

SEAFARERS



LOG

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION • ATLANTIC, GULF, LAKES AND INLAND WATERS

House Hearing Backs U.S. Maritime

Strong Bipartisan Support Evident for Merchant Marine

During a recent hearing in the U.S. House of Representatives, congressmen from both sides of the aisle forcefully spoke in favor of maintaining a robust American maritime industry. U.S. Reps. Duncan Hunter (R-California) (far right), John Garamendi (D-California) (immediate right) and others expressed unwavering support for the Jones Act, the Maritime Security Program, cargo preference laws, and American crews. Hunter chairs the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, where the hearing took place, while Garamendi is the ranking member. Some of the other attendees are pictured below. Pages 2, 3.



SIU Philanthropy Aims to Aid American Military Families

Seafarers in Tacoma, Washington, late last year continued their traditional support of Santa's Castle, an annual program that provides toys and other goodies for U.S. military families during Christmas season. The union hall in Tacoma served as a staging area for SIU donations. Pictured at the hall are (photo below) Chief Steward Norman Cox and (photo at right, from left) DEU Reynaldo Mambulao and SA Lisa Wert. The SIU participants donated around \$9,500 worth of toys and other items. Page 24.



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President's Report

'Cornerstone of Security'

There were a number of highly encouraging comments made at last month's U.S. House of Representatives hearing on the state of the American maritime industry. These remarks included written testimony as well as dialogue that happened during the usual question-and-answer sessions that followed the prepared remarks from two separate panels. (Full coverage of the hearing appears elsewhere in this edition.)

Several things stood out to me about the supportive commentary.



Michael Sacco

For one, it came from both sides of the aisle and from pretty much every component of our industry. For another, it reflected not only in-depth knowledge of the laws and programs that keep Old Glory flying on American-built ships and tugs and other vessels, but also the need to spread the word about precisely why the United States must maintain a viable U.S. Merchant Marine.

Congressman Duncan Hunter chaired the hearing of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, and as usual, he didn't sugarcoat his pro-maritime views. I especially appreciated his description of the Jones Act. Congressman Hunter said in part, "In order for us to

maintain the way of life as we know it as a nation that is secure and is able to project power, be it Navy power or commercial (maritime) power, the Jones Act is intrinsic to that. It's the cornerstone of all of them."

He also said it would be "stupid" and "absurd" to give away our shipbuilding capacity and let foreign-owned, foreign-crewed vessels loose on our waterways. I could not agree more.

But he finished with a vital point, and it may seem familiar if you've kept up with these columns. Congressman Hunter cited the need to "keep educating and educating because that's what it's going to take so that people understand why [America needs the Jones Act] and how it is one of the cornerstones of our entire country's national security apparatus."

You might recall that three other congressmen voiced the same sentiment during the Maritime Trades Department (MTD) convention in October. One of them, Congressman Bennie Thompson, said our industry has "the best message in the world." But it's up to us, collectively, to inform Congress, the administration, other politicians and the general public. It's up to us to help people understand why America needs not only the Jones Act but also the Maritime Security Program, strong cargo preference laws, a fully functional U.S. Export-Import Bank and – most importantly in my admittedly biased eyes – a cadre of U.S. civilian mariners who are always available to uphold the U.S. Merchant Marine's role as the fourth arm of defense.

The SIU works on this mission every day, whether through individual grassroots political action, or participating in departments like the MTD or coalitions like the American Maritime Partnership, or using our newspaper, website and social-media accounts to promote the outstanding work of SIU members. I agree with the congressmen who spoke at last month's hearing and at the MTD convention – they basically said that some of our industry's problems stem from lack of awareness about our outstanding value. That's an ongoing project, but I think we've all stepped up and are making progress since last year's hurricanes (which spurred some severe misrepresentations of what American maritime is really all about).

My thanks go to Congressman Hunter and Congressman John Garamendi (ranking member of the subcommittee) for conducting the hearing, and to the other representatives who attended and spoke out in favor of the U.S. Merchant Marine. They include Congressmen Garret Graves, Randy Weber, Rick Larsen and Alan Lowenthal.

With people like that on our side, we are going to succeed in revitalizing our industry. Our entire nation will benefit, and we'll all be more secure.

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Maritime's Puerto Rico Relief Efforts Continue

The United States territory of Puerto Rico was hit by Hurricane Maria in September 2017, leaving millions of people to pick up the pieces in the wake of the storm's devastation. U.S.-flag vessels (many with SIU crews) promptly began transporting relief supplies to the island, which was in desperate need of clean water, generators and other basic necessities.

The SIU, along with the union's allies in the maritime, labor and business communities, has continued to support recovery efforts in the New Year. For example, the SIU is a co-sponsor of Operation Agua, an initiative spearheaded by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) that has helped provide clean drinking water to people throughout the territory.

Operation Agua's other co-sponsors are the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR, an affiliate of the AFT), Seafarers-contracted Tote Maritime, AFSCME, Operation Blessing International, and the Hispanic Federation.

"The AMPR is here for our students, our members, our schools and our communities," said Aida Diaz, AMPR president. "We started our efforts in the schools because we wanted to ensure our students and staff had safe drinking water. This is a continuing plan to help Puerto Rico recover and rebuild and to support public education on our island."

As of mid-January, the coalition had raised more than \$1.6 million dollars in donations, all of which go directly to providing Kohler Clarity water filters to families in need all over the island, as well as larger-capacity filtration systems for schools, union offices and other community centers.

"We delivered Operation Agua water filters, clothes and gifts to students and faculty at Puerto Rico public schools—some still without electricity and only intermittent access to drinking water

for the past three months since Hurricane Maria," said AFT President Randi Weingarten. "I am in awe of all the educators and students here who are striving to move forward in the face of such daunting circumstances. I am equally inspired by the generosity of people all across our country who have collectively helped us get half way to our goal. We will continue to support Puerto Rico to help make sure that our children are safe, that they receive all the help they need and that this crisis is not invisible, and the federal government should do the same."

All the filters that have been distributed on the island as a part of Operation Agua were shipped to Puerto Rico free of charge by Tote Maritime. Containers full of filters and other relief supplies continue to arrive weekly on Tote-operated Jones Act vessels.

Separately, Seafarers-contracted Crowley and other vessel operators have also been delivering relief cargoes to the island. As stated by the new chairman of the American Maritime Partnership (AMP), Matt Woodruff, during recent testimony before Congress, "Since Hurricane Maria hit the island, domestic liner carriers including Crowley, TOTE, and Trailer Bridge have delivered over 75,000 containers to the island. These containers include relief cargoes like food, clothing, water, and medicine as well as rebuilding supplies. In addition to containers, roll-on/roll-off, tank, and bulk shipments have delivered fuel, electric poles, utility trucks, tanker trucks, heavy equipment, and other cargoes."

Woodruff concluded, "Finally, the Puerto Rico carriers are doing more than just delivering cargo – they are supporting the island, including using their own truck distribution networks to deliver goods; coordinating with federal and local government entities and relief organizations to improve final mile delivery; and organiz-

ing community events and donations on the island."

In addition, Kohler produced a short video on the relief efforts, and how to donate to Operation Agua. Links to more information, as well as details on donating or becoming an Operation Agua sponsor, can be found at www.operationagua.com.

Meanwhile, some private individuals are making their own contributions to the recovery of the island. Assisted in their endeavor by Tote, Deb and Robin Roberts recently distributed more than 30,000 pounds of food, bottled water and other necessities to the people of Puerto Rico. They had organized their relief effort in November by asking their local community in Wilton, Maine, to donate supplies in honor of their son, Michael Holland.

Holland was serving aboard the *El Faro* as the third engineer when tragedy struck in October 2015, claiming his life and those of the other 32 people aboard, including 17 SIU members, amidst a hurricane not unlike 2017's Hurricane Maria. Holland had spent considerable time in Puerto Rico, as the *El Faro* was dedicated to the Puerto Rico trade lane. The Roberts felt called to support the people and communities who played such an integral role in their son's life.

"It was truly a rewarding experience to be able to help the people of Puerto Rico in memory of our son, Michael," commented Deb and Robin Roberts. "We are so grateful to everyone at Tote for helping us to make the drive a success. Without their efforts and support, we never would've been able to make it happen."

"Partnering with the Roberts to bring goods to the island has been a gift," said Anthony Chiarello, president and CEO of Tote. "There are still so many families and communities struggling to survive after Hurricane Maria – these goods will be invaluable to people throughout the island."

BLS Data Shows Increase in Union Membership

Union membership was on the rise in 2017, according to the latest annual report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. As stated in the report, union membership in the U.S. grew by 262,000 last year, to 14.817 million, while union density stayed at 10.7 percent.

Unionists' wage advantage over their non-union colleagues grew again, according to the BLS, which issued its report in mid-January. The median wage for unionist members in 2017 was \$1,041, compared to \$829 for unrepresented workers. And the wage gap between working men and women was, as usual, smaller for union workers, at 88 percent of the average male union wage (\$970 for women, \$1,102 for men.)

The data showed that last year, 11.4 percent of working men and 10 percent of working women belonged to a union. Those percentages are much higher in the public sector, where 34.4 percent of government employees are protected by a union. In the transportation industry, 17.3 percent of workers were union in 2017. As shown in the BLS report, union membership also increased among younger people, with 877,000



Richard Trumka
President, AFL-CIO

union members between the ages of 16 and 24 and 3 million members between 25 and 34.

According to the report, union density rose in Michigan, Minnesota and South Carolina, and declined slightly in Missouri – though the legislation that would have brought so-called "right to work" laws to Missouri has stalled thanks to grassroots political efforts. The most unionized states in 2017 were still New York and Hawaii, at 23.8 and 21.3 percent, respectively. The report

reaffirmed that most union members are still concentrated in the Northeast, the Great Lakes and the Pacific Coast, though gains are being made in other states.

The AFL-CIO, of which the SIU is a member, hailed these latest numbers as a victory, saying that the increase in union members "reflects critical organizing victories across a range of industries, which have reaped higher wages, better benefits, and a more secure future for working people around the country."

"In the face of a challenging year, the power of working people is on the rise," said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. "Together, we organized historic new unions, stood up to powerful corporations, and won higher wages.... But today's data is more than numbers on a page; it's a growing movement of working people that can't be measured as easily. When more union members fill the halls of power, when wages rise and inequality shrinks, and when a growing number of people see that we can and will change the rules of this economy – that's when you'll know unions are on the rise."

Congressional, Maritime Leaders Emphasize Backing of Jones Act, MSP, Cargo Preference

Strong bipartisan support for the U.S. Merchant Marine was readily apparent during a recent hearing in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Conducted Jan. 17 by the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation (part of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee), the hearing's broad purpose was to examine the state of the U.S.-flag maritime industry. U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-California) chairs the subcommittee, while U.S. Rep. John Garamendi (D-California) is its ranking member.

Subcommittee members heard from two panels. The first consisted of U.S. Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby and U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. John Nadeau, the agency's assistant commandant for prevention policy. The second comprised Matt Woodruff, newly elected chair of the American Maritime Partnership (AMP); Eric Ebeling, president and CEO of American Roll-On/Roll-Off Carrier Group (testifying on behalf of USA Maritime); Aaron Smith, president and CEO of the Offshore Marine Service Association; Matthew Paxton, president of the Shipbuilders Council of America; and Bill Van Loo, secretary-treasurer of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (testifying on behalf of his union along with the SIU, AMO and MM&P).

