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ARC2Y004 5/25/2010
Feb2010

authority's publicity campaign led to urban renewal tax credits as well as Oregon State Marine Board funding, and federal Clean Vessel Act and Boating Infrastructure grants to build a welcoming access to the town's historic area while offering pumpout services and safe haven from Pacific storms.

"As these winners demonstrate, this award recognizes those who are succeeding in reversing the loss of waterfront marine facilities, and even more important, spotlights those efforts so others are inspired to improve access where they boat," said BoatU.S. President Nancy Michelman. "We're continuing this important recognition program for 2010 to keep building on that track record of successful projects others can follow."

Deadline for applications, October 1, 2010; winners will be announced October 31. For more information or a look at last year's winners, visit BoatUS.com/gov/AccessAward. Previous applicants are asked not to reapply.

— R.L.

Texas Sea Scouts Earn Flagship

A Sea Scout unit with the unlikely name "Minnow" is the winner of Sea Scouting's biggest recognition, the BoatU.S. Flagship Award for 2010. The unit, Ship 1659, *Minnow*, serves youth in the Houston area and maintains a fleet of six cruising sailboats at South Shore Harbor Marina on Clear Lake, Kemah, Texas.

BoatU.S. recognized Ship 1659 for excellence in program quality, youth achievement, and adult commitment. Charles Wurster, a retired Coast Guard vice admiral who chairs the National Sea Scout Committee, presented the award May 28 at the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) annual meeting in Dallas, Texas. The meeting marked the group's 100th anniversary.

The ship and its crew of 14 youth conducted 32 days of on-the-water activities last year and also carried out half-a-dozen community service projects, including a waterway cleanup of the remnants of Hurricane Ike. Like all Sea Scout units, Ship 1659 uses boats, seamanship, and nautical skills to develop character and leadership qualities in young people 14-20, male and female.

BoatU.S. originated the Flagship Award in 2002 to mark the 90th anniversary of Sea Scouting. Approximately 6,000 youths participate in Sea Scouting in 557 Ships nationwide. A perpetual trophy bearing the names of the annual BoatU.S. Flagship winners resides at the BSA National Scouting Museum in Irving, Texas. www.SeaScout.org

— R.L.

Sea Scout Boatswain Selected

The National Sea Scout Support Committee selected Vanya Marie Keyes of Huntington Beach, California, as the National Sea Scout Boatswain for 2010-2011. As youth representative for Sea Scouts across the U.S., Keyes will serve as the liaison with regional boatswains and other youth to help promote Sea Scouting. She's a member of Ship 90, *Renegades*, Orange County, California, winner of the 2009 BoatU.S. Sea Scout Flagship Award. — R.L.



Longer Leases Help Yacht Clubs In Massachusetts

Massachusetts yacht clubs and boating facilities sited on state public lands breathed a sigh of relief in March when a law passed authorizing leases up to 30 years versus the current system that requires renegotiation after only five years. The March 4 voice vote by the Massachusetts Senate mirrored that taken last November by the state House of Representatives and spotlighted a nationwide problem of dwindling public waterfront access.

"This is good news for many yacht clubs and private boating facilities in the state because a 30-year lease allows them to better plan and to make long-term capital investments in the property," said state Sen. Thomas McGee, among the bill's supporters. Many of the facilities affected — including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Boat House and the Harvard University Sailing Pavilion, both in Cambridge — were founded decades ago and have constructed docks, floats, gangways, storage buildings, clubhouses, and other amenities. In addition to giving the clubs more flexibility, the law assures that these waterfront lands will remain free from non-boating development. The loss of boatyards and marinas to escalating land prices and rampant waterfront development is a critical access issue for boaters in Massachusetts and elsewhere.

The rift between the state and the boating clubs came to a head in 2005 under then-Governor Mitt Romney, who

Continued on next page

She was once the queen of the ocean, a veritable five-star floating palace transporting four U.S. presidents and international celebrities. But the *SS United States*, in ever-decaying retirement since 1969, may be headed for the ship breakers unless the granddaughter of the naval architect who designed her can raise enough money to turn the ship into a tourist attraction.

Considered one of the greatest ocean liners of all time "Big U" still holds the record for Atlantic crossings set on her 1952 maiden voyage with an average speed of 34.5 knots. But now her once-bright red, white, and blue funnels are peeling paint in Philadelphia, and many feel her course towards the scrap yard is inevitable. That's because the ship, owned by Norwegian Cruise Lines, which bought her along with the smaller *SS Independence* for an estimated \$30 million in 2003, is so expensive to keep up.

But Susan Gibbs, president of the *SS United States* Conservancy, is hoping to save the iconic ship designed by her grandfather, William Francis Gibbs. Constructed in secrecy at Newport News, Virginia, with Navy funding, the liner was revolutionary for her day. She was considered an important weapon for the Cold War. The ship could be converted into a troop transport capable of landing 14,000 soldiers in Europe in less than five days.

Gibbs says the current owner listed the *SS United States* for sale in February '09. "At that time, NCL stipulated the ship would only be sold to a U.S. entity and wouldn't be sold for scrap," she says. But these stipulations have expired; the cruise line has opened the bid process to domestic scrap-
ping companies. Her group hopes to raise funds to purchase the vessel.

"The Conservancy's goal is to acquire title to buy time to lay the groundwork for a large-scale public-private partnership to convert the ship into a multipurpose stationary attraction in an urban waterfront setting," says Gibbs. But time is running out, and costs are upwards of \$700,000 per year. "If the ship was sold for scrap, the Conservancy would do everything in its power to salvage remaining items of historical value and conduct a thorough documentation of the vessel for archival purposes," said Gibbs.

— Ann Dermody

Is Time Running Out For The *SS United States*?