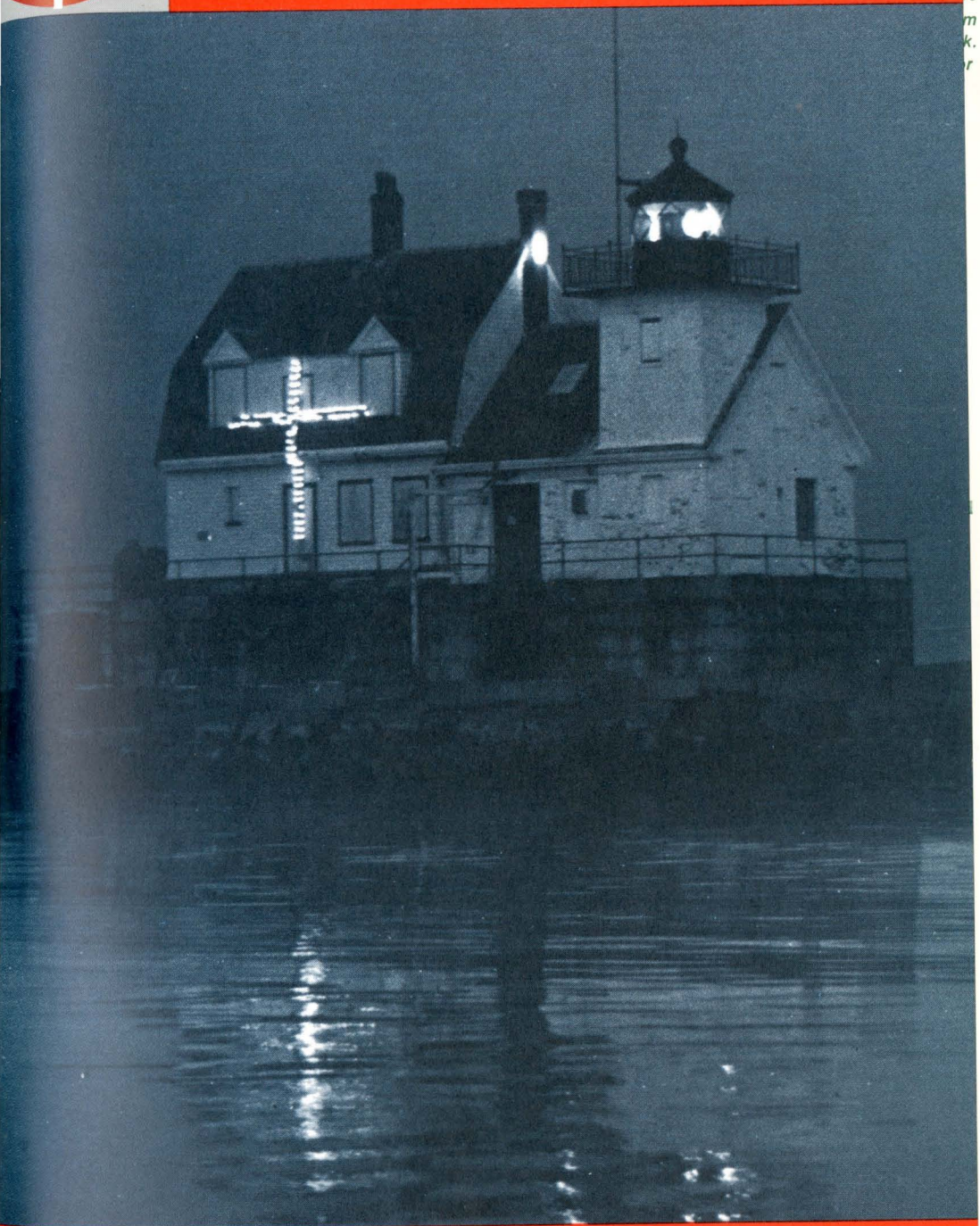
the LOOKOUT

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK



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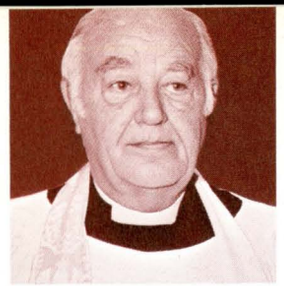

A Holiday Message from the Director

**"How bright appears the morning star,
With mercy beaming from afar."**

People wonder sometimes if the Christmas star still shines. Has its light gone out? Are there so many satellites, telestars, rockets now in orbit that the Christmas star cannot be found in the skies? Has an anti-missile missile knocked it out of the Heavens?

A star gives its light by reflection. If you want to see the Christmas star, look for it where its light is reflected. Look around you and you can see it in the fight against disease: cancer, multiple sclerosis, polio and all the others. You can see it in the fight against slums, in the struggle for civil rights, in the war against poverty. You will see it in the dedication and concern of every church, in countless private agencies, local, national and international, whose concern is with some aspect of social welfare and human betterment. You will see it in the lives of millions of human beings who care enough to give something of themselves to help their brother man; men and women not afraid to nurture a sense of mutual responsibility.

You see, the Christmas star gets its light from the Son of God and its reflection shines in the hearts and lives of men. Satellites couldn't put it out. The darker the night, the more brightly it shines. Wise men will always see it, turn towards it, and follow it.

**"How bright appears the morning star,
With mercy beaming from afar;
The host of heaven rejoices."**

To men of good will of every race and clime the world over go our prayers and our heartfelt best wishes at this holy season.

**"On His day we give you greeting,
In His name we wish you peace,
With His favor may God bless you,
In His love your joy increase."**

Sincerely yours,
THE REV. JOHN M. MULLIGAN, D.D.

the LOOKOUT

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When Christmas Trees took to the Seas

by Jean C. Conger

We reprint this article from a Christmas issue of The Lookout *from some years back. —editor*

Not one of the oldest sailing-ship traditions, but one of its cheeriest, is the Christmas tree lashed to the top-gallant mast. Obviously, only ships rolling at anchor or berthed in some port were decorated in this way.