Throughout the two-hour hearing, legislators from both sides of the aisle along with panelists spelled out why U.S. national, economic and homeland security rely on a strong American maritime industry. The industry in turn depends on laws and programs prominently including the Jones Act, the Maritime Security Program (MSP), and cargo preference. The return of a fully functioning U.S. Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank also would provide a much-needed boost to American-flag shipping, several speakers noted.

Hunter voiced concern about the shrinking pool of U.S. mariners, and commended the industry's efforts to mitigate the problem in part through the Military to Maritime program, which assists veterans in transitioning to careers in the U.S.-flag industry. (The SIU is a partner organization.)

Hunter also expressed incredulity at recent opposition to the Jones Act, which he described as "the absurdity of trying to take away America's cabotage law. In order to maintain life as we know it, the Jones Act is intrinsic to that. It is the cornerstone.... I hope that we keep educating, because that's what it's going to take. The Jones Act is one of the cornerstones of our entire security apparatus."

Garamendi also cited Jones Act support as a top maritime priority.

He said, "First and foremost, we cannot become complacent in our defense of the Jones Act, and our efforts along with other organizations to raise public awareness of the need for, and the many benefits that flow from this longstanding maritime policy."

He added, "We need to ... find new cargoes for U.S.-flag vessels in the international and coastwise trades. More cargo means more ships, and more ships mean more good-paying maritime jobs.... The export of oil and natural gas give us such an opportunity. We need better enforcement of existing cargo preference requirements, especially for the Food Aid shipments.... We also need to look creatively at

how best to recapitalize our nation's Ready Reserve Force, Military Sealift Command (MSC), and Maritime Security Program fleets."

Buzby, formerly the commanding officer of MSC, reviewed the statutory mission of the Maritime Administration (MARAD), which is part of the Transportation Department. That mandate "is to foster, promote, and develop the maritime industry of the United States to meet the nation's economic and security needs," he said. "Congress long ago recognized that it is necessary for national defense, and development of domestic and foreign commerce, that we have a U.S. Merchant Marine capable of serving in times of war or national emergency, and composed of the best-equipped, safest, and most suitable types of vessels, constructed in the U.S., and crewed by trained and efficient citizen mariners."

He continued, "Unfortunately, over the last few decades, the U.S. maritime industry has suffered losses as companies, ships, and jobs moved overseas. MARAD will continue to leverage, as appropriate, the current mainstays of the merchant marine: the Jones Act, the Maritime Security Program, and cargo preference.... The U.S. military, the most powerful military in the world, relies on U.S.-flag vessels crewed by U.S. civilian mariners, operating from strategic ports, and using intermodal systems to ensure delivery of vital supplies and equipment to service members and their families stationed overseas. This transportation partnership between the U.S. military and the U.S.-flag Merchant Marine has been proven as reliable, enabling, and cost-effective to meeting sealift requirements."

Turning to cabotage, Buzby stated, "Coastwise trade laws promote a strong and vibrant U.S. domestic maritime industry, which helps the United States maintain its expertise in shipbuilding and maritime transportation. The Jones Act also ensures that vessels navigating on a daily basis among and between U.S. coastal ports and vulnerable inland waterways are operating with U.S. documentation and crew rather than under a foreign flag with foreign crew."

Nadeau said, "A healthy maritime industry is vital to the nation's economic prosperity and national security. It is also dynamic and continually evolving to meet stakeholder demand."

AMP Chairman Woodruff praised U.S. mariners for their effective responses to last year's hurricanes that struck the mainland, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"In many cases, the men and women of our industry put aside the need to address damage to their own homes in order to help their fellow Americans because they knew the cargo they carried represented a lifeline to impacted areas," Woodruff said.

Specifically addressing the Puerto Rico relief effort, he added, "As you all know, the original narrative was that the Jones Act was impairing the recovery effort, a narrative that was proven to be patently false. Thanks to your hearing last October, public statements, and other factors, the story quickly changed and the truth came out. In reality, the Jones Act fleet was steadily delivering containers to the island, which, unfortunately, were stacking up on the terminals due to road closures and other inland infrastructure issues that resulted from the hurricane. Today, we can say without equivocation



Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-California)



Rep. John Garamendi (D-California)

that the Jones Act fleet was and continues to be a major part of the recovery effort."

Woodruff concluded his prepared statement by citing the numerous security benefits directly stemming from the Jones Act: "If your concern is national security, the Jones Act contributes to it, whether by helping maintain the shipyard industrial base that is vital to national security, providing a pool of mariners who have demonstrated through the ages that they will go into harm's way to support America's interests and defense, or through using commercial vessels for military cargoes. If you worry about homeland security, you can sleep better knowing that the vessels plying our inland waters, often carrying dangerous cargoes, are manned by security-screened Americans, who care about keeping your home safe and secure, because they are your neighbors. If you care about economic security, you are glad to know that the vessels that keep vital goods moving between American cities and energy flowing will not disappear overnight because of a decision by a foreign power. You know the industry provides well-paying, family wage jobs that allow Americans to climb the ladder of economic security. You know that we cannot have energy independence or dominance if we have to depend on foreign interests to get our domestic energy out of the ground and to its markets in America."

Ebeling said the U.S.-flag fleet "has been at a crossroads in recent years." He reiterated the industry's confidence in Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, Transportation Command Commanding Officer Gen. Darren McDew, and Maritime Administrator Buzby. He then detailed the effectiveness and importance of the MSP, cargo preference laws and a fully functioning Ex-Im Bank.

"Smart and effective management by the U.S. Maritime Administration, and full cooperation of the shipper agencies such as the Department of Defense, Export-Import Bank, USAID, and other government shipping agencies is critically important to the U.S. international fleet, and to the survival of the U.S. Merchant Marine, which provides the loyal, competent, well-trained mariners for our ves-

sels," Ebeling said. "It is a rather simple equation. Without cargo, carriers will not invest in ships, and without ships, there will not be jobs for merchant mariners. Without those merchant mariners, the government-owned reserve fleet cannot be crewed."

Smith of OMSA said his organization "is a strong supporter of the Jones Act. This act has proven time and again to promote U.S. national, homeland, and economic security."

Paxton, head of the shipbuilder coalition, said of the Jones Act, "This policy, which is provided at no cost to the U.S. government, helps to maintain a merchant marine that is sufficient to carry our domestic waterborne commerce and also ensures that there is sufficient U.S. capacity to serve as a naval and military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency."

He offered several illustrations of how some foreign countries subsidize their shipyards – a fact that shouldn't be overlooked when calculating the costs of American-built vessels.

"U.S. shipyards do not compete on a level playing field in the worldwide market," he observed. "For example, last year South Korea's government injected \$2.6 billion into one of their most prominent shipyards in order to keep the yard from going bankrupt. China's government subsidies are extremely difficult to detect and measure, partly because international trade agreements prohibit direct and indirect subsidies. However, we know that there is a certain extent of market manipulation based on international news reports and recent studies."

"On top of [a] scrapping incentive, the Chinese government offers more overt support for its shipyard industry through cash infusions," he added. "One such shipyard, Rongsheng, received state subsidies of up to \$202 million per year from 2010 to 2012."

Van Loo pointed to the U.S. Merchant Marine's centuries-long history of supporting the nation in peace and war. Like other panelists, he also said America has reached a dangerous point for its U.S.-flag fleet and the men and women who crew the vessels.

"We continue the patriotic tradition of American mariners serving since the founding of our nation – we remain willing to sail into harm's way in order to support and supply our military overseas," Van Loo said. "A strong U.S.-flag fleet and the corresponding base of American merchant mariners is imperative to securing America's economic and national security. Unfortunately, the pool of licensed and unlicensed mariners has shrunk to a critical level. Without governmental action, the military will no longer be able to rely on the all-volunteer U.S. Merchant Marine as our nation's fourth arm of defense.... The commercial sealift capacity and its pool of highly trained and experienced mariners is reaching a diminished point of no return."

He then spelled out numerous steps that can be taken to rectify the problems, and pledged the ongoing cooperation of maritime labor.

During question-and-answer periods, other subcommittee members expressed strong support for the Jones Act and the industry as a whole including Reps. Garret Graves (R-Louisiana), Randy Weber (R-Texas), Rick Larsen (D-Washington) and Alan Lowenthal (D-California).



Mark Buzby
Maritime Administrator



Bill Van Loo
MEBA Secretary-Treasurer



Eric Ebeling
President/CEO, ARC

El Faro Investigation Concludes After 26 Months

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) on Dec. 12 conducted an all-day meeting in the nation's capital that marked the end of its 26-month investigation of the *El Faro* sinking.

While the board cited numerous factors in the October 2015 tragedy – an incident that claimed the lives of 33 mariners, including 17 SIU members – they primarily pointed to the vessel master's "failure to avoid sailing into a hurricane despite numerous opportunities to route a course away from hazardous weather," the NTSB said in a news release.

However, NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt stated, "The *El Faro* didn't have to sail into Hurricane Joaquin, and having met the hurricane, didn't have to sink. The captain's decisions were important, but there's also more to this accident."

He added, "We may never understand why the captain failed to heed his crew's concerns about sailing into the path of a hurricane, or why he refused to chart a safer course away from such dangerous weather. But we know all too well the devastating consequences of those decisions."

Based on the findings of the investigation, the NTSB made 29 recommendations to the U.S. Coast Guard, two to the Federal Communications Commission, one to the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, nine to the International Association of Classification Societies, one to the American Bureau of Shipping, one to Furuno Electric Company and 10 to vessel operator Tote Services. Many are consistent with conclusions from related report (issued in October 2017) by the Coast Guard's Marine Board of Investigation.



NTSB Chairman Robert L. Sumwalt speaks during an *El Faro* investigation press briefing on Dec. 12, 2017. (Photo courtesy NTSB)

■ Require that all personnel employed on vessels in coastal, Great Lakes, and ocean service be provided with a personal locator beacon to enhance their chances of survival.

Tote Services released a statement on the NTSB's findings that read, "We as a company intend to learn everything possible from this accident and the resulting investigations to prevent anything similar from occurring in the future. Tote also remains focused, as we have from the start, on caring for the families of those we lost and working daily ashore and at sea to safeguard the lives of mariners."

The complete accident report is expected to be available in the near future. The executive summary, including the findings, probable cause and safety recommendations is available online. Additional information related to this investigation, including news releases, photographs, videos, and a link to the accident docket containing more than 30,000 pages of factual material, is available on the *El Faro* accident investigation web page.

The 790-foot cargo vessel *El Faro*, en route from Jacksonville, Florida, to San Juan, Puerto Rico, sank Oct. 1, 2015, in the Atlantic Ocean during Hurricane Joaquin. As outlined in the report, when the ship departed, the vessel had a range of navigational tools that would have allowed it to steer clear of the storm, which would eventually strengthen into a Category 4 hurricane. According to the NTSB, the captain ignored suggestions from the bridge, and used outdated weather forecasts in ordering a course that failed to avoid the path of the hurricane, which pounded the ship with 35-foot seas and 100-mph winds.

The NTSB recommendations include:

■ Revise regulations to increase the minimum required propulsion and critical athwartships machinery angles of inclination. Concurrently, requirements for lifeboat launching angles should be increased above new machinery angles to provide a margin of safety for abandoning ship after machinery failure.

■ Propose to the International Mari-

time Organization (IMO) that all watertight access doors and access hatch covers normally closed at sea be provided with open/close indicators both on the bridge and locally.

■ Require that vessels in ocean service (500 gross tons or more) be equipped with properly operating meteorological instruments, including functioning barometers, barographs, and anemometers.



