



SHIPS™ NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 317 • Grand Blanc, Michigan 48439

SPRING

JOHN KELVIN, EDITOR

Carry Away With You THE MEMORY

MORRELL FILM FINISHED, RECEIVES AWARD IN "BEST DOCUMENTARY" CATEGORY AT IFTF

The Shipwreck History Interpretation and Preservation Society's (SHIPS) three-year effort to sponsor a film of the discovery of the ruptured ore freighter Daniel J. Morrell ended last April with the film's debut in Sault Ste. Marie.

Since, it has won a bronze award in the "best documentary" category at the International Film and TV Festival (IFTF) of New York. The award isn't the only boost SHIPS has gotten from the film, says President Larry Coplin. Membership and donations to the non-profit organization have skyrocketed as the Morrell film toured Michigan, Ohio, New York and Washington, D.C., he says.

Filming the Morrell began in 1979 after a crew of SHIPS members located the Morrell's missing 300-foot bow section for the first time, in May of that year.

Coplin produced the film, with help from John Steele, shooting over 7,000 feet of film on the 16-year-old wreck as other society members contributed to the film with their talents. Bob McGreevy, a marine artist, made several sketches of the ship's separated bow and stern sections as they now lay on Lake Huron's floor. Sketches of the Morrell as she looked while seaworthy, and of the survivor on the liferaft were also incorporated into the film.

But even with the sketches and film Coplin and others struggled to make a "best documentary" that wouldn't resemble other underwater productions. Playwright Robert Jackson then lent his talents to the project and produced and directed a script which would narrate the tragedy by a newscaster, the lone survivor, and the Morrell herself.

"Everything seemed to fall into place with the film," said Coplin. "Almost as soon as we would run into a problem someone would come along who could help us."

With the film, artwork and script in place, Coplin turned to Dave Kelley of National Television News to provide quality, professional editing of the film, and quality mixing of its music score which was written by Rick Slotnick of Filmhaus Music, Troy, Michigan.

"The Morrell film has been a big boost to the society, and I'd like to thank all of the people who worked on it and contributed to it. These people made it one of the "best documentaries at IFTF," said Coplin.