Who was the first tar who climbed the mast to affix the tree? We wish we knew. Even the country from which he came is unknown.

Christmas trees were a German custom. The oldest record about them that landlubbers have is a forest law from Alsace. Dated to 1561, this said that no town dweller "shall have for Christmas more than one bush of more than eight shoes' length." The Christmas tree went to the sea much later.

Strangely, about the same time that these German townsmen were measuring their bushes for Christmas, another custom began in England. This was the use of trestle-trees on masts. It probably gave that first tar his idea.

E. Keble Chatterton, who spent much of his life tracing ships through the ages, says that even sailors wise in the ways of sail would be confused at this nautical term.

Trestle-trees were made of wood or iron. These pieces were attached on either side of the lower masthead and overlapped onto the heel of the top mast. They strengthened it.

The log of an Elizabethan ship, which had been roughly handled by a storm, gives the picture. "This night we perished our maine trestle-trees so that we could no more use our maine top-saile." Cheered by the sight of a Christmas tree in his landlubber days, the tar carried the thought to sea. And trestle-trees were there to help him.

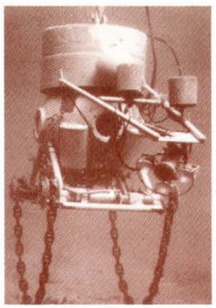
Sailing ships had probably worn other holiday trimmings in honor of Old St. Nick centuries before the trees came. While he lived during the 4th century, St. Nicholas was Archbishop of the seaport, Myra. This made him a protector of sailors.

Legend grew around this, just as it would around his gift-giving. Soon he was saving ships from the ocean's storms. There was a day when Greek and Russian sailors would not go to sea without an ikon of St. Nicholas in the forecastle. The tradition of Christmas trees on ships had more than one origin.

As an American custom, this is probably not more than a hundred years old. Christmas trees were not sold in New York City until 1851. Sailors did not have such an opportunity to go into the woods and chop their own as landlubbers did.

RIVER IN THE SEA

by Arthur Black



Some historians and oceanographers claim that the Gulf Stream, the artery of the Atlantic, is really the force that civilized Europe, making a "greenhouse out of its shores" so its people, invigorated and stimulated by its warm breezes, might flourish and prosper. In short, it is the Mother of Western Civilization.

Certainly, without the Gulf Stream, Scandinavia might be as bleak and inhospitable as Southwestern Greenland, and Ireland might be like Labrador.

The warm stream gives Norway ice-free harbors, makes Murmansk an ice-free port while further south other Baltic ports are frozen shut. You can take two islands in approximately the same latitude and have one (Bounet Island) icebound and another such as Ireland nourish semi-tropical plants.

So much heat is transported to northern latitudes by the Gulf Stream that roses can be grown in northern Norway while, much farther south in Greenland, the cold southward progress of the East Greenland current blocks off the warming influence of the Gulf Stream.

There are many ocean currents, but the Gulf Stream which transports 1,000 times more water than the Mississippi —in fact, more than all the rivers of the world combined—is the grandest and most mighty terrestrial phenomenon.

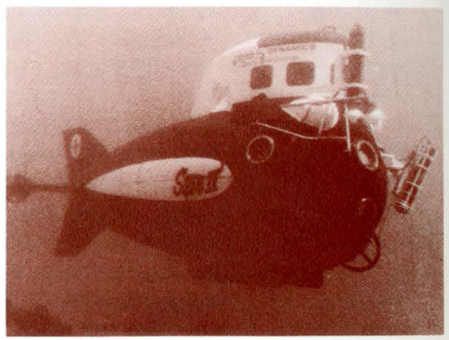
When it leaves the Straits of Florida transporting 100 billion tons of water an hour, it is 40 miles wide and 2,000 feet deep with a surface speed of four miles an hour. (In spots it can be traced to a depth of 3,200 feet.)

How could a river possibly exist in the ocean? And it is unquestionably a warm river which winds among banks of cold water. To the best of our current knowledge the stream is caused by the sun's heat, the earth's rotation, and winds created by these forces.

"Gulf Stream" may actually be a misnomer since the heating of the stream does not take place so much in the Gulf of Mexico. Really the source of the heated mass of water lies further south in the Bay of Yucatan.

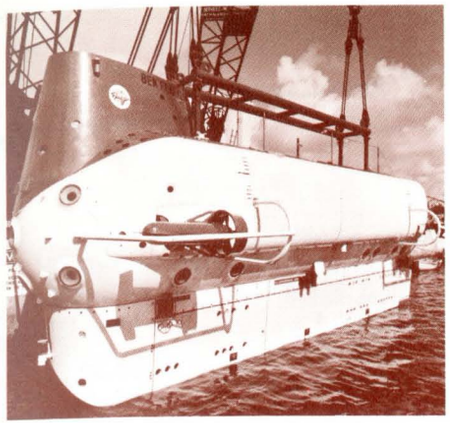
It is the Trade Winds which force the waters of the hot equatorial drift into the Gulf which then passes through the Florida Straits.

The Gulf Stream rides through the



narrow passage between Florida and Cuba on its journey of 6,000 miles clear across the Atlantic Ocean.

The right side of the Stream is always higher than the left because of the strange force of the spinning Earth. It spreads out in eddies and fingers as it crosses the Atlantic, running at a speed of 60 to 100 miles a day.



First it passes through Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, then runs to the Banks of Newfoundland and heads due east across the ocean where it is swerved by the Labrador Current. Their meeting place with this cold current is a place of hissing fog and rolling waters. The mist hangs like a curtain between the two waters.

Halfway across the Atlantic the Gulf Stream divides into four branches, one arm reaching up to Greenland in the summer, one going up the North Sea to an area 600 miles from the North Pole where it warms Spitzbergen.

