



**Houston  
Maritime  
Museum**

# THE ANCHOR

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2017 | NEWSLETTER OF THE HOUSTON MARITIME MUSEUM



## USS HOUSTON: SHIPS NAMED IN HONOR

In collaboration with the USS *Houston* CA-30 Survivors Association, the Houston Maritime Museum has opened our new exhibit "USS *Houston*: Ships Named in Honor." This exhibit not only tells the unique histories of the four ships that have been named USS *Houston*, but also the heart wrenching saga of the brave men who fought against all odds during WWII.

This permanent exhibit is centered around the heavy cruiser USS *Houston* CA-30 and her crew who fought in the opening chaotic months of the Pacific War. While defending the island of Java, the *Houston* and the Australian cruiser *Perth* encountered a powerful Japanese invasion fleet during the night of February 28, 1942. Fighting an unwinnable battle, both cruisers sought to do as much damage as possible to the troop transports offloading Japanese soldiers. The brave crews of both ships could only delay the inevitable and by the early hours of March 1, the Japanese Navy sank both the *Perth* and *Houston*. Survivors of both ships had to endure a new hell; captivity and forced labor at the hands of the Japanese military until the war's end in 1945.



Members of the Survivor's Association visited the museum to attend a special lecture and preview the new exhibit. HMM staff was honored to participate in ceremonies marking the 75th anniversary of the *Houston's* loss. On Saturday March 4, staff attended the memorial service at Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston. Museum Director Leslie Bowlin laid a wreath at the base of the USS *Houston* monument to honor the crew and their sacrifices.



## Rum Rhapsody



**Did you miss this event? Don't worry, we'll have similar events in the future and here is a recipe to tide you over till then!**

**Father Labat's Punch** - Pere Jean-Baptiste Labat roamed the Caribbean from 1693 to 1705. He was a priest, but certainly no saint. Labat trafficked in slaves and paid no attention to "thou shall not kill." He once fired 12 point blank range cannon shots at a British ship. In 1694, the friar wrote down a partial recipe for a punch. This is Kimberly Paul's version to be made in a punch bowl.

- 1 - 750 ml - 5 yr. Plantation rum
  - 1 - 750 ml - \*Spice infused water
  - 1 - 750 ml - Lime syrup
  - 1 - Ice block made with \*spice infused water
- \*nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, allspice
- Serve over ice

The Houston Maritime Museum was packed on February 17th as guests came together to enjoy a "walking tour" on the history and mixing of the favorite drink for sailors and pirates alike - rum!

Award winning Mixologist Kimberly Paul led the night's festivities with tastings of four different cocktails made with Plantation Rum, including the famous Mojito. Hors d'œuvres were served throughout the evening and guests were free to wander the museum. At the end of the night there was no question of 'why is the rum gone?'



## Docent Spotlight

### Whit Drake - Director of the Comedy Tour

Whit Drake combines incredible knowledge of the maritime world with humorous anecdotes of the ships, people and places related to the stories in our museum. His fun and engaging tours are the highlight of our Tuesdays!

**What is your maritime background?** None! I'm the first docent without a maritime background; my hobby is history, especially military history. I was three months post back surgery and my wife was trying to find a way to get me out of the house and out of her kitchen! Lawrence Shallenberger was my docent and we hit it off. We had a great time trading stories back and forth about the models and I brought stories from my history passion. Next thing I knew, Leslie was calling me to be a docent!

**WHIT DRAKE IS ONE OF THE BEST.**

**HE'S GIVING HIS BEST FOR HOUSTON.**

Whit Drake is the Director of the Comedy Tour at the Houston Maritime Museum. He is a graduate of Texas A&M and Chapman College in California. A native of El Paso, he has responsibility and doesn't wait. But he does a lot more than that. What has given away a good deal of his time so far is a variety of community projects. For example, he has served as an instructor in the Business Achievement Project program, teaching basic economics to grade school and junior high students. He has been especially active in the Incentives, having served as a board member and vice president. Among projects in which he has participated are:

- "Children's Council," helping collect and report on election night.
- "Houston's Children's Area Council," studying and planning



advisors to major area problems, such as pollution, traffic and urban growth.

