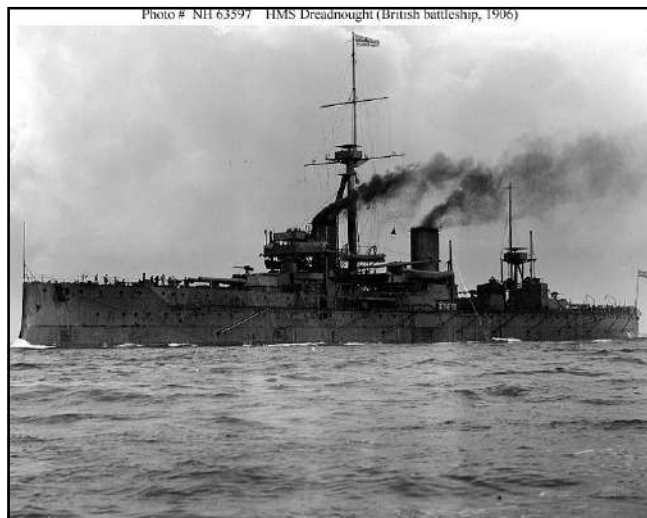
they did fairly well until the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Americans again began pushing north. The American Civil War had ended in 1865, British trade interests were stagnating and Canadians were just beginning the long, hard job of nation-building. Britain had growing interests in South Africa and Asia, and the cost of maintaining the Royal Navy's position as the pre-eminent naval force in the world was rising steadily.

Disputes over the boundaries of western Canada had simmered on for years. The Alaska purchase in 1867 added yet another element, with Teddy Roosevelt threatening to send in the Marines unless things went his way. Politicians everywhere soon realized that Canada could not be defended – in a military sense – from the United States. Britain saw the advantages of friendly relations with our southern neighbour, and began to toe the American line (Canada's new Dominion status meant that Great Britain retained authority for foreign relations. This situation was still in effect in the early 1900s, meaning that Canada needed British permission to start a Canadian Navy).

Canadian politicians had been wringing their hands over the idea of a Canadian Navy for years, with some opposed (just send money to Britain to help with costs) and some in support (time to cut the apron-strings).

Then, in 1904, the Royal Navy announced that it would abandon its colonial bases and concentrate its forces at home. Hand-wringing reached a fever pitch – who would protect us against those dastardly Americans, imperialist Russians or rapidly expanding Germans with their new colonial ideas?

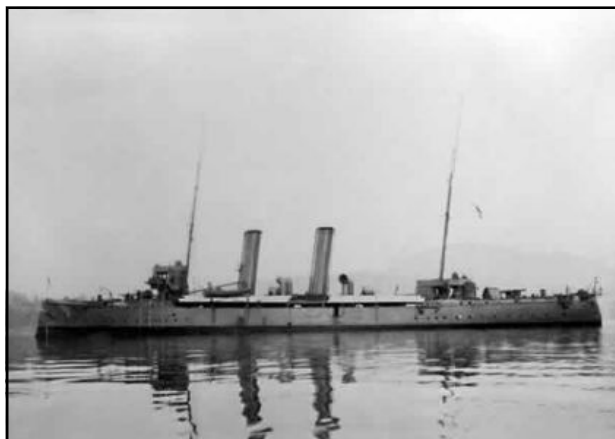
One reason why the Royal Navy decided to go home was the introduction of some radical new technologies in a completely new package. **HMS DREAD-NOUGHT** was so



advanced that she made previous battleship design obsolete. Not surprisingly, The Royal Navy now had to replace its entire fleet of large capital ships – and quickly – since the Germans and the Americans were both planning to build some of the new dreadnought – type battleships. In order to do this, Fleet Admiral Jacky Fisher had to reorganize the entire Navy, closing unneeded overseas bases and focusing on the British Isles. Fisher's vision was that the Dominions and Colonies would send money to the RN, who would respond – kind of like a worldwide fire service – when troubles arose.

When the British Pacific Squadron sailed out of Esquimalt Harbour for the last time in 1905, it left behind some shore facilities and two small sloops, **SHEARWATER** and **ALGERINE**. Both were lightly armed, 204 ft steamers capable of 12 knots. Canadians now had to decide if this was, in fact, a country or merely a doormat for whomever wanted to use the land and its vast resources. The answer was unclear: a few guns were mounted on some east coast Fishery Protection cruisers while discussions with the mother country continued. Plans were made to develop the Fishery Service into a prototype navy but then, in true Canadian fashion, a scandal erupted over high-level corruption within the Department of Fisheries and Marine. A federal inquiry was called, dragging things out for years. Conferences and policy sessions continued as Wilfred Laurier's Liberals struggled to find a politically acceptable solution. Finally, on March 10, 1910 federal legislation to establish a naval service was passed and Canada had the beginnings of a navy. Two old training cruisers (**NIOBE** and **RAINBOW**) were offered on loan from the Royal Navy and a modest budget was established. Then, an election.... the new Conservative government of Robert Borden soon slashed the new Navy's budget and for the first four years of its existence, the Canadian Naval Service swung at anchor.