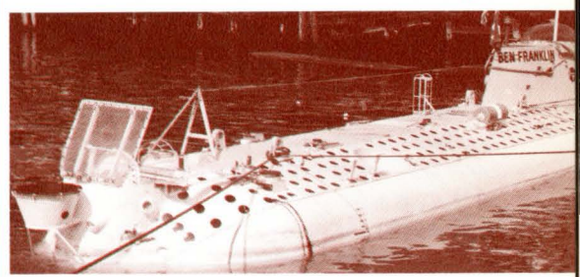
Another finger licks at the shores of Great Britain. If the Gulf Stream should change its course, England would be as cold as Hudson's Bay with very little settlement or farming. Such a shift is only a hair's breadth away in geologic terms since just below the swift hot stream is a cold Antarctic current moving slowly in the opposite direction!

The fourth arm flows down the coast of France, Spain and Africa, caresses the Canaries, and drifts past Cape Verde Islands and on toward the equator—its starting point. As it once more approaches the fierce tropic sun it begins its journey again, swung by the Trade Winds and the earth's spin.

How was the path of the Gulf Stream charted; how was it possible to trace water upon water? Not as difficult as it may seem. Ben Franklin charted part of the Stream by its blue color, warmer temperature and drift bottles, and the analysis of sea water to determine the salt content.

Oddly, sea water is the most uniform of all substances. Samples taken from all around the world have the same chemical composition including over ninety elements. If an ocean stream has more or less salt, it will sink or rise.

Some boundary lines of the Gulf Stream were first recorded by Lescorbet in 1609: "On the 18th of June, 1606 in latitude 45 degrees at a distance of six times twenty leagues east of the Newfoundland Banks we found our-

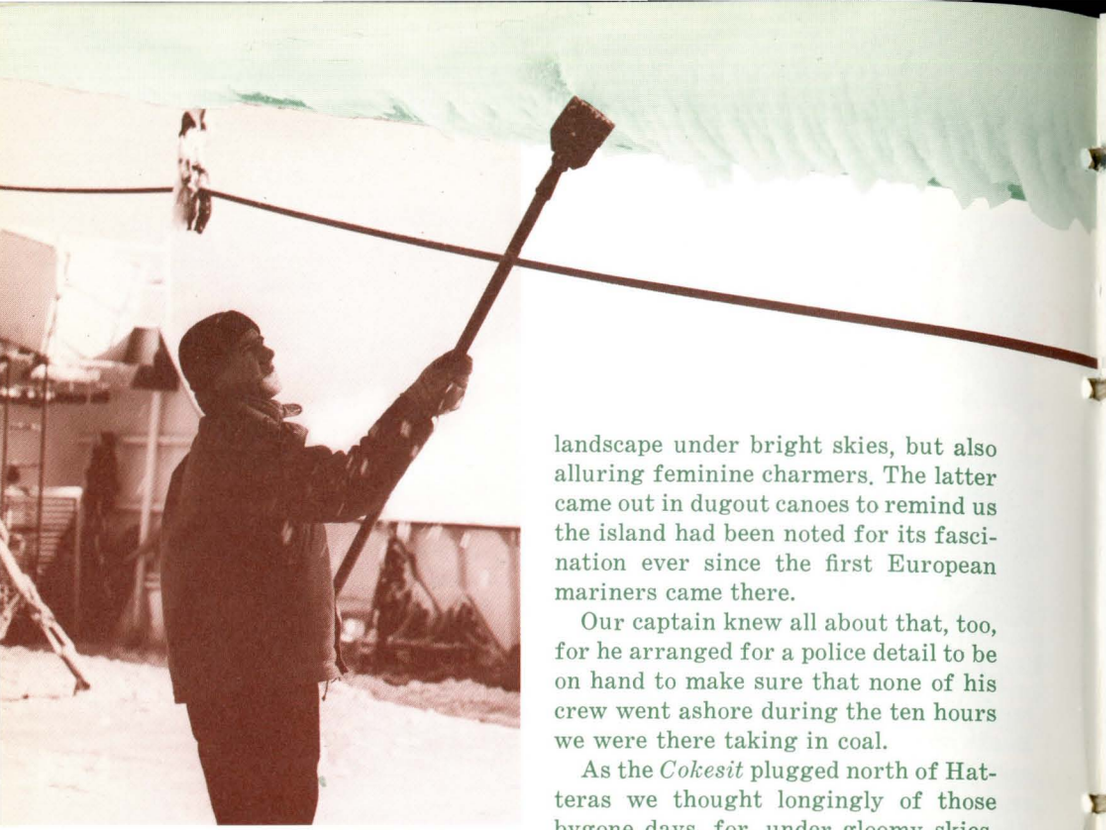


selves in the midst of very warm water despite the fact that the air was cold. But on the 21st of June all of a sudden we were in so cold a fog that it seemed like January and the sea was extremely cold."

Many a ship captain was aware of a current and its path long before scientific investigation began to measure these "drifts." The Phoenicians used the Gulf Stream in reaching the Azores before they knew what it was.

In our time it is believed that Ponce de Leon in 1513 was the first European

(Continued on page 12)



By the time the *Cokesit*, an old coal-burning freighter on the Australia-New Zealand run, came up to the latitude of Cape Hatteras, we had been nearly six months cruising in fair-weather seas. It had been springtime along the Australian coast, and the broad Pacific between there and the Panama Canal is noted for its salubrious climate.

Just to mention the South Sea islands to most people, even those who have never been near there, brings up visions of blue skies, sunlit seas, waving palm fronds.

We had seen something of that, for the *Cokesit* being a heavy coal-consumer, though she seldom steamed at better than eight knots, we had stopped in exotic Tahiti to replenish our fuel supply.

There we had found not only tropical palms, extravagantly-verdured landscape under bright skies, but also alluring feminine charmers. The latter came out in dugout canoes to remind us the island had been noted for its fascination ever since the first European mariners came there.

Our captain knew all about that, too, for he arranged for a police detail to be on hand to make sure that none of his crew went ashore during the ten hours we were there taking in coal.

As the *Cokesit* plugged north of Hatteras we thought longingly of those bygone days, for, under gloomy skies, a northeast wind brought a hint of New England winter to us. The ship, loaded deep with wool and other Australian products, was bound for Boston.