Tacoma, Washington



Oakland, California



Pictured at the hall in Wilmington, California, are (from left) SIU Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel, SIU VP West Coast Nick Marrone and Seafarers Plans Administrator Maggie Bowen.

Benefits Conferences Conclude At Nine SIU Halls Around Country

The Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan (SHBP) in mid-December finished a series of informational conferences that began last summer and took place at a total of nine SIU halls. The three most recent gatherings occurred Dec. 11-13 at (in order) the halls in Tacoma, Washington; Wilmington, California; and Oakland, California.

Prior conferences happened at the halls in Piney Point, Maryland; Jacksonville, Florida; Houston; New Orleans; Norfolk, Virginia; and Jersey City, New Jersey.

The meetings offered wide-ranging benefits information to SIU members, retirees and their families, plus union employees, many of whom are pictured here.



Seafarers Plans Benefits Director Teresa Zelko (right in photo directly above) and Cigna Representative Melissa Smith (second from right) assist attendees in Tacoma, Washington. The photo at left shows some of the SIU members, retirees and family members who turned out for the conference in Wilmington, California



Congressman Scalise Receives Maritime Honor

A longtime backer of the U.S. maritime industry recently received prestigious recognition from a major coalition.

U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise (R-Louisiana) on Dec. 12 accepted the "Champion of Maritime" award from the American Maritime Partnership (AMP) during a brief ceremony in the nation's capital. AMP's member organizations, including the SIU, represent all facets of the domestic maritime industry.

In announcing the award, AMP cited Scalise's "extraordinary support and dedication to the American maritime industry."

"Each year, AMP presents the Champion of Maritime Award to a Member of Congress who has demonstrated exceptional support for the hard-working men and women of the American maritime industry," the coalition said in a news release. "Rep. Scalise is a longstanding champion of the Jones Act and recognizes not only the critical contribution that the American maritime industry makes to Louisiana by providing thousands of family-wage jobs in the state, but also the critical importance of this industry to the nation's economic, national, and homeland security interests."

Scalise stated, "I'm honored to receive the Champion of Maritime Award. The maritime industry is vital to Louisiana's economy, creating more than 50,000 jobs for hard-

working Louisiana families, and contributing more than \$11 billion annually into our state's economy. Additionally, America's maritime industry is not only responsible for creating and supporting hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs across our country, it is also a critical component of America's homeland security strategy. I have long been a strong advocate for the hard-working men and women in America's maritime industry who work tirelessly to protect our waterways, and I'll continue to fight every day to defend and uphold the Jones Act, which is vital to the national and economic security of our country."

"Congressman Scalise continues to be a tremendous champion for the domestic American maritime industry and truly understands our industry's critical role to the vitality and security of our nation," said Thomas Allegretti, who served as chairman of AMP through 2017. "Through his steadfast support for our domestic maritime industry that sustains nearly 500,000 jobs from coast to coast, it is our honor to award Congressman Scalise with our highest recognition – the Champion of Maritime Award – for his diligent dedication to our American maritime companies and American mariners."

Citing just one recent example of the congressman's backing of the nation's freight cabotage law, the coalition pointed out that earlier in 2017, "Rep. Scalise demonstrated his unwavering commitment when he defended the importance of the lawful interpretation of the Jones Act while U.S. Customs and Border Protection reviewed a flawed letter ruling."

In an op-ed from 2014 that he co-authored with U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-California), Scalise described robust domestic shipbuilding as well as the numerous, vital contributions made by the maritime industry to U.S. security. That piece continued, "This growth would not be possible without the Merchant Marine Act passed by Congress in 1920, commonly referred to as the Jones Act, which requires that vessels moving cargo between U.S. ports be owned by American companies, crewed by American mariners and built in American shipyards. The resulting benefits cannot be understated: More than 40,000 American-owned vessels built in American shipyards and crewed by American mariners move agricultural goods, petroleum, coal, natural gas, chemicals and other essential commodities safely and efficiently along our rivers and coastlines. The domestic maritime industry supports nearly 500,000 jobs and almost \$100 billion in economic output."



U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise (left) is introduced by Tom Allegretti, who served as chair of the American Maritime Partnership.



A close-up view of the Champion of Maritime award

The op-ed went on to point out, "The security importance of this law is equally, if not more important than the economic benefits. For decades, U.S. military leaders have supported the Jones Act because of its national and homeland security benefits.... The domestic maritime industry also protects America's security interests within our own borders. Our connected system of waterways links the heart of our nation to our coasts. Without the Jones Act, vessels and crews from foreign nations could move freely on U.S. waters, creating a more porous border, increasing possible security threats and introducing vessels and mariners who do not adhere to U.S. standards into the bloodstream of our nation.... The Jones Act should be hailed as a commercial and a public policy success. It is the critical factor that ensures a vibrant domestic maritime sector, which in turn helps propel the American economy and protect vital U.S. national and homeland security interests."

USNS Yuma's SIU Crew Rescues 7

SIU members sailing aboard the Military Sealift Command (MSC) vessel *USNS Yuma* put their skills to the test during a recent rescue at sea of some adrift pleasure boaters off the coast of Florida. Those stranded aboard the smaller boat had been without power for six hours, and were at the mercy of the sea, by the time their distress call was heard at 10 p.m. on October 29.

The *Yuma* is an expeditionary fast transport vessel that is crewed by members of the SIU Government Services Division.

"*Yuma* was transiting from Gulfport, Mississippi, to Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story when we received a request from the U.S. Coast Guard to assist the 50-foot pleasure boat *Good Ole Girl II*, which had

lost power and was adrift in the heavy seas approximately 15 miles south of Key West, Florida," said Capt. David Gommo, *USNS Yuma's* master. "The boat was approximately 45 miles south of *Yuma* when the distress call was received."

There were no other Coast Guard or Navy vessels in the area when the distress call was picked up by the *Yuma*, so the ship, the Navy's newest in its class, changed course to search for the adrift vessel. The seas were between 7-9 feet at the time of the search.

"My biggest initial concern was that if we were going to perform a rescue at sea, I wanted to do it during daylight hours as I didn't want the added complexity of performing a rescue at sea in the dark," said Gommo. They eventually arrived on scene and performed a "skin-to-skin" maneuver with the *Good Ole Girl II*.

Initially, attempts were made to tow the disabled vessel back to Florida, but the rough seas proved too much of a challenge, and the seven passengers of the pleasure vessel boarded the *Yuma* and left the smaller craft to drift.

The *Good Ole Girl II* has since washed up on the shores of Cuba, and the owner is in the process of retrieving the vessel.

"The rescue of the passengers aboard *Good Ole Girl II* was an all-hands evolution. From maintaining the proper propulsion and navigational direction to line-handling, all of *Yuma's* mariners were key to the rescue's success," said Gommo.

The rescued boaters wrote a letter to Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne, commander of MSC, to convey their thanks to the crew of the *Yuma*.

As stated in the letter, "We want to express our deepest gratitude, honor, praise and respect to these heroes. We are forever indebted to them. Everyone demonstrated the highest quality of care and generosity while aboard *Yuma*.... *Yuma* is an incredible vessel, but it is the captain and crew which make her extraordinary to us."

Mewbourne likewise expressed his thanks to the crew of the *Yuma*, in a letter which congratulated them on a job well done.



The rescued boaters pose for a photo with the crew of the *USNS Yuma*. (Photo courtesy *USNS Yuma*)



The Seafarers-crewed submarine tender *USS Frank Cable* transits the Pacific Ocean in late December. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Randall W. Ramaswamy)

SIU-Crewed *USS Cable* Completes Upgrade

The Seafarers-crewed submarine tender *USS Frank Cable* is headed back to its home port at Naval Base Guam, following a lengthy shipyard period.

Members of the SIU Government Services Division sail aboard the *Cable*, which departed the Vigor Industrial shipyard in Portland, Oregon, Dec. 21 and arrived at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, Jan. 2 en route to Guam. The ship carries a hybrid crew of civilian mariners and Navy sailors.

According to the U.S. Navy, the *Cable* spent more than eight months in the shipyard, where “it went through a main reduction gear foundation repair and shafting, a collection holding tank replacement and received more than 600,000 pounds of renewed steel to enhance survivability and watertight resistance.” The improvements to the nearly 40-year-old ship cost \$56 million.

“The Navy and Military Sealift Command

crew worked very hard during this shipyard period to maximize repairs and material conditions,” said MSC ship’s master Capt. Patrick Christian. “Now we are ready to rejoin the fleet and get back on our mission.”

“MSC and what they bring is vital to our mission,” said Capt. Jeff Farah, the *Cable*’s commanding officer. “Our mission can take place in port, forward deployed, through fly-away teams, or on land. MSC gives us the flexibility to deploy at a moment’s notice.”

During off-duty hours, the crew made appearances for Fleet Week and supported multiple organizations, including Meals on Wheels and Wreaths Across America.

“Portland is a community that doesn’t typically have a large naval presence,” said Farah. “During our time there, not only did we have a chance to get involved in the community and volunteer, but we got to participate in the Portland Rose Festival.”

Longtime Seafarer Walter Wise Shares Safety Tips

SIU member **Walter Wise** isn’t sure what made him think of it, but when he realized he’d reached a significant safety milestone, he wanted to share some pointers.

Wise joined the SIU in 1989 and sailed as a chief cook in the inland division on the Mississippi River until 2004. He shifted to the Great Lakes from 2004-2015 (sailing as second cook and chief cook), and then pivoted to the deep-sea division in 2016.

Through it all – last September marked 28 years with the Seafarers – Wise has never had a lost-time injury.

“I’m definitely not bragging or anything,” Wise said. “But I’m proud of going that long without a lost-time injury, and I also owe a lot to the SIU. If it weren’t for the union, I don’t know where I’d be. They’ve helped me to stay safe. I just thought about it the other day.”

Wise, who most recently sailed as an ACU, said the training he has received at the SIU-affiliated Paul Hall Center in Piney Point, Maryland, played a big role in his milestone. He has completed numerous safety and upgrading courses at the school, dating back to 1996.

“The school has improved and changed quite a bit over the years,” he observed.

In addition to learning through upgrading, when it comes to safety, Wise says, “Pay attention to your supervisor, and keep your eyes open at all times for things that can cause you

to have an accident. I’ve been in the galley for a long time (he previously sailed in the deck department), but you can get hurt there, too.”

In summary, he said the key is “awareness. Just be aware of surroundings to stay safe.”

Wise, 68, got started with the SIU after working for a fleet service while he lived in Illinois. He plans to sail for at least a few more years, and has a favorable view of the industry.

“I’m enjoying sailing with the union,” he stated. “I recommend it to whoever I talk to on the beach.”



SIU member Walter Wise

EARN YOUR COLLEGE DEGREE THROUGH THE PAUL HALL CENTER !

The Paul Hall Center’s Seafarers Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship (SHLSS) has partnered with the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) to offer an Associate of Applied Science degree in Maritime Operations Technology with a concentration in either

- Nautical Science (Deck department)
- or-
- Marine Engineering (Engine dept.)

Students must complete a combination of academic general education courses and technical education courses in order to earn the degree.

Courses completed during the Unlicensed Apprentice program apply toward the degree.

Students can complete English, Math and Physics courses at SHLSS. The remaining general education courses can be completed online.

