

Bio

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Full name
Stephen
Kirkland

Age 42

Originally from
Aulander, N.C.

Education
Bachelor's in
journalism from
University of
South Carolina

Family Married to
Sarah Jane Kirkland;
2-year-old daughter,
Sophia

Resides in
Belvedere

Previous jobs Walt
Disney World
attractions host
(internship),
1991; TV news
reporter and
part time
anchor in
Dalton, Ga.,
1995-1996;
Carnival Cruise
Lines social
host and then
cruise director,
1996-2001.

take this organization to the next level. I want to bring that ship to life. The battleship Wisconsin is an icon and I think there's lots of different ways to tell stories. I also want to focus on families. It's great for the history buff to come aboard the ship, but I want to appeal to the young kids. I don't think the word 'fun' is a bad word. I want to create some unique experiences here and be a catalyst for downtown.

What is the future of cruising in Norfolk? I think it's bright. Right now we have the most robust stop-over cruise ship schedule we've ever had with 20 scheduled right now. We'll continue to build our homeport program. The Half Moone is truly a multipurpose facility. I know the industry pretty well and I know it's cyclical.

Favorite place in Norfolk and why? Besides Nauticus, my house, because it's brand new to us and we just celebrated our first Christmas there.

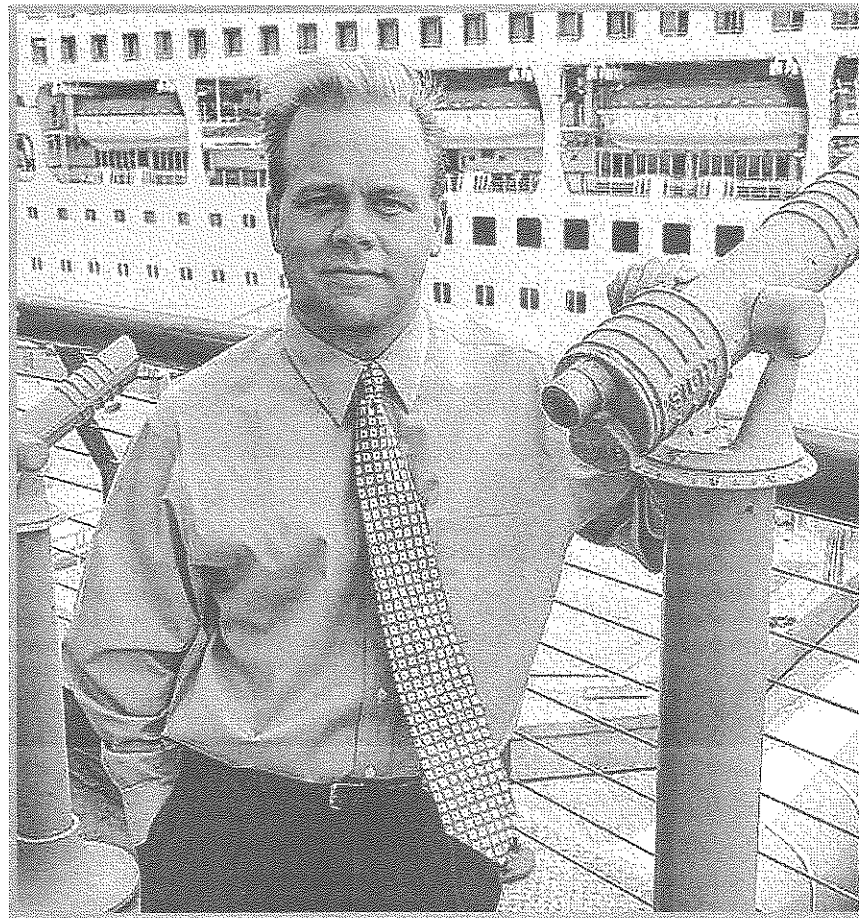
Hobbies? I love to read and I collect books. I'm a huge American literature guy - I love Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Favorite movie? "Love, Actually."

Favorite book? "The Old Man and the Sea" by Ernest Hemingway

If you could have dinner with any historical figure, either living or dead, who would it be and why? The idea of sitting in a Paris café with F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway in 1925 Paris would make me more excited than I could tell you. Fitzgerald had just written "The Great Gatsby." Hemingway was about to go to the bullfights in Pamplona. It was a turning point in the lives of both. I actually wrote a play about it.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Stephen Kirkland

New director of National Maritime Center (Nauticus, cruise terminal, battleship) sees a bright future for its "dynamic campus."

INTERVIEW BY LIA RUSSELL | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

STEPHEN KIRKLAND was appointed director of the National Maritime Center last month. He served as acting director since September, after the resignation of former director Hank Lynch. He had been assistant executive director since 2001, the year he came to work for the city.

"Stephen has demonstrated a passion for creating inspirational and memorable visitor experiences at one of the most valuable destinations along the Norfolk waterfront," said City Manager Marcus Jones, when he announced the appointment. "I believe his leadership and vision will create programs and exhibits at the National Maritime Center that impact the lives of everyone who walks through the doors."

Kirkland's relationship with the Maritime Center began in 2001, when he was hired as assistant executive director. In that role, Kirkland managed the Nauticus Museum, Half Moone Cruise and Celebration Center and the battleship Wisconsin. He helped develop family friendly exhibits for Nauticus and oversaw fundraising efforts to support its programming. He also served as the city's liaison to the cruise industry, an apt role as his former job was cruise director with Carnival Cruise Lines.

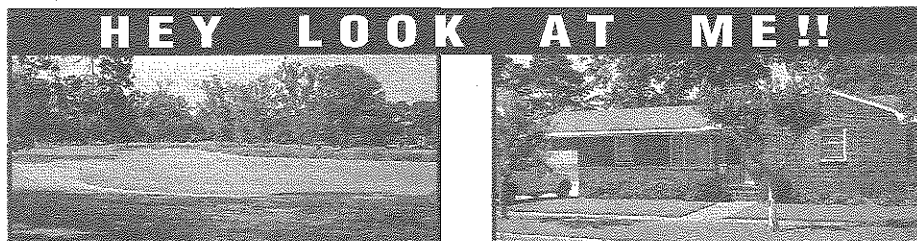
Compass recently caught up with Kirkland.

What's your favorite part of your job?

The National Maritime Center's dynamic campus. Where else can you go and find a fantastic museum, a cruise terminal, the last battleship built by the U.S. Navy and a sailing program for kids? I love this job and I love this place.

What's your vision for the Maritime Center and Nauticus?

I'm not interested in maintaining business as usual. 2014 is Nauticus' 20th anniversary. We want to lay out a direction for this campus for the next 20 years and beyond. I want to



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