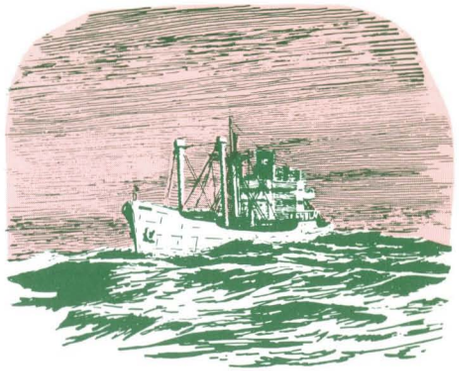
It was December 18 when the first wintery blast struck us, and we expected to make port in good time for everyone to be home, or at least ashore, for Christmas.

Despite the attraction of romantic islands in tropical seas we still had longings for the pine trees, the snow, the flaming hearth, and the joys of Christmas. One shipmate who kept the phonograph in the messroom going, frequently put on a recording of "White Christmas" which had increased our yearnings for home in the Yule season.

Soon something else came along to remind us of the season. The wind had increased in force, and with it, by nightfall, came snow squalls. In another twenty-four hours we were plunging into a real nor'easter with gale-force

A WHITE CHRISTMAS

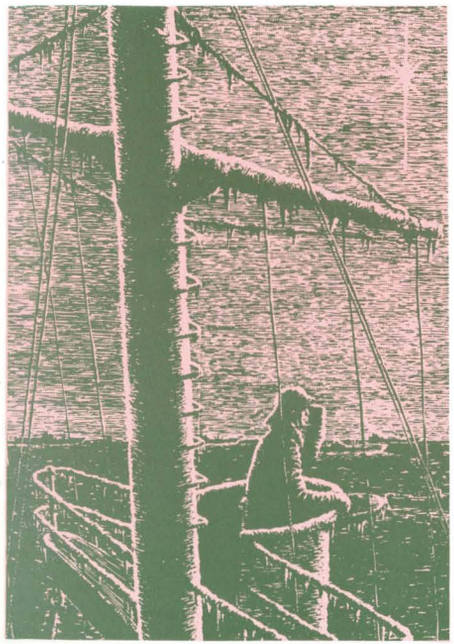
by George R. Berens



wind and pelting snow. Just ahead were the notorious waters of the Nantucket-Cape Cod region, and the ever-thickening snow had decreased visibility to near zero.

The *Cokesit* had only primitive navigational equipment, for the electronic devices that allow the navigator of today to find his way safely regardless of lack of visibility, had not then been developed.

At half-speed into the heavy head sea, blind in the falling snow, the old coal-burner crawled along, the whistle blaring at two-minute intervals, the captain, watch-officer and lookouts trying to pierce the white curtain for sight or sound of Nantucket Lightship, our "landfall" for the run into Boston.



As time passed with no sight or sound of the lightship, our captain became increasingly apprehensive. There had been no chance of celestial observation since the ship was south of Hatteras. By dead reckoning, the lightship should have been sighted, but with visibility reduced to a half-mile or less, the least error in calculations could have prevented our seeing the anchored sea mark.

The sound of the fog horn probably wouldn't carry far in the shrieking wind. Course was changed to eastward to haul out clear of all dangers. We learned later by radio that Nantucket Lightship had been blown adrift, which was why we could not find it.

So the *Cokesit* plugged on into a regular blizzard, at reduced speed. Hammering into wind and sea, she wasn't making much head way.

The blizzard continued unabating for four days, then the wind slacked off, and the snowfall lightened. By now the decks and hatches were covered with snow to a depth of more than a foot. Snow lay along the top of the cradled cargo booms. It clung to the ropes and rigging.

As the wind dropped it shifted to northwest, and grew much colder. Fi-

nally the snow ceased to fall, the sea went down a bit, and our captain changed course again to bring us into Boston. With the engine back at full speed we were able to make harbor late on the 24th—Christmas Eve.

When the pilot boarded to take us in to anchorage he brought instructions from ashore for the captain.

We were to lie at anchor all Christmas Day!

At 0600 the day after Christmas we would be taken into the dock. Longshoremen would be aboard at 0800 ready to start discharging the cargo for Boston. The owners were in a hurry to get the ship to New York; there must be no delay.

The crewmen, of course, did not know these details as they stood on deck staring at the lights of the city. The harbor scene was certainly seasonal, all the islands and mainland white. As they stood eyeing the white Christmas scene the boatswain came up.

"You guys better turn in and get some sleep. Gonna be a busy day tomorrow. We gotta clear off the snow, top the booms, get out the lines, and everything ready for docking."

"But it's Christmas, bose," cried one of the guys.

'Yeah. So 'tis. And after you're all through with that you can celebrate Christmas."

Silently the deck gang watched the boatswain stride off along the snow-covered deck. Then there was much muttering, and growling, and cussing. One by one the men kicked the snow off their seaboots, and disappeared into the forecastle. Before long only snores, grunts, and coughs were to be heard down there in the warm compartment with its odor of tobacco smoke mixed with less pleasant smells.

Morning, bright, cold, and breezy. Breakfast with hot, strong coffee. Then we manned the shovels, and started heaving the white stuff into the icy harbor waters.

The Chief Mate, our boss, came along, puffing his pipe.

"Merry Christmas, men. Do a good job," he called cheerily.

"Aw, nuts!" cried one of the shovellers, adding many less polite words.

All morning we shoveled snow off the decks and hatches, swept it off the booms and winches. All afternoon we ran around topping up the booms and getting everything ready to unload our Boston cargo. The ship was four days late in arriving; four days lost in plugging through that beautiful nor'-easter that gave the folks ashore their dreamed-of white Christmas.

It gave us a white Christmas, too, though, to judge by the growling and cursing all day, it didn't seem to be appreciated. I noticed that many times men paused in their labors to gaze for a few minutes at the wintery shoreside scene, thinking, no doubt, as I was, of much more pleasant Yuletides.