(Continued on page 7)



With the start of World War 1 in July 1914, **RAINBOW**, **SHEARWATER** and **ALGERINE** were all that stood between the west coast and Germany's modern Asia-Pacific Squadron under Admiral Graf von Spee, known to be on the loose somewhere in the Pacific.

Captain Walter Hose took **RAINBOW** to sea with an untrained crew and training ammunition to seek a fight with the German Squadron – any of which could have blown the little cruiser out of the water before getting in range of her small guns. Fortunately, he never made contact but the point was made emphatically that Canada needed to be able to look after itself. While **RAINBOW** was away, the powerful Japanese cruiser **IDZUMO** arrived in Esquimalt as backup, followed a few days later by Jacky Fisher's fire service – the British cruiser **NEWCASTLE**. **NEWCASTLE** and **IDZUMO** headed south to chase von Spee once **RAINBOW** returned, and **IDZUMO** soon returned as a regular (and welcome) visitor to Esquimalt.

Today, the need for naval capability is stronger than ever. Coastal resource protection, environmental enforcement and deterrence against well equipped terrorists are just some of our Navy's domestic duties. Overseas activities with NATO and the UN give Canada the political capital we need to encourage other governments to do things differently and all these things require resources and support from Canadians. So the next time you see an Ottawa politician wringing hands over the cost of having a Navy, remind him/her of the lessons of our not-so-distant past.

- 30 -

Bibliography  
Dreadnought, Robert K. Massie, Ballantine Books, 1991  
Canada's Navy: The First Century, Marc Milner, University of Toronto Press, 1999

## **VMSS MODEL BOAT PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST**

**OPEN TO MEMBERS OF ANY MODEL BOAT CLUB**

### **Just a few Rules:**

1. Maximum of 3 entries per amateur-photographer/member: **DIGITAL (jpg) only!**
2. Send by email attachment to: [vmss@shaw.ca](mailto:vmss@shaw.ca) **subject line: "PhotoContest Entry"**
3. Model ships and related topics only, please. **Limit of 3 (three) entries** per person.
4. **Deadline November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010.**
5. Judges decision final; prizes to be announced at a later date in the Binnacle.

**NOTE:** It is intended that the top 12 BEST entries will be used in our VMSS Calendar for 2011. **Questions:** email to: [vmss@shaw.ca](mailto:vmss@shaw.ca)

**GOOD BOATING AND SHOOTING!!**



**Harrison Pond Lighted Boat Parade**, December 20, 2009. Great turnout of members and boats attracted a large crowd of watchers, in spite of the drizzle.



## What's New ?



Well for one thing it's a New Year, new boats to build, new places to explore, new meeting place. A new way of getting plans. Due to the change of locale we don't have a place to store plans, so now they are stored in my basement, still cataloged nicely. The new thing is your access to them. This may be a step in a better direction. In a future issue of The Binnacle, I will publish a listing of all our plans, for you to peruse at your leisure. If something jumps out at you then give me a call and I will get them to you as best I can. Keep the plans for a period of time and if you wish to build the vessel then have the plans photocopied and return the originals to me. (the archivist?)



As for myself I am feverishly working on my new tug that will hopefully do well at Maple Bay in the spring. My Catala has been sidelined for a short duration. That's not a bad thing, because when I get back to it, there will be a renewed enthusiasm. Hope to see you on some pond in the near future.