Enrollment Information

Please contact Seafarers Harry Lundeberg School Academic Coordinator Dale Rausch
(301) 994-0010 Ext. 5411 -or- drausch@seafarers.org

Resident courses at Piney Point begin
February 26, 2018

- Associate of Applied Science Degree
- UA courses apply toward the degree
- Fully accredited
- Some courses held at SHLSS
- Online classes
- Scholarships available

The following classes will convene at SHLSS:

February 26 – March 16, 2018

English 1011 – Composition and Rhetoric

Math 1011 – Math for Technologies

7 Credit Hours

Includes: tuition, textbooks, room and board plus one hour of tutoring following each daily class session

Solidarity in Sunshine State



The SIU was well-represented in mid-December at the Florida AFL-CIO convention in Orlando. Pictured from left are SIU Asst. VP Archie Ware, AFL-CIO Executive VP Tefere Gebre, and SIU Asst. VP Kris Hopkins. Ware was re-elected as a vice president at large of the state federation.

Alaska Tanker Company Reaches Safety Milestones

For Seafarers-contracted Alaska Tanker Company (ATC), the start of the New Year also marked a noteworthy pair of safety milestones.

In a written communication to the company's employees in early January, ATC President and CEO Anil Mathur noted, "The men and women of Alaska Tanker Company have now completed 16 years and 22 million man-hours with only one lost-time injury: a fractured finger back in 2011. During this period, ATC has carried 1.4 billion barrels of crude oil and spilled less than 2.2 gallons of crude to sea (yes: we count every drop)."

He continued, "This combination of long-term safety and environmental performance is unmatched in the oil tanker industry, worldwide. Yet, we in ATC do not see ourselves as extraordinary individuals. It's always felt like a team of ordinary men and women, performing at an extraordinary level. The bedrock of our world class performance is the support we get from our external stakeholders, our operations integrity system, and our safety culture."

Mathur then described the multiple layers of that culture, which include training, teamwork, vessel integrity and much more.

Additionally, and as usual when commenting on prior safety achievements, Mathur was quick to include the company's shipboard unions when crediting others for contributing to ATC's success.

"ATC's performance has been made possible with the support and encouragement of our external stakeholders," he wrote. "We are profoundly grateful for this: The financial and technical support from our client, BP; our Owners: Keystone and OSG; our Unions: the SIU and the MEBA; our Suppliers; the citizen groups we work with (RCAC); and our main Regulators: the U.S. Coast Guard; the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation; Washington Department of Ecology; the office of California Oil Spill Prevention and Response.

"It is our shipmates and shore staff that have delivered this amazing performance, one job at a time, one day at a time, during this 16-year stretch," he concluded. "We work 24/7 in mind-numbing freezing cold, howling winds that chill our bones, interrupted sleep patterns, and with months away from our families, and yet our dedication to safety does not waiver. For my shipmates' unrelenting passion for safety and unparalleled commitment, I am deeply grateful."



Spotlight on Mariner Health

Facts About Urinary Tract Infections

A urinary tract infection (UTI) is caused by microbes. These are organisms that cannot be seen by the human eye; you must use a microscope to see them. Most UTIs result from bacteria. Some can be caused by fungi and on rare occasions from viruses.

A UTI can happen anywhere in the urinary tract. This includes the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra. However, most urinary infections involve the urethra and bladder.

UTI symptoms can include the following (for both men and women): burning sensation with urination; bloody urine; frequency and urgency of urination; cloudy urine with a strong odor; pelvic or rectal pain.

Women have a much higher chance of getting a urinary tract infection than men do. Repeat infections are also very common. This is probably due to the fact that women have a shorter urethra, which allows bacteria quicker access to the bladder.

Test can be done to check and see if you have a UTI. A routine urine test (called a clean catch) is usually done first. Next, a urine culture can be done to show if any bacteria are in the urine causing problems.

Treatment is done with antibiotics that specifically kill the offending organism. Remember that you must take the whole prescription in order to kill the pathogen or you can build up a resistance to the prescribed antibiotic. If you do not finish the antibiotic, the organism can come back and cause more harm.

It's also important to drink lot of water,

which flushes the kidneys and the bladder. Your doctor may also prescribe a medication in order to soothe the pain and urgency of urination.

There are many home remedies for UTIs. None can cure a urinary tract infection! Cranberry juice is good to drink because it does force fluids, but it will not treat the urinary infection.

If a urinary infection is left untreated, it can progress up the ureters to the kidneys and cause many more problems such as sepsis. This is a life-threatening event.

Risk factors for UTIs include: age (older adults are more likely to get an infection); reduced mobility and sitting for long periods of time; kidney stone history; previous UTIs; urinary tract obstructions or blockages, such as enlarged prostate, certain forms of cancer, and stones; prolonged use of urinary catheters; diabetes that is poorly controlled,

There are many things to help in the prevention of UTIs, including: drink lots of water (6-8 glasses a day); not holding urine for a long time in the bladder; trying to manage urinary incontinence so meds are not needed to help fully empty the bladder.

A urinary infection can cause pain, urgency, and a real headache. If you suspect that you have one, see your doctor or local health center for treatment as soon as possible. Catch the infection early, get antibiotic treatment as necessary, and you'll be able to resume your daily activities quickly.

Healthy Recipe

Bourbon Chicken

Servings: 20

8 pounds chicken thighs without skin, trimmed of fat
 ½ gallon warm water
 1 cup brown sugar, packed
 1 ¼ teaspoons granulated garlic
 ½ tablespoons kosher salt
 ½ tablespoon garlic pepper
 ¼ cup white vinegar
 ½ cup soy sauce, low sodium
 ½ cup ketchup
 ½ tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
 1 ½ tablespoons lemon juice, bottled
 ¼ cup garlic, minced
 ¼ cup Dijon mustard
 2 tablespoons canola oil

- Place the chicken in a tub large enough to hold them.
- In a 5-gallon bucket, pour in the warm water and brown sugar along with all the dry ingredients.
- Stir all ingredients.
- Add all the rest of the ingredients to the warm-water mixture.
- Mix until well-blended to make the marinade.
- Pour ¾ of the marinade over the chicken. Save ¼ of the marinade to make sauce for later step.
- Cover and refrigerate overnight.
- Preheat grill to 350 degrees/med-high.

- Coat the grill with some of the canola oil each time you cook a batch of the chicken to help the chicken from sticking to the grill.
- Grill the chicken on each side for about 2-3 minutes to get color on them. Chicken will be finished in the oven.
- Place the marked chicken in 2" hotel pans. Each pan should have about 20 pieces arranged in 3 rows.
- Make the bourbon sauce by heating the reserved marinade. Then thicken with a cornstarch slurry.
- Put one cup of bourbon sauce in each pan.
- Bake the chicken in a 350-degree oven for about 15-20 minutes until the internal temp is 165 degrees.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 193 Calories; 6g Fat (26.2% calories from fat); 21g Protein; 14g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 86mg Cholesterol; 590mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain (Starch); 3 Lean Meat; ½ Vegetable; 0 Fruit; ½ Fat; 1 Other Carbohydrates.

Provided by the Paul Hall Center's Seafarers Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship



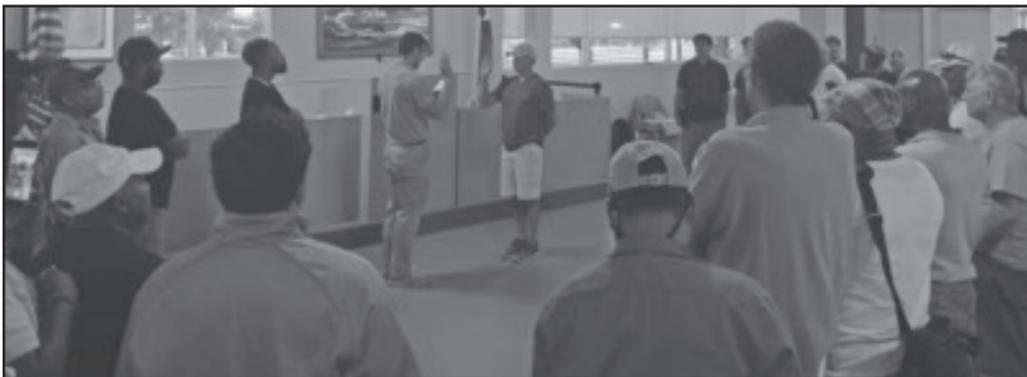
A-BOOK IN JERSEY – AB Alex Busby (left) receives his A-Book at the union hall in Jersey City, New Jersey. Port Agent Mark von Siegel is at right.



WELCOME ASHORE IN NORFOLK – Port Agent Georg Kenny (right in both photos) congratulates AB Billy Ray Hanbury (photo above) and Lead Tankerman Michael Parks (photo at right) on their respective retirements. Hanbury most recently sailed on the *Resolve*, while Parks spent the bulk of his career sailing with Penn Maritime.



At Sea and Ashore With the SIU



FULL BOOK IN HOUSTON – Seafarer Charles Hanohano (hand raised, standing at right) takes the oath from Patrolman Joe Zavala as other SIU members look on.



SALUTING JOHN PATRICK – The SIU in early December turned out in force for an event honoring the service of Texas AFL-CIO President John Patrick (third from right), who stepped down from his post in September. Pictured from left are Safety Director Kevin Sykes, Asst. VP Mike Russo, ITF Inspector Shwe Aung and his son, Ryan Tun Aung, Patrick, SIU VP Gulf Coast Dean Corgey and Fr. Sinclair Oubre, who gave the invocation. (Fr. Sinclair is an SIU member.)



ABOARD ATB VISION – This photo was taken Nov. 19 at the Shell Terminal in Martinez, California. Pictured from left aboard the Crowley vessel are Port Agent Nick Marrone II, Second Mate Thomas Crawley, ABT Matthew Jenness and Recertified Steward Laura Deebach.



FULL BOOK IN FLORIDA – Pumpman Jason Horn (left) receives his full book at the hall in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he's pictured with SIU Asst. VP Kris Hopkins.



ABOARD WILLIAM BUTTON – Recertified Bosun Gregory Jackson said Thanksgiving aboard the Crowley-operated *William Button* was a winner, thanks to the efforts of Recertified Steward Ernest Carlos, Chief Cook James Martin and SAs Porcia Johnson, Jamaal McKenzie, Apalogie Labrador and Jacob Casarez.



FULL BOOKS IN PINEY POINT – SIU members recently picking up their respective full books at the union-affiliated school in southern Maryland include QMED Jeffery Thomas (photo at far left), Chief Cook William Moran (above, center), and Chief Cook Frederick Conroy (right in remaining photo, with Port Agent Pat Vandegriff).

At Sea and Ashore With the SIU



BOOKS ISSUED IN OAKLAND – AB Richard Flores (center in photo at left with Port Agent Nick Marrone II, left, and Patrolman Adrian Fraccarolli) receives his B-seniority book at the hall, while FOWT Claude Letts (right in photo at right, with Safety Director Kathy Chester) picks up his A-book.

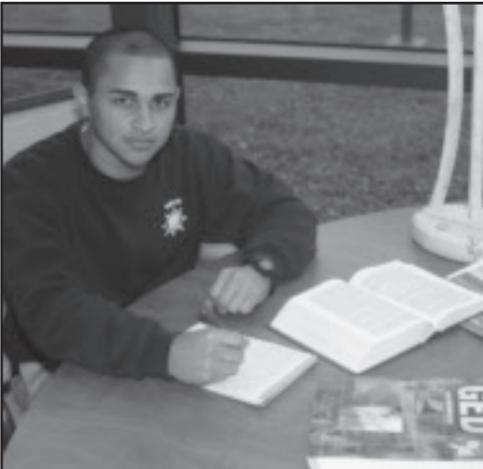
WELCOME ASHORE IN TACOMA – Recertified Steward Lincoln Pinn (left) picks up his first pension check, from Port Agent Joe Vincenzo.