"Okay, knock-off. Turn to at five-thirty tomorrow," the boatswain shouted, late in the afternoon,

We dragged our cold, weary bodies into the messroom for a cup of coffee and a smoke. Our musical shipmate cranked up the phonograph and put on a record—"White Christmas."

"Shut that damned thing off," yelled an old A. B. All hands were disgruntled and sour.

"Boy, I'll be pleased to get off this rust-pot. I'll have my Christmas right after we pay-off," said one. Then all started to curse the ship, the owners, the capain, and . . .

"Okay, men, here's a little Merry Christmas for you. Present from the Old Man." The Mate had come into the messroom, and he plunked two bottles of rum on the table. It took only a few minutes for us all to feel the first gut-warming effects of the potent liquor.

"What say, Slim. How about putting on that 'White Christmas' record," cried the old A. B. jovially.

THE ELEPHANT OF THE SEA

by E. R. Yarham

A five-year-old, two-ton bull sea elephant, alias the elephant seal, from the Falkland Islands, was recently acquired by a German zoo.

It is something of a coincidence that perhaps the most celebrated sea elephant of all spent the last part of his life in a German zoo during the Thirties. His death was learned with regret all over the world by people who had visited Berlin and had been entertained by "Roland."

The sea elephant takes its name less on account of its large size than by reason of its flexible trunk or proboscis. The bull inflates this cavernous projection to trumpet messages to his harem sprawled over the beaches. When courting he roars with this distended proboscis, and with its aid he sometimes assembles up to 150 females.

Sea elephants make other noises, such as grunting murderously when disturbed, but when unmolested they take their ease on the boulder-beds of their storm-wracked island homes, oblivious of icy blizzard, driving rain and dank fog.

During the breeding season the males clamber up on the shore and set up social hierarchies in which the high ranking bulls do most of the breeding. The males jockey for place in the hierarchy, not by physical attack but by raising the head and forelimbs and uttering a series of loud bass grunts at the rate of about one a second.

The bulls threatened in this way usually cede their ground with a minimum expenditure of energy on either side.

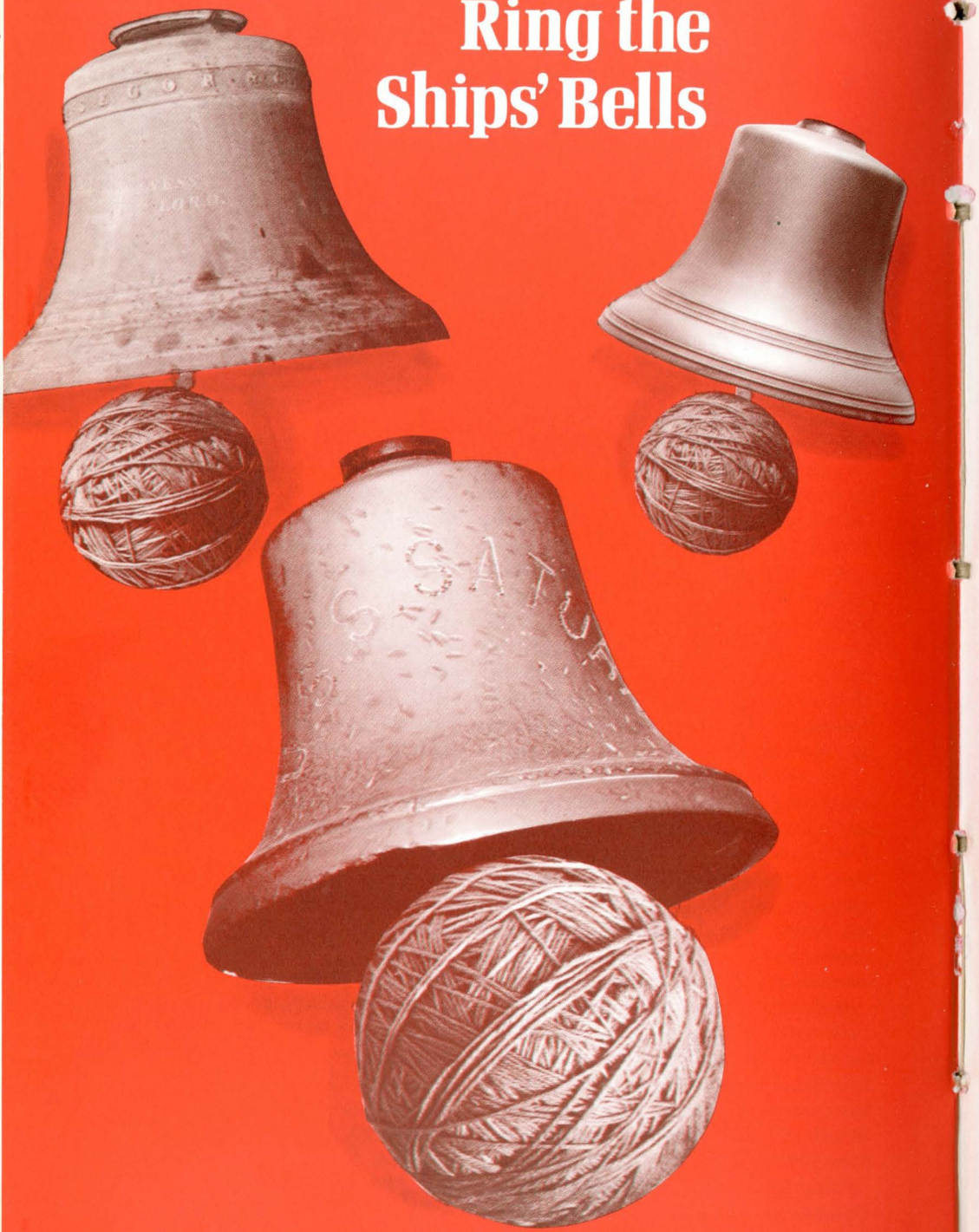
There are two species of these seals. The northern was once abundant on Juan Fernandez ("Robinson Crusoe's Island") off the west coast of Chile and thence northwards to lower California. The machine age brought the animal near extinction, for the blubber yielded even better lubricating oil than that of the sperm whale. More than 200 gallons could be got from a large male.