He headed a committee to collect food and clothing for victims of the Franciscan Settlement flooding and selected donations to build a baseball field in Southeast Houston. And, he helped arrange for interim storage of 1,200 used school desks from Houston being donated to Mexico Incentives in an inter-American program of cooperation.

The project for remembrance most fondly was getting together a committee to request the Bicentennial

which delights children at the Houston Zoo.

Brown & Root is proud of Whit Drake's contributions to a better Houston area. For more than 60 years, Brown&Root has been helping Houston grow through personal efforts such as participation in United Way campaigns, blood drives and car pooling, and through work on such projects as the Gulf Freeway, Rice Stadium, the Baytown terminal and major facilities along the Houston Ship Channel.

Whit Drake, Brown & Root and MNO Houston-area Brown&Rooters - we're giving our best for Houston.

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**Favorite model?** I have two favorite models - one is the USS Lexington as she looked pre-war and the second is the USS Hornet with the B25 on it's deck.

**What do you want visitors to know about you?** I graduated from the landlocked Texas A&M with a

degree in chemical engineering; picked up a masters in the Air Force and flew for them for 7 years in the Vietnam era; left in the reduction in force in the 70s and came to Houston to work in engineering and construction for 45 years.

**Join Whit for his comedy tour most Tuesday afternoons!**

## Upcoming Events @ HMM



**Special Lecture and Booksigning**  
***The Mathews Men: Seven Brothers and the War Against Hitler's U-Boats***  
Saturday, March 25 | 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

**\$5 FOR ADULTS (12 AND UP) | FREE FOR MEMBERS AND CHILDREN UNDER 12**  
**[REGISTRATION REQUIRED](#)**

Special thanks to [Blue Willow Bookshop](#)

William Geroux's book tells the largely forgotten story of the US Merchant Marine in World War II through the adventures of merchant mariners from Mathews County, Virginia. Mathews, a rural outpost on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay, has been a cradle of merchant sea captains and mariners for centuries. When America entered World War II in December 1941, Mathews mariners were scattered on freighters and tankers throughout the war zones, hauling vital cargo. They and their ships became prime targets for German U-boats trying to choke off the Allied supply line. The US Navy initially lacked the forces and inclination to protect the unarmed merchant ships and the U-boats exacted a terrible toll. The mariners faced torpedo explosions, flaming oil slicks, storms, frigid water, shark attacks, and harrowing lifeboat odysseys-only to ship out again as soon as they had returned to safety. The civilian US Merchant Marine suffered a higher casualty rate than any branch of America's armed forces. Nearly every family in tiny Mathews (whose wartime population was roughly 7,500) had a personal stake in the fight, and none more so than the family of Capt. Jesse and Henrietta Hodges and their seven sons, who would experience the U-boat war to its fullest.

William Geroux wrote for the Richmond Times-Dispatch for twenty-five years. His writing has appeared in the New York Times, The Associated Press, and various regional magazines. He also has worked for Maersk, the largest container-shipping company in the world.

Copies of *The Mathews Men: Seven Brothers and the War Against Hitler's U-boats* will be available for purchase and signing following the talk.

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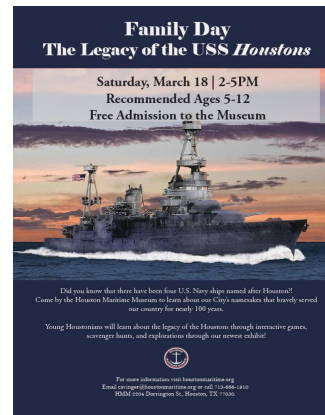
Family Days @ HMM  
**The Legacy of the USS *Houstons***  
March 18 | 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

FREE ADMISSION

Join us to learn about our City's namesakes that bravely served our country for nearly 100 years. Young Houstonians will learn about the legacy of the *Houstons* through interactive games, scavenger hunts, and explorations through our newest exhibit.

**Recommended Ages: 5 - 12**

[Learn more](#)



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