ABOARD ATB GALVESTON – Pictured aboard the USS Transport vessel are (from left) ABs Arthur Patterson, Reny Arzu and Romeo Codillero and Recertified Steward Rene Fernando Guity.

ABOARD USNS ALGOL – Recertified Bosun Ritche Acuman does preventive maintenance on the forward crane aboard the Ready Reserve Force ship, which is operated by Ocean Duchess, Inc.

ABOARD SEABULK TRADER – Getting into the Thanksgiving spirit aboard the Seabulk Tankers vessel are Chief Cook Josh Lee, Chief Steward Marlon Brown, 1AE Douglas Sherman, Capt. Jonathan Nadaeu, OMU Carlos Flores, GSU Dagoberto Norales, CM David Jenkins, 3M Rexford Ryman, CE Luong Trinh, AB Jonathan Anderson, AB Andre Robinson and 3M Tamara Talley.



DIPLOMAS EARNED IN PINEY POINT – Two Paul Hall Center apprentices successfully tested for their respective high school diplomas late last year at the union-affiliated school in Piney Point, Maryland. Earning the honors were Tristan Cordero (photo at right) and Bryan Velazquez (above). Bryan also got a celebratory cake.

WITH MARYLAND PILOTS – Port Agent Pat Vandegrift submitted this photo of Seafarers Adam Xenides and Kevin Kuhne, who are employed by the Association of Maryland Pilots.



CHRISTMAS FEAST ABOARD MAERSK OHIO – The steward department went all out with a scrumptious, wide-ranging menu a few days early, since the ship was scheduled to arrive in port Dec. 25. Pictured from left in the group photo at the immediate left are Recertified Steward Kenneth “Andy” Hagan, AB Richard Sandiford, Recertified Bosun James Joyce, AB Michael Sherman, 3AE Bryan Higgins and Electrician Antoine Rainey. SA Elena Hoener stands by the tree in the photo at right. Rounding out the galley gang (but not pictured) was Chief Cook Kenneth Epps. Thanks to vessel master Capt. Christopher Kavanagh for the photos (and a copy of the menu).



Seafarers Celebrate Holidays at the Halls

The photos on Pages 10 and 11 were taken at various SIU halls during the winter holidays. In addition to the traditional gatherings, a special event organized by the union took place Dec. 22 in Puerto Rico for Seafarers and their families.

SIU Vice President Gulf Coast Dean Corgey attended the get-together in Puerto Rico, where he expressed the

union's ongoing support of, and participation in recovery efforts that are continuing many months after Hurricane Maria devastated the island. In addition to sailing aboard Jones Act vessels that are carrying critical supplies to the territory, the SIU is co-sponsoring Operation Agua, a successful project through which portable water filters are being delivered to schools and residences.

Baltimore



Recertified Bosuns David James (left) and Rick James



Port Agent John Hoskins, SIU VP Atlantic Coast Joseph Soresi



Retiree Mike Kaminski, QEE Timothy Chestnut



GVA Mohamad Khodeiri, Recertified Steward Kim Strate

Wilmington



From left: Patrolman Michael Bell, Port Agent Jeff Turkus, VP West Coast Nick Marrone, Safety Director Gordon Godel, Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel, Plans Administrator Maggie Bowen

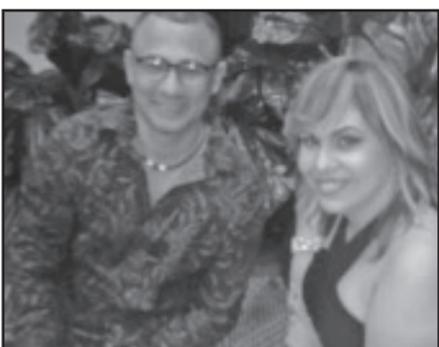


U.S. Congressional candidate Sam Jammal (second from left) stops by with campaign manager Megan Smith (left). Also pictured are SIU VP West Coast Nick Marrone (right) and Port Agent Jeff Turkus.

Jersey City



Puerto Rico



SIU VP Gulf Coast Dean Corgey (holding microphone) welcomes guests to the SIU-sponsored gathering for Seafarers, their families and retirees.

Port Agent Amancio Crespo (center) and guests

What's New for the 2018 Tax Filing Season

Following are some of the changes that took effect in 2017 and 2018, along with provisions that remain in effect from 2016. Please check www.irs.gov before filing your return.

Due date of return - File Form 1040 by April 17, 2018.
Exemptions - The personal exemption and the dependency exemption is \$4,050 for 2017. For tax year 2017, the phase-out is reinstated at the higher threshold of \$261,500 for single individuals, \$287,650 for heads of household, \$313,800 for married filing joint, and \$156,900 for married filing separately. For tax year 2018, the deduction for the personal exemption is reduced to zero.

Standard Deductions - The standard deduction for married couples filing a joint return has increased to \$12,700 for 2017. The standard deduction for single individuals and married couples filing separate returns has increased to \$6,350 for 2017. The standard deduction for heads of household increased to \$9,350 for 2017. The additional standard deduction for people who have reached age 65 (or who are blind) is \$1,250 for married taxpayers or \$1,550 for unmarried taxpayers.

You can use the 2017 Standard Deduction Worksheet or see page 141 from Publication 17 which can be found on irs.gov to figure your standard deduction. For tax year 2018, the standard deduction is increased to \$24,000 for married individuals filing a joint return, \$10,000 for head of household filers and \$12,000 for all other taxpayers. The additional standard deduction for the elderly and blind still applies.

Itemized Deductions - For tax year 2017, the phase-out is reinstated at the higher threshold of \$261,500 for single individuals, \$287,650 for heads of household, \$313,800 for married filing joint, and \$156,900 for married filing separately.

High-income taxpayers are also subject to limits on exemptions and deductions in 2017. The income threshold for the Pease and PEP (personal exemption phase-out) limitations is \$313,800 of adjusted gross income (AGI) for joint filers and \$261,500 for singles. The Pease limitation reduces the value of charitable contributions; mortgage interest; state, local, and property taxes; and miscellaneous itemized deductions. For 2017, this limitation is the lesser of 3% of AGI above the threshold up to 80% of the amount of the itemized deductions otherwise allowable. The PEP limitation reduces the total personal exemption by 2% for every \$2,500 of income above the same income thresholds with no upper limitations. That means it's possible for some taxpayers to completely phase-out of their personal exemptions.

Medical Care Itemized Deduction Threshold - For tax years 2017 and 2018, for all taxpayers, unreimbursed medical expenses may be claimed as an itemized deduction to the extent they exceed 7.5% of adjusted gross income.

Earned Income Credit (EIC) - The EIC is a credit for certain people who work. The credit may give you a refund even if you do not owe any tax. The maximum amount of income you can earn and credit available increased for 2017:

- Credit of \$6,318 if you have three or more qualifying children and you earn less than \$48,340 (\$53,930 if married filing jointly)
- Credit of \$5,616 if you have two qualifying children and you earn less than \$45,007 (\$50,597 if married filing jointly)
- Credit of \$3,400 if you have one qualifying child and you earn less than \$39,617 (\$45,207 if married filing jointly), or
- Credit of \$510 if you do not have a qualifying child and you earn less than \$15,010 (\$20,600 if married filing jointly)

The maximum amount of investment income you can have and still get the credit has increased to \$3,450 in 2017.

For tax years beginning after 2015 - a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) is not valid for EIC purposes unless it was used on or before the due date of the return. New to 2017, you may be able to qualify for the EIC under the rules for taxpayers without a qualifying child if you have a qualifying child for the EIC who is claimed as a qualifying child by another taxpayer.

Social Security and Medicare Taxes - The maximum amount of wages subject to the Social Security tax for 2017 is \$127,200.

There is no limit on the amount of wages subject to the Medicare tax. In 2017, hospital insurance tax in addition to the Medicare tax will be an additional 0.9% tax on wages that exceed the following threshold amounts: \$250,000 for married filing jointly and surviving spouses, \$125,000 for married filing separately and \$200,000 for all others. This additional assessment also applies to self-employed workers. For 2018, the maximum amount of wages subject to Social Security tax is \$128,400.

Self-Employment Tax Rate and Deduction - The FICA portion of the self-employment tax is 12.4% in 2017. The Medicare portion of the SE tax is 2.9% not including the 0.9% additional tax on the amounts above the applicable thresholds as noted above. The SE tax rate for 2017 is 15.3%, and the deduction is equal to one-half of self-employment tax.

Capital Gains and Losses - Continuing from 2012 you must report your capital gains and losses on Form 8949 and report the totals on Schedule D. If you sold a covered security in 2017, your broker will report the cost basis on your Form 1099-B. Refer to the IRS website at www.irs.gov/form8949 for additional information and other new developments affecting this form and Schedule D.

Qualified Dividend and Capital Gains Tax Rate - In 2017, the tax rate on long-term gains and qualified dividends is 20% for income that exceeds the 39.6% tax bracket threshold amount of:
■ \$470,700 for married filing jointly and surviving spouses
■ \$444,550 for head of household
■ \$235,350 for married filing separately
■ \$418,400 for single

The rate goes down to 15% for lower tax brackets and then 0% for 10%-15% tax brackets. In 2017, capital gain income will be subject to an additional 3.8% Medicare tax for income that exceeds the threshold amounts listed above.

Medicare Tax on Investment Income - In 2017, a tax equal to 3.8% of the lesser of the individual's net investment income for the year or the amount the individual's modified adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds the threshold amount. The threshold amounts for the additional Medicare tax are as follows:
■ \$250,000 for married filing jointly and surviving spouses
■ \$125,000 for married filing separately
■ \$200,000 for all others

Investment income reduced by deductions properly allocable to that in-

come is net investment income. Investment income includes income interest, dividends, annuities, royalties and rents and net gain from disposition of property, other than such income derived in the ordinary course of a trade or business. However, income from a trade or business that is a passive activity and from a trade or business of trading in financial instruments or commodities is included in investment income.

Modified adjusted gross income for the purpose of calculating the additional Medicare tax is a person's adjusted gross income with the foreign earned income exclusion or foreign housing exclusion added back in.

Adoption Credit - The maximum adoption credit has increased to \$13,570 per child with adjusted gross income phase out starting at \$203,540. The credit is nonrefundable. Any unused credit can be carried forward for five years. In general, the adoption credit is based on the reasonable and necessary expenses related to a legal adoption, including adoption fees, court costs, attorney's fees and travel expenses. Income limits and other special rules apply. In addition to filling out Form 8839, Qualified Adoption Expenses, eligible taxpayers must include with their 2017 tax returns one or more adoption-related documents.

Child Tax Credit - The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 extends the enhanced child tax credit of \$1,000 maximum credit per child through the end of 2017.

For 2017 tax year, the child tax credit starts to be reduced when income reaches the following levels:

- \$55,000 for married couples filing separately
- \$75,000 for single, head of household, and qualifying widow(er) filers, and
- \$110,000 for married couples filing jointly

In the phase-out range, the child tax credit is reduced by \$50 for each \$1,000 of income above these threshold amounts.

The child tax credit is generally nonrefundable credit that is limited to regular tax liability plus alternative minimum tax liability. However, a portion of the credit is refundable for certain taxpayers (see Form 8812 and IRS Pub. 972). Effective from 2016: Taxpayers cannot claim the Child Tax Credit for any tax year if the individual or a qualifying child did not have an individual TIN issued on or before the due date of the return for that tax year: For tax years beginning after 2015 - the Child Tax Credit is not allowed for (1) two tax years after a final determination or reckless or intentional disregard of rules and regulations or (2) 10 tax years after a final determination of fraud. If the Child Tax Credit is denied due to failure to supply required information to the IRS, no Child Tax Credit is allowed for any later tax year unless the taxpayer supplies the needed information.