Petroleum and protective legislation have spurred a rebirth of the species. As may be imagined, the bull sea elephants cooperate zealously with this resurgence, and their considerable run-series are always stocked with thriving youngsters.

The story was repeated with the southern species and on an even larger scale. Today the southern sea elephant is found in the Falkland Islands, Kerguelen, South Georgia, Macquarie

(Continued on page 12)

Institute Christmas Boxes Ring the Ships' Bells



It is at this time of year that the internationally-known SCI Christmas boxes—projecting the warmth and concern of the Institute for seamen—are quietly being transported to the piers of the New York harbor, brought by the Institute shipvisitors to the vessels tied up there.

Crewmen busily working about the ships pay no attention; ship's stores and supplies are constantly arriving at shipside and there is nothing about the plain, unmarked SCI cartons to indicate their contents. Only one or two of the vessels' officers, perhaps, know. And they keep mum.

This conspiracy of secrecy is maintained because the Institute volunteers are aware that, when, on Christmas day, the cartons are opened and the gift-wrapped SCI Christmas boxes distributed to the jubilant crew of a vessel, the element of surprise will enhance the Yule celebration.

In most of these instances the ships will be on the high seas when the packets are opened—the vessels scattered over every part of the globe.

And once again the famous SCI packets will bring joy to often-forgotten mariners.

What delights the seamen—as their thank-you letters have said countless times to SCI's Women's Council which is responsible for the gifts—is that the packets are so totally unexpected.

Then there are the touching letters from grateful seamen who say that if it were not for the SCI boxes they would not have received any Christmas gift whatsoever.

Every man is emphatic in his praise of the packet's contents, especially the hand-knitted woolen garments (sweaters, mittens, watch caps, scarves, etc.) knitted by the 4,500 volunteers from over the country.

These articles always ring the ships' bells.

A project of this magnitude obviously requires a precision system. And because the Council has had more than twenty years' experience at it, an efficient, overall organization has evolved —by volunteers and staff alike. One which functions the year-around.

Because the success of the Christmas boxes project hinges on the all-important volunteers, hundreds of them have been streaming into the "Christmas Room" (large headquarters room of the Council in the Institute building) during the past several weeks to help in the advance preparations. The tempo will climax this month.

Many of these volunteers are composed of church groups from the Greater New York area, Connecticut and New Jersey who come in by bus for the day.

Only when the last carton of the gift packets is hauled out of the Christmas Room in early December will the now-weary volunteers and staff relax—everyone pleased and happy that their work will bring Christmas joy to mariners far from their homes and firesides.

THE ELEPHANT OF THE SEA *(Continued from page 9)*

Island, Heard Island and other isolated spots in the southern seas in increasing numbers.

Macquarie Island affords a typical example of what happened. Today elephant seals abound, although 150 years ago they had been shot, speared and clubbed almost out of existence.

Old documents record that tens of thousands were massacred in the years 1811-1814. A thousand tons of oil were barrelled in two seasons, and by 1829, when the fur seal was already nearly wiped out, the elephant seal was so rare as not to be worth hunting.

These southern sea elephants migrate as far south as the Antarctic pack-ice, and they return to the island beaches for the breeding season.

In the martial atmosphere of the herd, life for the pups is uncertain enough without being menaced by man. Many are crushed to death by the huge bull as he goes to fend off an intruder.

Some, lying helplessly by the shore, are carried away by surf when strong gales spring up; others, deserted by their mothers, are killed by scavenging petrels and skuas, although sometimes an abandoned pup will be adopted by another female.

Happily for the future of the genus, the sealing industry has responded well to the regulations governing it for the elephant seal. Pups and females may not be taken, and killing for the oil is limited to bulls during the breeding season; and certain stretches of coast are also closed.

RIVER IN THE SEA *(Continued from page 5)*

to experience the phenomenon of the Gulf Stream. When sailing from Puerto Rico he encountered a current so swift that his ship had trouble navigating it—as described by Herrera y Tordesillas in 1601.

Other experiences were numerous after that and by 1519 the stream was so well known that Spanish ships returning to Spain followed the Gulf Stream to about the latitude of Cape Hatteras on their journey home, taking advantage of favorable winds and avoiding contrary currents.

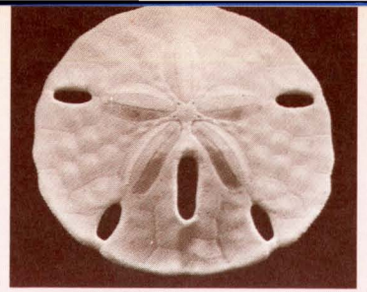
Is there such a thing as controlling the direction of the Gulf Stream and influencing the climate in many sections of the western world? Possibly, but the results might be quite drastic.

There is the Labrador Current which comes down from the Arctic and pushes the Gulf Stream out to sea. If this Labrador Current could be diverted to Greenland, the Gulf Stream would warm the New England coasts. Europe would get warmer climates, perhaps turning the people into Latin personalities. Blocking the Gulf Stream across the Straits of Florida would send the stream past Murmansk and open Siberia to moderate climate and full development. If the North American continent were conquered, such a possibility is quite feasible.

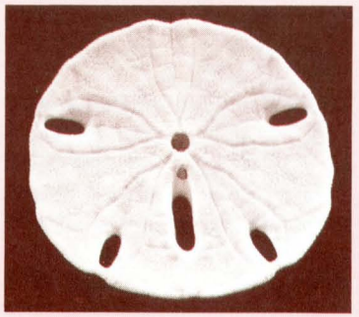
How long has the Gulf Stream been flowing? Geologists estimate 60,000,000 years. May it never cease or change course.

Aside from charting its course, the Gulf Stream remains as much a mystery as it has ever been. We still have to learn why its pattern, location and speed vary from time to time and place to place.

We need to understand such matters in order to determine the stream's role in modification of the weather, sea transport and commercial fishing. With our new emphasis upon oceanography and the underwater vessels we have built, perhaps the answers are not too distant.