**Dave Denton**

## Len Thomas



**1926-2009**

**THOMAS, Leonard George** 1926-2009 After living his life to fullest, Len Thomas passed suddenly, but peacefully on December 8, 2009 in Victoria, B.C. Len was born on July 13, 1926 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the only child of George Alfred Thomas and Eliza Ann (nee Bentley). After the family moved to Calgary, Len graduated high school in 1945. Len studied aeronautical engineering at the Provincial Institute of Technology (now SAIT) and subsequently passed the Royal Aeronautical Society of England exams in 1949. While in Calgary, Len worked with Alberta Aircraft Services as an apprentice air engineer and Dominion Bridge as a structural draftsman. In 1951, Len moved to Victoria with his parents and was hired as a draftsman with Victoria Machinery Depot, where he worked until his retirement in 1983. While living in Victoria, Len met the love of his life, Virginia AnDyke, who was living in Portland, Oregon. Len and Virg were married in Portland in June 1960. The newlyweds then settled in Victoria to raise a family. Len was very devoted to his children, and there is no doubt that his children and grandchildren gave him great joy. Len also delighted in Virginia's large, extended family, and was able to reconnect with many long lost Thomas cousins in his eighth decade. Len was a member of many clubs during his life, including the Vancouver Island Model Engineers, Victoria Video Club (50+ years), B.C. Aviation Museum, Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society, and the Canadian Scottish Regiment Pipes & Drums. From scratch, he built radio controlled boats, airplanes and a submarine. He also built several model steam engines and locomotives. Len was instrumental in the design of a replacement boiler for the Victoria Fire Department's restored 1899 steam pumper, Charles E. Redfern. Len will be deeply missed by his beloved wife, Virginia, his son Steve and wife Sue, his daughter Carol Ramey and her husband Darrin, and their children, Benton, Alexandra and Elizabeth. Published in the Victoria Times-Colonist from 12/12/2009 - 12/13/2009



## VMSS Annual Social, Gorge Vale Golf Club, December 10, 2009.



Photo by Rob McDonough

Award winners (L to R) **Ernest Reid** (Photo contest), **Bill Sturrock** (Esprit de Club), and **Jack Plummer** (Special Award: RCMP St.Roch).



Rob McDonough's daughter, **McKenzie**, reading **Mike Creasy's** version of "Twas the Night..."



Binnacle Editor, **Bill Sturrock**, presenting an award to **Romain Klaasen**, "For his outstanding literary contributions to the VMSS for the past 20 years".

Photo by Nancy Sturrock



## VMSS Annual Trophies



President's Award



Powell Cup



Denton Cup



### President's Esprit de Club Award

#### Previous winners:

1996 Bill Birch  
 1997 Ron and Julie Hillsden  
 1998 Derek Wollard  
 1999 Ron Armstrong  
 2000 Bob Rainsford  
 2001 David Powell  
 2002 Romain Klaasen  
 2003 Bob Rainsford, Derek Wollard  
 2004 Ken Lockley  
 2005 Bill Andrews  
 2006 Tom Pound  
 2007 Barry Fox  
 2008 Bill Andrews



## MODEL KIT FOR SALE

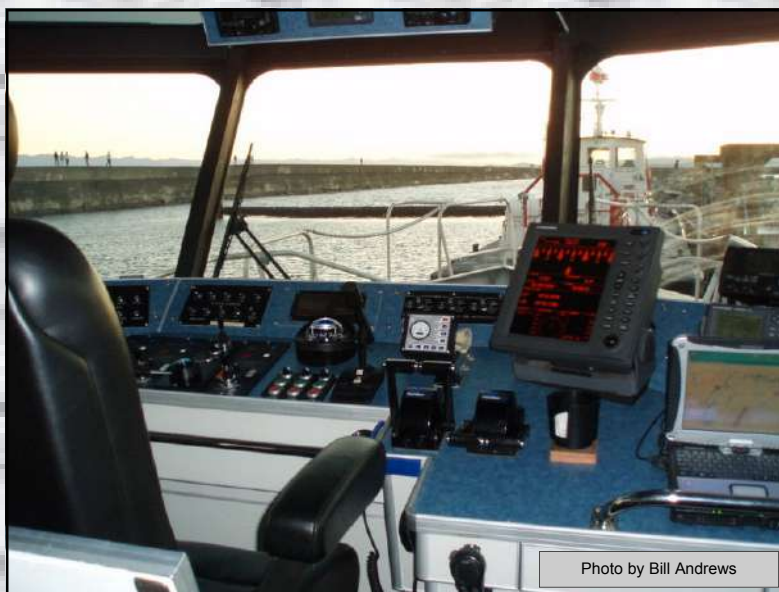
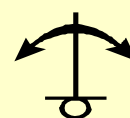
**THE ROBERT E. LEE...**a genuine wooden Mississippi River Steamboat ... kit #1439 by Model Shipways. Incredibly detailed...brand new...this kit has never even been out of the box. Extremely detailed and easy to follow directions with many diagrams. Scale is 1:150. This kit is listed online for \$400 US + taxes and shipping. Sale Price is \$250 Can. all included. **Marty Adams**

[m.adams@shaw.ca](mailto:m.adams@shaw.ca)

[Vendor will make a donation to the Club]



## MYSTERY PAGE



**Name this ship?**



**Name this ship model?**