Child and Dependent Care Credit - For 2017, there is a credit equal to the amount of qualified expenses multiplied by an applicable percentage determined by the taxpayer's adjusted gross income. The maximum amount of qualified expenses to which the credit may be applied is \$3,000 for cost to care for one child under age of 13 or up to \$6,000 for two or more children, so that the parents can either go to work or be in process of looking for work. There must be earned income in order to take the credit (the credit amount has not changed).

The American Opportunity Tax Credit - For tax year 2017, the maximum credit amount can be up to \$2,500, and up to 40% of that credit amount may be refundable. The credit applies to the first 4 years of post-secondary education in a degree or certificate program. The credit is calculated by taking 100% of the first \$2,000 of qualified tuition and related educational expenses and 25% of the next \$2,000 of such expenses. The credit is gradually reduced if your Modified AGI is:

- \$90,000 for Single, Head of Household, and Qualifying Widow(er)
- \$180,000 for Married Filing Joint

Taxpayers cannot claim the American Opportunity Credit for any tax year if the individual or a student did not have a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) issued on or before the due date of the return for that tax year. For tax years beginning after 2015, the American Opportunity Credit is not allowed for (1) two tax years after a final determination of reckless or intentional disregard of rules and regulations or (2) 10 tax years after a final determination of fraud. If the American Opportunity Credit is denied due to failure to supply required information to the IRS, no American Opportunity Credit is allowed for any later tax year unless the taxpayer supplies the needed information. Taxpayers must report the Employer Identification Number (EIN) of the educational institution to which payments were made.

Lifetime Learning Credit - For tax year 2017, the maximum credit amount per tax return can be up to \$2,000. The credit is calculated by taking 20% of the educational expenses on the first \$10,000 of qualified educational expenses. The credit is gradually reduced if your Modified AGI exceeds \$56,000 (\$112,000 if married filing joint return) and is completely eliminated if your Modified AGI exceeds \$66,000 (\$132,000 if married filing joint return). The credit cannot be claimed if your filing status is "married filing separately". There is no limit on the number of years for which the credit can be claimed for each student.

Tuition and Fees Deductions - For 2017, the tuition and fees deduction has expired. If it is extended, you will not be able to take it if your filing status is married filing separately.

Expanded Definition of Qualified Expenses for Qualified Tuition Programs - Qualified higher education expenses generally include tuition, fees, and related expenses such as books and supplies. The expenses must be for the student pursuing a degree, certificate, or similar program, at an eligible educational institution. An eligible educational institution includes most colleges, universities, and certain vocational schools.

Educator Expenses - *The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015* extended the above-the-line deduction for eligible elementary and secondary school teachers of up to \$250 per year (\$500 if you and your spouse were both eligible educators) for expenses paid or incurred for books, certain supplies, computer and other equipment, and supplementary materials used in the classroom. For tax years beginning after 2015 - Eligible expenses also include expenses for professional development courses the educator takes related to the curriculum he teaches or to the student he teaches.

State & Local Sales Tax Deduction - You can elect to deduct state and local general sales taxes, instead of state and local income taxes, as an itemized deduction on Schedule A (Form 1040), line 5b.

Individual Retirement Accounts
Education IRAs (Coverdell Education Savings Account) - Taxpayers can contribute a maximum of \$2,000 cash each year to an Education IRA for a person under age 18. The dollar limit is phased out for married individuals filing jointly with modified adjusted gross income between \$190,000 and \$220,000, and between \$95,000 and \$110,000 for single filers. The contribution is not deductible.

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Tax Tips for Members

How to Prepare A Tax Return

Step 1. Get all records together.
■ **Income Records.** These include any Forms W-2, W-2G and 1099
■ **Itemized deductions and tax credits**
■ **Medical and dental payment records**
■ **Charitable contributions**
■ **Real estate and personal property tax receipts**

■ **Interest payment records for items such as a home mortgage or home equity loan**
■ **Records of payments for child care so an individual could work**

Step 2. Get any forms, schedules or publications necessary to assist in filing the return. IRS Publication 17 titled "Your Federal Income Tax for Individuals" is the most comprehensive guide the agency has issued this year. Most IRS offices and many local banks, post offices and libraries have publications designed to provide individuals with information on correctly filing tax returns. Also, you may access the IRS website at www.irs.gov for forms, instructions and publications.

Step 3. Fill in the return.

Step 4. Check the return to make sure it is correct.

Step 5. Sign and date the return. Form 1040 is not considered a valid return unless signed. A spouse must also sign if it is a joint return.

Step 6. Attach all required forms and schedules. Attach Copy B of Forms W-2, W-2G and 1099-R to the front of the Form 1040. Attach all other schedules and forms behind Form 1040 in order of the attachment sequence number. If tax is owed, attach the payment to the front of Form 1040 along with Form 1040-V (original only). Write name, address, phone number, Social Security number and form number on your check or money order. Payment also can be made by credit card. You may use American Express, Discover, Visa or Master cards. To pay by credit card, call the toll-free number 1-888-872-9829 or 1-888-729-1040 or visit www.officialpayments.com/fed or www.pay1040.com. There is a fee charged based on the amount you are paying.

Rounding Off to Whole Dollars: Cents may be rounded off to the nearest whole dollar on the tax return and schedules. Do so, raise amounts from 50 to 99 cents to the next dollar. For example, \$1.39 becomes \$1 and \$1.50 becomes \$2.

Fast Refund: Taxpayers are able to request direct deposit of their tax refunds by filling out lines 76b, 76c and 76d on their Form 1040. Line 76b is for the bank's routing number. Line 76c indicates the type of account, and line 76d is the taxpayer's account number at the bank. When tax returns are filed electronically, a refund will be received in about 3 weeks or in 2 weeks if it is deposited directly into a savings or checking account. For a charge, many professional tax return preparers offer electronic filing in addition to their return preparation services. Beginning in 2009, individuals that prepare his or her own return can access most commonly used Federal tax forms from the IRS website and website at: www.irs.gov.

What Are Considered Deductions and Credits

Personal Exemption Amount: The deduction for each exemption - for the individual, his or her spouse and dependents is \$4,050 per person. A child cannot claim an exemption on his or her return or qualify for a higher education credit if the child's

Standard Deduction

This is the standard deduction chart for most people. If a taxpayer is 65 or older or blind, there are additional standard deductions (\$1,250 for a married person or "spouse" or \$1,550 for an unmarried person). Note that the personal exemption deduction is \$4,050.

Filing Status	Standard Deduction
Single and Married filing separate	\$ 6,350
Married filing joint return or qualifying widow(er) with dependent children	\$12,700
Head of household	\$ 9,350

parents claim a dependency exemption for their child.

Standard Deduction: The standard deduction, or dollar amount that reduces the amount that is taxed, increased for married couples filing jointly in 2017 at \$12,700. The standard deduction for single individuals and married couples filing separate returns also increased in 2017 at \$6,350. The standard deduction for heads of household increased to \$9,350 for 2017.

Personal Interest Deductions: For 2017, personal interest cannot be deducted. Personal interest includes interest on car loans, credit cards, personal loans and tax deficiencies.

Interest on Secured Loans Deductible: Deduct all your home mortgage interest depending on the date of your mortgage, the amount of the mortgage and how the proceeds were used. Interest paid on investments is also 100 percent deductible but limited to the amount of investment income earned each year. Any excess can be carried forward to the next year.

Union Dues Deduction: Union dues, including working dues, are deductible only if they exceed 2% of adjusted gross income. If they do, only the portion over the 2% is deductible. The self-employed may deduct union dues as a business expense.

Club Dues Deduction: No deduction is permitted for club dues; however, dues paid to professional or public service organizations are deductible for business reasons.

Deductions Subject to 2% of Adjusted Gross Income: These include investment advisory fees, trustees' administrative fees, legal expenses that are paid to produce taxable income, unreimbursed employee expenses, safe deposit box rental and tax preparation fees.

Deducting Work-Related Expenses: Travel to the union's designated medical facility to take the required physical and drug tests are examples of expenses which are work-related but not reimbursed by the company. Members of the galley crew may deduct the costs of knives and other equipment they personally own but use when on a ship performing their work duties. The purchase of work-related clothing and other gear, as long as it is truly for work and not paid for by the employer, are likely to be considered tax-deductible.

Deducting Work-Related Car Expenses: Use of a personally owned automobile in work-related travel can result in deductible expenses. Two methods can be used to compute automobile expenses - either listing a standard mileage rate or determining actual cost. On the tax return, due April 17 of this year, the IRS is accepting a standard mileage rate. The rate for 2017 is 53.5 cents. Parking fees and tolls can be added when using the standard mileage rate. If using actual expenses, information must be available on all operating-related costs for the vehicle, including insurance, licenses, maintenance, repairs, depreciation, gas, oil, tolls and parking. The IRS recommends keeping a log book or diary listing all expenses related to travel, for both the standard mileage rate and actual cost method, to ensure accurate records. Only work-related expenses not reimbursed by an employer can be claimed.

Deducting Work-Related Meals When Traveling: You can use a special standard meal allowance if you work in the transportation industry. You are in the transportation industry if your work:
■ Directly involves moving people or goods by airplane, barge, bus, ship, train, or truck, and
■ Regularly requires you to travel away from home and, during any single trip, usually involves travel to areas eligible for different standard meal allowance rates.

If this applies to you, you can claim a standard meal allowance of \$63 a day (\$68

for travel outside the continental United States) from January 1 through December 31, 2017. Using special rates for transportation workers eliminates the need for you to determine the standard meal allowance for every area where you stop for sleep or rest. If you choose to use the special rate for any trip, you must use the special rate (and not use the regular standard meals allowance rates) for all trips you take that year.

Dependent's Social Security Number: Each dependent must have a Social Security Number (SSN). Individuals may get a SSN for their dependent by filing Form SS-5 with their local Social Security Administration office or calling the Administration at 1-800-772-1213. It usually takes about two weeks to receive a SSN.

Additional (Refundable) Child Tax Credit - This credit is for certain individuals who get less than the full amount of the child tax credit. The additional child tax credit may give you a refund even if you do not owe any tax.

Student Loan Interest: Taxpayers may be able to deduct up to \$2,500 of interest paid for qualified education expenses for oneself, spouse or dependents. The deduction is allowed in figuring adjusted gross income.

Other Tax Information

Private Delivery Services: Tax returns and extensions can be mailed through private delivery services such as DHL Worldwide Express, Federal Express and United Parcel Service.

Forms of Payments: One can pay the Internal Revenue Service through credit cards, debit cards, charge cards, bank check or money order. If you file your return electronically you may be able to make your payment electronically.

Which Records To Keep

Keep records of income (such as receipts), deductions (for example, canceled checks) and credits shown on the tax return, as well as any worksheets used to figure them, until the statute of limitations runs out for that return, usually 3 years from the date the return was due or filed, or 2 years from the date the tax was paid, whichever is later. However, it is recommended that all records be kept for about 6 years. Some records should be kept even longer. For example, keep property records (your home, stocks) as long as they are needed to figure the basis of property.

Change of Address: If an individual has changed his or her address from the one listed on that person's last tax return, IRS Form 8822 should be filled out and filed with the agency.

Death of a Taxpayer: If a taxpayer died before filing a required return for 2017, the taxpayer's personal representative (and spouse, in the case of a joint return) must file and sign the return for that person. A personal representative can be an executor, administrator or anyone who is in charge of the taxpayer's property.