LEGEND OF THE SAND DOLLAR



When man first became aware of his environs, he started pondering over the oddities found in nature. Later, believing them to be revelations from a Supreme Being, he began to associate them with his religion and legends began to grow.

Even in today's affluent society, legends still exist. None is so closely linked with Christianity than the one inspired by the design found on the lowly "sand dollar."

Sand dollar is the popular name for the *Echinarachnius Parma,* an order of flat sea urchins. The hard, circular disc shell of this species makes the name an appropriate one.

When alive, the sea urchin is covered with hairy spines that are silky to the touch. In water the spines are brown with a reddish or purple tint but turn green when exposed to the air. The spines are easily removed when the little creature expires and reveal a startling pattern of designs as exquisite as the most delicate of engravings.

Exact replicas of some of the symbols used in the Bible story of Jesus, these designs have been interpreted as a portrayal of His life and death.

The underside of the shell is marked by narrow, branching grooves that radiate from the center. The petal-like outline made by these grooves resembles a Christmas poinsettia roughly.

Centrally located on the upper side, a star is etched in perfection, the Star of Bethlehem so the legend goes. The star marks the heart of a petal-like design representing the Easter lilly.

The Keyhole urchin varies somewhat, although the markings are the same. In its shell it has five perforations through which the podia were connected with the hydraulic system in the living animal. These perforations tend to enhance the legend of the sand dollar. Four are said to be the nail holes made in the hands and feet of the Savior, and the fifth is the one made by the Roman spear thrust in His side.

The somewhat bulging center of the disc is a porous partitioned compartment containing five loose bones. When the shell is broken open and the bones are revealed, they look amazingly like tiny doves of peace in flight.

Even without the legend, the skeleton of the sea urchin is prized for the beautiful etchings pricked in its shell.

by R. D. Rives

THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT INSTITUTE OF MARITIME AND GENERAL STUDIES

CONTINUING ADULT EDUCATION AT SCI

Technical Training

The commitment of the Seamen's Church Institute to education for the seafarer goes back to the period of World War I and the beginning of the Merchant Marine School to assist men who wished to upgrade their licenses.

Untold thousands of men have studied here and have gone to sea with better training than would have been possible otherwise.

Today our call to serve in this area continues, especially with the rapidly evolving technology on board ships. The teaching staff of the school is well trained and alert to the changing needs of the men who present themselves to study here.

Education, however, is a very expensive commodity and few students can afford to pay a fee commensurate to their actual share of the total program cost. This fact is as applicable to seamen as it is for any other student in an independent school.

The consequence is that for 1972 our Merchant Marine School is budgeted for an operating subsidy of $48,000. This subsidy is derived in part from the contributions of the good friends of the institute who assure the continuation of our merchant marine program.

For this reason, a contributor to the institute can feel a particular sense of pride that some ship will be safer and that the arteries of our trade will be more open throughout the world because of this school and the seamen who study here.

General Knowledge

Our commitment to education, however, does not stop with maritime training. For many years the institute has had evening courses of a more general nature open to both seamen and to men and women from the community.

This part of our program has now been formalized in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Institute which offers a wide range of courses in international trade, professional skills and personal development.

To encourage learning in this area of general studies, the majority of our courses are offered tuition-free to seamen and at a modest charge to the general public.

Under our auspices, men of the sea not only can broaden their general education but they can also meet with persons who work ashore as they study together in courses of mutual interest and benefit.

This program must also be subsidized and a portion of every contribution goes to make up the $17,000 needed each year.

Contributors, therefore, have a direct share in making possible a great enterprise of education that could not otherwise pay for itself. For this, many men and women are grateful and seldom fail to express their thanks.

SHIP VISITS INCREASE IN NEW YORK HARBOR

The term "shipvisitor" is generally understood by the marine industry but not by the landlubber.

It could mean, the lubber might think, someone who visits his friends aboard a departing passenger ship for a gala champagne party.

Such a sybaritic shipvisitor has no connection or similarity with an Institute shipvisitor.

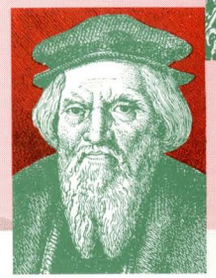
Mariners know—in the case of SCI—that a shipvisitor from the Institute who comes aboard the vessels tied up in the harbor (1) Speaks several languages, (2) Is prepared to aid any seaman needing help he encounters, (3) Often brings books and other reading material aboard ship for the crew, (4) Is knowledgeable about the Port of New York, Port Newark and the general metropolitan area.

He has other useful special qualifications—useful to seamen in port.

Whatever the reason—possibly because of settlement of waterfront strikes in Europe and elsewhere—the number of ships entering the eastern ports increased recently and SCI shipvisitors pointed with pride to calling on 249 vessels within the New York (Port Newark included) harbor within a week's time. A good spate of activity for the SCI reps.

Thirty-two nationalities were represented in the compilation for New York-berthed ships; seventeen nationalities at Port Newark during the same period. *(Continued on page 18)*

Christmas on the Map



by Victor Beesea

The cheerful word, "Christmas," pops up in many remote places on a map of the world. Usually this is because such places were discovered by explorers of old on the very day of Christianity's chief festival. The coincidence made it seem that the newly-discovered places deserved the name, "Christmas," almost by divine right.

Christmas Island, 95 square miles in area and one of the largest atolls in the Pacific, was discovered in 1777 by Captain James Cook. Recording the discovery in his log, he wrote: "As we kept our Christmas here, I called this discovery Christmas Island."

In 1919 Christmas Island was added to the British colony of Gilbert and Ellice Islands. And in the 1950's it became a British nuclear weapon testing range.

Another Christmas Island, 60 square miles in area, lies in the Indian Ocean, west of Java. Formerly a part of Singapore crown colony, it passed to Australia in 1958.

South America has a Christmas Sound, 120 miles northwest of Cape Horn, and explorers toiling through British Guiana dated their findings of the Christmas Cataracts on the river Berbice by linking them with the great Christian festival.

