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Independence Seaport Museum Brings Over 60 Years of Maritime Exhibits and On-Water Activities to Penn's Landing

Philadelphia, PA | February 10, 2022 – Founded in 1960, [Independence Seaport Museum's](#) (ISM) mission is to discover Philadelphia's river of history and world of connections. ISM is a critical component of Philadelphia's waterfront renaissance and is a popular, family-friendly tourist destination for the Penn's Landing neighborhood, serving 110,000 visitors every year. In 2022, ISM will offer a variety of new, in-person programming dedicated to celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act and in-person workshops courses in their building. Spend the day discovering award-winning exhibitions highlighting the history and wonders of our waterways before heading outside to tour their historic ships or explore the Delaware River.

Inside the Museum

From now through December 2022, the [Penn Program in Environmental Humanities](#) (PPEH) is partnering with ISM to lead discussions and create solutions that address environmental issues through the [2022 Ecotopian Toolkit Project](#). The program began in 2017 and is a collaborative effort between creators and the general public to develop and provide access to shared sustainable tools and knowledge to endure current and future ecological challenges. PPEH will work with ISM to examine these issues through a new exhibit and host workshops to explore the uses of the proposed tools with the help of their River Ambassadors and community members. This evolving process will occur in three distinct phases, each intended to engage our wider community in reflection, participation, and action.

Guests can explore one of the largest maritime art and artifact collections in North America, most of which are displayed in their award-winning, permanent exhibits. The [River Alive!](#) exhibition gives visitors an up-close look at the wildlife, science, and wonder of the Delaware River and encourages exploration through various engaging, interactive components. Awarded the Special Achievement in Interactivity Award in 2020 by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), this exhibit proves that the river truly is alive and how important its conservation is to the eastern seaboard. To celebrate the Clean Water Act, the Museum launched the [Teatime Series](#), a new, family-friendly program, which highlights the importance of clean water both for humans and sea animals. The series takes place in *River Alive!* and offers visitors the chance to meet experts from the [Center for Aquatic Sciences](#) or [Skype-A-Scientist](#), complete upcycled crafts, and sit in on storytime.

Featuring artifacts from the Museum's collection, [Tides of Freedom: African Presence on the Delaware River](#), shares first-hand accounts detailing the history of enslavement, emancipation, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights in Philadelphia. Another AAM award-winning exhibit, *Tides of Freedom*, was curated by the Lasry Family Professor of Race Relations at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Tukufu Zuberi. Learn about piracy and Philadelphia's connection to the founding of the U.S. Navy in *Patriots & Pirates*, which includes the 102-foot vessel Schooner *Diligence*. The replica ship was constructed by staff and volunteers from [The Seaport Boat Shop](#), a traditional boat shop located inside the Museum where maritime tradition meets hands-on experiences and community.

The Seaport Boat Shop is dedicated to boat building and sailing skills and traditions in the Delaware Valley and New Jersey shore. Visitors can interact with ISM's boat builders as they work on various projects or enroll in programs for high school students and adults alike. The area's finest teaching craftspeople lead workshops on various subjects, such as traditional wooden boat building, metal forging, and metal casting. Prices for workshops vary. The minimum age for the program is 16 years old, with an adult present.

On the Delaware Waterfront

The Museum is proud to be continuing its efforts to educate the public about its historical vessels docked along the landing. Nearby the Museum are [Cruiser Olympia](#), the oldest floating steel warship, and [Submarine Becuna](#), a World War II-era Balao-class submarine. ISM began its stewardship of *Olympia*, a National Historic Landmark, in 1996 and has since overseen restorations that made it possible for the historic Cruiser to remain open for touring visitors. The *Becuna* also brings a storied history from her 25 years in the U.S. Navy. The submarine completed five wartime patrols in the Pacific Theater of World War II and earned four combat stars for her service. In 1951, she underwent modernization as part of the United States Navy's Greater Underwater Propulsion & Power Program (GUPPY) and was refitted with a Guppy 1A modification. She remains the only Guppy 1A type submarine anywhere in the world. *Becuna* became a museum in July 1976 as part of Philadelphia's Bicentennial Celebration and became a part of ISM's collections in 1996.

In 2021, ISM commemorated the [Centennial Anniversary of the Return of the Unknown Soldier](#) aboard Cruiser Olympia. Following the end of World War I, the Cruiser was chosen to return the remains of an unknown American soldier to the United States. By popular demand, ISM extended *Olympia's* [Difficult Journey Home](#) exhibit through March 20, 2022. The exhibit features an 11-panel installation that examines the 16-day treacherous voyage home that Cruiser *Olympia* faced after departing from Le Havre, France, in 1921. To commemorate the Unknown Soldier and memorialize his story for future visitors, ISM unveiled a permanent [historical marker](#) on Olympia located where the coffin was laid during its transport in 1921.

In addition to the ships, ISM offers additional opportunities to explore the waterways. During the warmer months, visitors can look forward to exploring the Delaware River from a whole new point of view with ISM's unique [On-Water Programming](#) with options for every level of experience. Back by popular demand, the Museum will be offering both the family-favorite, [Paddle Penn's Landing](#), where visitors can paddle around the basin, and [Kayak Excursions](#), where participants can paddle out of the basin and onto the river.

Interviews: Please contact **Hannah Thomas** to schedule interviews with ISM's President & CEO Peter S. Seibert, ISM Executive Vice President & COO Mike Flynn, or Chief Curator Craig Bruns.

Photos: Live [HERE](#)

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About Independence Seaport Museum

Independence Seaport Museum encourages visitors to discover Philadelphia's river of history and world of connections. Stewards of Cruiser *Olympia* and World War II-era Submarine *Becuna*, ISM is home to a boatbuilding workshop, interactive exhibitions, and one of the largest collections of historic maritime artifacts in the world. Visitors can explore the historic and beautiful Delaware River first-hand by renting a boat from the Museum or by participating in one of our kayak excursions. The Independence Seaport Museum is the premier, year-round destination on the Penn's Landing waterfront. Visit daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and see our full schedule of programs and events at phillyseaport.org.