Which Income To Report

In addition to wages, salaries, tips, unemployment compensation, capital gains, dividend payments and other income listed on the federal tax return, the following kinds of income must be reported:

- Jones Act settlements for lost wages
- Amounts received in place of wages from accident and health plans (including sick pay and disability pensions) if employer paid for the policy
- Life insurance proceeds from a policy cashed in if the proceeds are more than the premium paid
- Canceled debts

- State income tax refunds
- Rents
- Repayments
- Royalties
- Unemployment benefits
- Profits from corporations, partnerships, estates and trusts
- Endowments
- Original Issue Discount
- Distributions from self-employed plans
- Bartering income (fair-market value of goods or services received in return for services)

- Tier 2 and supplemental annuities under the Railroad Retirement Act
- Lump-sum distributions
- Gains from the sale or exchange (including barter) of real estate, securities, coins, gold, silver, gems or other property (capital gains)

- Accumulation distributions from trusts
- Prizes and awards (contests, raffles, lottery and gambling winnings)
- Earned income from sources outside the United States

- Director's fees
- Fees received as an executor or administrator of an estate
- Embezzled or other illegal income
- Social Security Benefits

Which Income

Need Not Be Reported

The following kinds of income do not need to be reported on the federal tax return:

- Benefits from government welfare programs
- Jones Act settlements for injuries, pain, suffering, and medical costs
- Maintenance and Cure
- Workers' compensation benefits, insurance, damages, etc. for injury or sickness
- Disability retirement payments (and other benefits) paid by the Veterans' Administration
- Child support
- Gifts, money or other property inherited or willed
- Dividends on veterans' life insurance
- Life insurance proceeds received because of a person's death
- Amounts received from insurance because of loss of the use of a home due to fire or other casualty to the extent the amounts were more than the cost of normal expenses while living in the home
- Certain amounts received as a scholar-ship

Filing an Extension

Taxpayers can get an automatic 6-month extension if, no later than April 17, 2018, Form 4868 will be filed with the IRS. It is important to remember that a 6-month extension to file does not extend the time to pay the taxes. Form 4868, when sent in, must be accompanied by all tax monies due to the U.S. government.

Where Is My Refund

If taxpayers have not received a refund check within 28 days from the original IRS mailing date, information can be accessed through the website at www.irs.gov.

To get the refund status, taxpayers will need to provide the information from their tax returns. You should know your Social Security Number (or IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number), Filing Status (Single, Married Filing Joint Return, Married Filing Separate Return, Head of Household, or Qualifying Widow(er)) and the refund amount. It is important to enter the refund amount exactly as it is shown on your return.

Where To Get Information

General Information: 1-800-829-1040 may be called for general information between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. your local time.

Publications: Call 1-800-829-3676 to order current and prior year forms, instructions and publications.

Walk-In Help: IRS representatives are available in many IRS offices around the country to help with tax questions that cannot be answered easily by telephone. To find the location of an IRS office, look in the phone book under "United States Government, Internal Revenue Service."

Telephone Help: The IRS is prepared to answer questions by phone. Through the agency's taxpayer information service, publications covering all aspects of tax-filing can be ordered. The federal Tele-Tax system has recorded tax information covering about 150 topics. 1-800-829-4477 is the IRS's automated Tele-Tax system. When calling from a touch tone phone, the number

Away At Tax Time

Should Seafarers find themselves overseas and seeking IRS forms or assistance, U.S. embassies and consulates are equipped to provide some taxpayer-related services. At a minimum, IRS forms are available at all U.S. embassies and consulates located in: Berlin, Germany; Caracas, Venezuela; London, England; Mexico City, Mexico; Nassau, Bahamas; Ottawa, Canada; Paris, France; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Rome, Italy; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Sydney, Australia; Tokyo, Japan.

Why Seafarers Must Pay State Income Tax

Federal law prohibits employers from withholding state and local taxes from the wages of mariners working aboard U.S.-flag ships. Specifically, the law [46 USC 11108(1)] provides that "no part of the wages due or accruing to a master, officer or any other seaman who is a member of the crew on a vessel engaged in the foreign, coastwise, intercoastal, interstate or non-contiguous trade shall be withheld pursuant to the provisions of the tax laws of any state, territory, possession or commonwealth, or a subdivision of any of them, but nothing in this section shall prohibit any such withholding of the wages of any seaman who is employed in the coastwise trade between ports in the same state if such withholding is pursuant to a voluntary agreement between such seaman and his employer."

The law, however, does not exempt seamen from paying state and local taxes. Mariners, just like any other citizens of any given state, must meet their obligations to the government of the area in which they live. Each state has a set of criteria to determine whether an individual is a resident of that state. A seaman should check with a state tax office if he or she is unsure about residency status.

For example, in California during the early 1970s, a case before the California State Board of Equalization stated that a merchant seaman—despite the fact that he was on a ship for 210 days of the year—was a resident of the state for tax purposes. The board took into consideration the fact that the seaman owned a home in California and maintained a bank account in a California-based bank. Additionally, each state has established conditions under which non-residents of that state must pay a portion of state tax if such an individual earned income from a source based in that state. Many states allow a credit in the amount an individual must pay the state if that person has already paid taxes in another state. In 2000, President Clinton signed into law the bipartisan Transportation Worker Tax Fairness Act, a measure aimed at providing "equitable treatment with respect to state and local income taxes for certain individuals who perform duties on vessels."

The law, which took effect Nov. 9, 2000, stipulates that pilots and other mariners "who perform regularly assigned duties while engaged as a master, officer or crewman on a vessel operating on the navigable waters of more than one State" shall be subject to state income tax only in his or her residential state. If any questions arise regarding residency and state tax issues, mariners should telephone the taxpayer assistance office in the state in which they reside.

"9" will repeat the topic and the number "2" will cancel the topic. To listen to a directory of topics after the introductory message finishes, dial 123. You can also check the status of your refund. This telephone service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Personal Computer: Access the IRS's internet website at www.irs.gov to: download forms, instructions and publications; see answers to frequently asked tax questions; search publications on-line by topic or keyword; figure your withholding allowances using their W-4 calculator; check the status of your refund; send the IRS comments or requests for help via email; and sign up to receive local and national tax news by email.

Send IRS Written Questions: Written questions regarding the tax returns can be sent directly to an IRS District Director (listed on the tax form). Include a Social Security number with the letter.

Various Changes Greet Tax Filers During 2017 Season

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Traditional IRAs - For 2017, the contribution limit to a traditional IRA is the lesser of \$5,500 or your compensation. For taxpayers age 50 or older as of year-end, an additional catch-up contribution of up to \$1,000 is allowed. Thus, the 2017 contribution limit for these taxpayers is the lesser of \$6,500 or your compensation. For the deduction, the Modified Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) phase-out range in 2017 is \$62,000-\$72,000 for single and head of household, \$99,000-\$119,000 for married couples filing jointly or qualifying widow(er), and less than \$10,000 for married individuals filing separate returns when a taxpayer is covered by an employer's retirement plan at any time during the year.

Roth IRAs - The maximum total yearly contribution that can be made by an individual to a Roth IRA is the lesser of \$5,500 (increased to \$6,500 for taxpayers age 50 or older at year end) or your compensation. Roth IRAs are subject to income limits. The maximum yearly contribution is phased out for single and head of household taxpayers with an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) between \$118,000 and \$133,000, for joint filers and qualifying widow(er) with an AGI between \$186,000 and \$196,000, and married filing separate filers with an AGI between \$0 and \$10,000. Although the contributions are not deductible, the distributions may be tax-free depending on when and why they are made.

Special Charitable Contributions for Certain IRA Owners - The *Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act of 2015* permanently extends the Qualified Charitable Distributions. It offers older owners of IRAs a different way to give to charity. An IRA owner age 70 and one-half or older can directly transfer, tax-free, up to \$100,000 per year to eligible charities. Known as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), this option is available for distributions from IRAs, regardless of whether the owners itemize their deductions. Distributions from employer-sponsored retirement plans, including SIMPLE IRAs and simplified employee pension (SEP) plans, are not eligible to be treated as a qualified charitable distribution. To qualify, the funds must be contributed directly by the IRA trustee to an eligible charity. Amounts so transferred are not taxable and no deduction is available for the transfer. Not all charities are eligible. For example, donor-advised funds and supporting organizations are not eligible recipients. Remember to check eligibility of the charity before requesting a QCD. All QCDs from an IRA to eligible charities are counted in determining whether the owner has met the IRA's required minimum distribution. Where individuals have made nondeductible contributions to their traditional IRAs, a special rule treats QCD amounts as coming first from taxable funds, instead of proportionately from taxable and nontaxable funds, as would be the case with regular distributions.

Foreign Financial Assets - If you had foreign financial assets in 2017, you may have to file Form 8938 with your return. In addition, a separate FBAR document must be e-filed by April 17, 2018 if the aggregate value of the foreign accounts exceeds \$10,000 in any time during the calendar year.

Divorced or Separated Parents - A custodial parent who revoked their previous release of a claim to a child's exemption must include a copy of the revocation with their return.

Repayment of First-Time Homebuyer Credit - If you have to repay the credit, you may be able to do so without attaching Form 5405. Repayment is reported directly on Form 1040, line 60b.

Mortgage Insurance Premiums - Mortgage insurance premiums for qualified mortgage insurance on debt to acquire, construct, or improve a first or second residence can potentially be treated as deductible qualified residence interest. This provision was extended for premiums paid or accrued before 2017.

Residential Energy Efficient Property Credit - For property placed in service after December 31, 2016 and before January 1, 2022, the credit is available only for eligible solar electric property and solar water heating property. The credit is equal to 30 percent of the cost of eligible property placed in service in 2017, 2018 or 2019; 26 percent of the cost of the property placed in 2020; and 22 percent of the cost of property placed in service in 2021.

Standard mileage rates - The standard mileage rate for 2017 is 53.5 cents per mile for business miles driven and was decreased to 17 cents per mile for medical or moving expenses. The rate for providing services for a charity is

set by statute and equals 14 cents per mile.

Deduction for corrosive drywall - If you suffered property losses due to the effects of certain imported drywall installed in homes between 2001 and 2009, under a special procedure, you may be able to claim a casualty loss deduction for amounts you paid to repair damage to your home and household appliances that resulted from corrosive drywall. For details, see Pub. 547.

Personal Casualty & Theft Loss - This loss remains unchanged from 2016. The loss is limited to the excess of the loss over \$100. The 10% of AGI limit still applies.

Foreign Earned Income Exclusion - For tax year 2017, the maximum foreign earned income exclusion amount is \$102,100. This amount is up \$800 from tax year 2016.

The Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) Exemption - AMT exemption amounts help prevent some middle income earners from being subject to the AMT, and help keep any AMT adjustments less than they otherwise might have been.

For tax year 2017, the alternative minimum tax exemption increases to the following levels:

■ \$84,500 for married couples filing a joint return and qualifying widows and widowers, up from \$83,800 in 2016.

■ \$42,250 for married couples filing separately, up from \$41,900.

■ \$54,300 for singles and heads of household, up from \$53,900.

Health Care Coverage - In 2017, individuals must have health care coverage, to qualify for a health care coverage exemption or make shared responsibility payment with their tax return.