A harbor at Kerguelen Island in the Indian Ocean tells us by its description that British sailors discovered it on Christmas Day.

Australia has an inland Christmas Hill, a Christmas Creek, and a township called Xmas.

Other places are named after the Christmas season, like the province of Natal. It was in 1497 that the great explorer, Vasco da Gama, with his four tiny ships, rounded the foot of the African continent during fierce storms. As they slowly made their way up the African east coast they were rewarded by the sight of a fair and verdant land. Dating their great discovery, they piously christened it Natal, which in Portuguese means "Christmas."

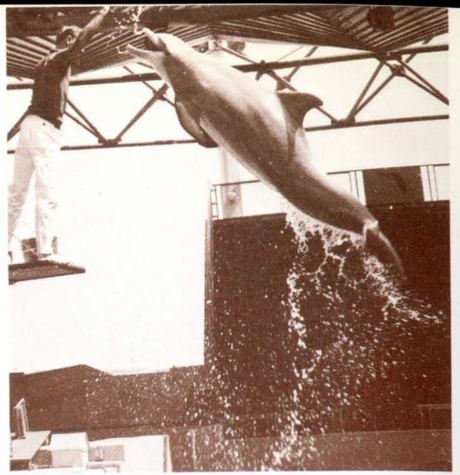
Brazil also has a Natal, a port around which fierce fighting raged during the early days of the Spanish conquerors. The town was known as Cidade dos Reis. To rechristen it Natal was a later inspiration in the days of peace.

The name of the mining community of Natal appears on the map of British Columbia, in its southeast corner near Coleman, Alberta. There is a Natal in Queensland, Australia, and on the island of Sumatra.

It seemed to be a habit of great explorers to make history on Christmas Day; Vasco Nuñez de Balboa was journeying through Panama when, on Christmas Eve, 1513, he came to the foot of a small mountain which he promptly named Mount Natal. The following day he climbed it alone and when he reached the summit was astonished to see long stretches of water on both sides of him in the distance.

One stretch was the Pacific Ocean, and he was the first white man to see it. In 1913, Panama issued a special stamp to commemorate this incident and to mark the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the Pacific Ocean.

PORPOISES HOME FROM MISSION



The Navy, according to United Press International, has brought home from Vietnam porpoises used to protect a big American base from North Vietnamese frogmen.

A Navy spokesman said the porpoise patrol had ended its Vietnam war duty of surveillance and detection, a program classified "Top Secret."

Military sources said the mammals had returned to the naval underwater research and development center at San Diego where they were trained.

The porpoises spent their year's tour of duty in Vietnam at a small Navy base called "Markettime" and were given the task of defending the Cam Ranh Bay port and airfield complex from attack by Communist frogmen.

Navy scientists chose the porpoises for training similar to guard dogs in a program which also is studying sea lions and other sea mammals for defense uses.

High intelligence, travel at speeds of more than 30 miles per hour underwater, and sonar-like abilities similar to electronic equipment used to track vessels in the water made the porpoises ideal for such training.

SHIP VISITS INCREASE IN NEW YORK HARBOR

(Continued from page 15)

A detailed breakdown showed the following distribution of U.S. and foreign ships called on by Institute representatives:

New York: American 48, Argentine 3, Belgian 3, Brazilian 6, British 11, Chilean 1, Colombian 4, Danish 4, Dutch 14, Ecuadorian 1, German 6, Greek 9, Guatemalan 2, Indian 4, Iranian 1, Italian 2, Japanese 1, Korean 1, Liberian 10, Mexican 3, Norwegian 4, Nicaraguan 2, Pakistani 1, Panamanian 3, Peruvian 2, Philippine 2, Polish 3, South African 1, Swedish 1, Turkish 2, Venezuelan 1, Yugoslavian 1.

Port Newark: American 1, British 12, Dutch 1, Finnish 2, French 3, German 33, Greek 9, Israeli 2, Italian 1, Japanese 5, Liberian 2, Norwegian 9, Portuguese 2, Spanish 5, Swedish 3, Swiss 1, Turkish 2.

—H.G.P.

NOTHING

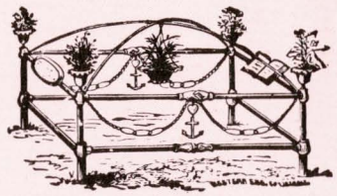
that had ever
happened to him
had diminished
his enthusiasm
for the sea.

His heart was clogged
in sea lanes;
Flavors of a thousand ports,
Tang of salt

Names like tiny bells
chiming in sunlight,
Or mournful clanging
of water-buoys.

Yet in the finality,
he settled for green meadows
of the land and a grave
on a hill overlooking
his first love.

Dorothy Mitchell Bechhold



THE CHANTEY SINGER

She certainly knows the seas she sings,
salt on the driftwood tossed inshore
by the stout ninth wave
uncurling last squall.

Pretty the phrasing of gull-drift talk,
bent on the wind past sight of land
the old bird settles to foam,
cradling out where the wave is born.

Quiet the gull on the heaving tides,
never a cry of high romance,
waiting until on wing again
she keens the depths while over the shore.

L. A. Davidson

Seamen's Church Institute of N. Y.
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New York, N. Y. 10004

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IN
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INVITE YOUR SPECIAL
CHRISTMAS GIFT THAT WE MAY
MAKE CHRISTMAS BRIGHTER FOR MANY
LONESOME MEN FAR AWAY FROM HOMES AND
FAMILIES WHO MAKE THEIR HOLIDAY HOME WITH
US. IF YOU ACCEPT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS YOUR
BROTHER'S BROTHER, PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO HELP
US IN OUR WORK, ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT DURING THIS SEASON
WHEN JUST HAVING A FRIEND MEANS SO MUCH . . . NOT ONLY TO OUR
AMERICAN SEAMEN, BUT
TO HUNDREDS OF SEA-
FARING BROTHERS
⊠ VISITING WITH ⊠
US THIS YEAR WHO
NEVER HAVE EXPERI-
ENCED THE WARMTH
AND FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTMAS