



FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION / November 29, 2016

Era of Change at The Mariners' Museum and Park

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – The Mariners' Museum and Park's mission of connecting people to the world's waterways brings new changes to gallery spaces throughout the Museum. Opening in May 2017, *Cat Fight: Racing Technology in the America's Cup* will feature cutting-edge technologies that have redefined competition in the America's Cup. This exhibition follows an event last October where guests enjoyed the extraordinary opportunity to see the America's Cup Trophy up close when the Museum hosted a reception and lecture with Tucker Thompson, the Official Host of the 35th America's Cup in 2017. *Cat Fight* will be on display in the Great Hall.

To prepare for the installation of *Cat Fight*, *Abandon Ship* will close on Monday, December 5, 2016. Opened in May 2012, this exhibition explored the aftermath of catastrophes at sea. Inspired by the story of Steven Callahan's 76 days adrift, *Abandon Ship* included a wide variety of stories across the globe of explorers, fishermen, and recreational voyages that faced shipwrecks. Guests have consistently enjoyed and connected with the personal stories of survival at sea, particularly the portion of the exhibition dedicated to the *Titanic*, which included a model lifeboat that will be relocated elsewhere in the Museum.

Then, the *Great Hall of Steam* will close to the public starting on Wednesday, January 4, 2017, to begin the installation of *Cat Fight*. The *Great Hall of Steam* provided a visual display of maritime steam engines along with an array of oceangoing commercial steamship models. The Museum has updated and added to the collection over the years, and added new attractions including the popular ship model maker's stand, which will be incorporated into a new exhibition space. The steamship models and the ship model maker's stand will be reinterpreted into the gallery space previously home to *Abandon Ship*. This new model gallery will reopen in March. A number of models made by members of the Hampton Roads Ship Model Society, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2017, will also be included into new exhibition space.

In addition to these changes, a new plan for The Mariners' Museum Library will be finalized in 2017. The Museum board and staff are currently exploring options for a new building on the Museum's campus to house the Library, Collections Storage, Conservation, and Digital Imaging. Visitors will be able to walk through this new space and observe conservators and collections experts preserving and cataloging artifacts in the new gallery.

Historic images of Great Hall of Steam and gallery images of Abandon Ship:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/i3gagysg7ho0smx/AACKPmmfFRS_titY96ukZQcga?dl=0

About The Mariners' Museum and Park:

The Mariners' Museum and Park connects people to the world's waterways through exploration and engaging experiences. The organization is an educational, non-profit institution accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and preserves and interprets maritime history through an international collection of ship models, figureheads, paintings, and other maritime artifacts. The Mariners' Museum is home to the USS *Monitor* Center, and is surrounded by the 550-acre Mariners' Museum Park, the largest privately maintained park open to the public in North America. The Mariners' Museum Library is the largest maritime library in the Western hemisphere. The Mariners' Museum has been designated by Congress as "America's National Maritime Museum." For hours and information, visit MarinersMuseum.org, call (757) 596-2222, or write to The Mariners' Museum, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, VA 23606.

###

100 Museum Drive • Newport News, VA 23606 • (757) 596-2222 • (800) 581-7245 • MarinersMuseum.org