Coverage Exemptions: An individual may be exempt from the requirement to maintain minimum essential coverage and thus will not have to make a shared responsibility payment if, for 2017, he or she:

■ Has no affordable coverage options because the minimum amount he must pay for the annual premiums is more than 8.16% of his household income;

■ Has a gap in coverage for less than three consecutive months or

■ Qualifies for an exemption for one of several other reasons, including having a hardship that prevents him from obtaining coverage, or belonging to a group explicitly exempt from the requirement.

If the taxpayer, spouse or any of the dependents did not have minimum coverage for any month in 2017, a payment needs to be computed and reported on Form 1040, line 61.

For 2017, the annual payment amount is the greater of:

■ 2.5% percent of the household income that is above the tax return filing threshold for taxpayer's filing status, or

■ The family's flat dollar amount, which is \$695 per adult and \$347.50 per child, limited to a family maximum of \$2,085.

Premium Tax Credit - Individuals with low to moderate income who get health coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace may be eligible for this refundable credit.

Individuals who are eligible for PTC need to meet the following requirements:

■ Purchased coverage in the Marketplace for someone in their tax family (taxpayer, spouse, if married filing jointly and dependents for which a personal exemption is claimed) for a month that person was not eligible for minimum essential coverage (other than coverage in the individual market).

■ Have household income at least 100%, but no more than 400% of the federal poverty line for taxpayer's family size. *Exception:* In some cases, taxpayers with household income less than 100% of the federal poverty line can take the credit.

■ If married, individuals must file a joint return. *Note:* Exceptions apply to victims of domestic abuse or spousal abandonment and to individuals who are considered unmarried.

■ Cannot be claimed as a dependent by another person.

Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) - The health care tax credit is a tax credit that pays a percentage of health insurance premiums for certain eligible taxpayers and their qualifying family members. The health coverage tax credit is a separate tax credit with different eligibility rules than the premium tax credit.

Affordable Care Act - Several very important provisions of the *Affordable Care Act (ACA)* that affect individuals and businesses first became effective in 2015. The Employer Shared Responsibility provision of the *Affordable Care Act* requires employers with 50 or more full-time equivalent employees to either

offer minimum essential coverage that is "affordable" and that provides "minimum value" to their full-time employees and their dependents, or potentially make an employer shared responsibility payment to the IRS.

Transit Benefits - The *Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015* extended transit benefits. These include van pool benefits, transit passes and qualified parking. Beginning in 2017, the monthly exclusion amount will remain \$255.

Earned Income Credit and Additional Child Tax Credit - IRS Refund Claim - The IRS has additional time to review refund claims based on the Earned Income Credit or the refundable portion of the additional Child Tax Credit in order to reduce fraud and improper payments. No credit or refund for an overpayment shall be made to a taxpayer before February 15 following the close of the tax year, if the taxpayer claimed the Earned Income Credit or additional Child Tax Credit.

Form 1098-T Required to Claim Certain Education Incentives - Taxpayers must receive a form 1098-T, Tuition Statement, from educational institutions to claim the American opportunity credit, the Lifetime Learning tax credit or the above the line deduction for qualified tuition and fees.

Rollovers to SIMPLE IRAs - For rollover contributions made after December 18, 2015, distributions from employer sponsored retirement plans and traditional IRAs may be rolled over into a SIMPLE IRA, as long as the SIMPLE IRA has been open for at least two years.

Extended Filing and Payment Deadline - Section 7503 states that filing and payment deadlines that fall on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday are timely satisfied if met on the next business day. April 15, 2018 is on Sunday, and the Emancipation Day holiday will be observed in the District of Columbia the following Monday. Therefore, most individuals will have until Tuesday, April 17, 2018 to file their 2017 Forms 1040.

Tax Rates for 2017 - For 2017, there remains a 39.6% bracket (for single individuals at \$418,400, head of household at \$444,550, married filing jointly at \$470,700 and married filing separately at \$235,350). Trusts and estates will hit the 39.6% bracket at \$12,500. The rate for capital gains and qualified dividends is 20% if the income is in excess of the threshold amount:

■ \$418,400 for single individuals

■ \$444,550 for heads of household

■ \$470,700 for married filing joint

■ \$235,350 for married filing separately

Exclusion of Cancellation of Indebtedness on Principal Residence - Cancellation of indebtedness income is generally includable in income. However, income from cancellation of debt on a qualified principal residence, of up to \$2 million, may be excludable.

Uniform Definition of a Qualifying Child - To be claimed as a qualifying child, the person must meet four criteria:

■ **Relationship** - the person must be your child, step child, adopted child, foster child, brother or sister, or a descendant of one of these (for example, a grandchild or nephew).

■ **Residence** - for more than half the year, the person must have the same residence as you do.

■ **Age** - the person must be under age 19 at the end of the year, or under age 24 and be a full-time student for at least five months out of the year, or any age and totally and permanently disabled.

■ **Support** - the person did not provide more than half of his or her own support during the year.

Hurricane Relief - Qualified charitable contributions made before January 1, 2018, for relief efforts in the designated disaster areas for Hurricane Harvey, Irma or Maria are not subject to the phase out of itemized deductions. In addition, Congress is currently considering legislation that would provide additional tax relief for those affected by Hurricane Harvey, Irma, or Maria, and tax relief for those affected by other 2017 disasters, such as the California wildfires.

■ **Casualty and Theft Losses** - Disaster relief enacted for those impacted by Hurricane Harvey, Irma, or Maria includes a provision that modified the calculation of casualty and theft losses.

■ **Earned Income Credit (EIC) and Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC)** - Disaster relief enacted for those impacted by Hurricane Harvey, Irma, or Maria allows prior year earned income to be elected as 2017 earned income when figuring both the 2017 EIC and

the 2017 ACTC.

■ **Increased Standard Deduction** - In addition to the annual increase due to inflation adjustments, your 2017 standard deduction is increased by any net disaster loss due to Hurricane Harvey, Irma, or Maria. To claim the increased standard deduction, you must file form 1040. See Pub. 976 for more information.

■ **Possible Legislation** - Congress is currently considering legislation that would extend certain tax benefits that expired at the end of 2016 and that currently can't be claimed on your 2017 tax return, such as:

■ The credit for nonbusiness energy property,

■ Parts of the credit for residential energy property,

■ The deduction for mortgage insurance premiums,

■ 7.5% of adjusted gross income threshold for deducting medical and dental expenses,

■ The credit for alternative fuel vehicle refueling property, and

■ The deduction for tuition and fees.

To learn whether this legislation was enacted resulting in changes that affect your 2017 tax return, go to Recent Developments at IRS.gov/Pub17.

Your Online Account - In order for you to access your online account, you must authenticate your identity. To securely log in to your federal tax account, go to IRS.gov/Account. View the amount you owe, review 18 months of payment history, access online payment options, and create or modify an online payment agreement. You can also access your tax records online.

Mailing your return. If you live in Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, or West Virginia and you are mailing your return, you will need to mail it to a different address this year. See Pub. 17 for more information.

Consumer Alert - The IRS warns taxpayers to be on the alert for emails and phone calls they may receive which claim to come from the IRS or other federal agencies and which mention their tax refund.

These are almost certainly a scam whose purpose is to obtain personal and financial information — such as name, Social Security number, bank account and credit card or even PIN numbers — from taxpayers which can be used by the scammers to commit identity theft. The emails and calls usually state that the IRS needs the information to process a refund or deposit it into the taxpayer's bank account. The emails often contain links or attachments to what appears to be the IRS website or an IRS "refund application form." However genuine in appearance, these phonies are designed to elicit the information the scammers are looking for.

The IRS does not send taxpayers emails about their tax accounts. Also, the IRS does not request detailed personal information through email or ask taxpayers for the PIN numbers, passwords, or similar secret access information for their credit card, bank, or other financial accounts. If you receive an unsolicited email claiming to be from the IRS, forward the message to: phishing@irs.gov. You may also report misuse of the IRS name, logo, forms or other IRS property to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration toll-free at 1-800-366-4484 or TTY/TDD 1-800-877-8339. You can forward suspicious emails to the Federal Trade Commission at: spam@uce.gov or contact them at www.ftc.gov/idtheft or 1-877-IDTHEFT (1-877-438-4338). Visit IRS.gov and enter "identity theft" in the search box to learn more about identity theft and how to reduce your risk.

If your tax records are affected by identity theft and you receive a notice from the IRS, respond right away to the name and phone number printed on the IRS notice or letter. If your tax records are not currently affected by identity theft but you think you are at risk due to a lost or stolen purse or wallet, questionable credit card activity or credit report, etc., contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490 or submit Form 14039. For more information, see Publication 4535, Identity Theft Prevention and Victim Assistance. Victims of identity theft who are experiencing economic harm or a systemic problem, or are seeking help in resolving tax problems that have not been resolved through normal channels, may be eligible for Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) assistance. You can reach TAS by calling the National Taxpayer Advocate helpline toll free case intake line at 1-877-777-4778.

NMC Releases Reminders About USCG Email System

The U.S. Coast Guard's National Maritime Center issued the following notice in early January:

Email Attachments Sent to the NMC

Email is a critical way for mariners to communicate with the National Maritime Center (NMC). This notice is intended to advise our stakeholders of the following limitations in the Coast Guard's email system regarding sending of emails with attachments to the NMC:

■ The system will not accept attachments larger than 10 MB. It is highly recommended that attachments larger than 8 MB be split into multiple emails. When sending multiple emails, please ensure the subject of each email indicates the order of the attachments.

■ The system will not accept compressed (ZIP) files, regardless of size.

Emails that are larger than 10 MB or that include compressed files as attachments will not be delivered. Furthermore, neither the sender nor intended recipient will be notified of the delivery failure.

We apologize for any inconvenience related to email submissions to the NMC.

Questions should be addressed to the NMC call center via email to IASKNMC@uscg.mil, via Chat, or via phone at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

Personals

Attn: Tom Banks

Congratulations and wishing you well in retirement.
From Recertified Bosun Scott Heginbotham

Searching for Interview Subject

I am trying to locate Henry "Baghdad" Everhart/Eberhardt or anyone who might remember him. Baghdad lived in the Oakland area and worked the Merchant Marine in the 1970s. I would like to interview him for a documentary about actor Rick Cluchey. Contact me (Lance Duerfahrd) at laduerfahrd@gmail.com

February & March 2018 Membership Meetings

Piney Point.....	Monday: February 5, March 5
Algonac.....	Friday: February 9, March 9
Baltimore.....	Thursday: February 8, March 8
Guam.....	Thursday: February 22, March 22
Honolulu.....	Friday: February 16, March 16
Houston.....	Monday: February 12, March 12
Jacksonville.....	Thursday: February 8, March 8
Joliet.....	Thursday: February 15, March 15
Mobile.....	Wednesday: February 14, March 14
New Orleans.....	Tuesday: February 13, March 13
Jersey City.....	Tuesday: February 6, March 6
Norfolk.....	Thursday: February 8, March 8
Oakland.....	Thursday: February 15, March 15
Philadelphia.....	Wednesday: February 7, March 7
Port Everglades.....	Thursday: February 15, March 15
San Juan.....	Thursday: February 8, March 8
St. Louis.....	Friday: February 16, March 16
Tacoma.....	Friday: February 23, March 23
Wilmington.....	*Tuesday: February 20, Monday: March 19

* Wilmington change due to Presidents' Day

Each port's meeting starts at 10:30 a.m

SPAD Works For You, Contribute to the Seafarers Political Activities Donation

SPAD

Dispatchers' Report for Deep Sea

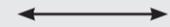
December 12, 2017 - January 15, 2018

Port	Total Registered			Total Shipped			Trip Reliefs	Registered on Beach		
	All Groups A	All Groups B	All Groups C	All Groups A	All Groups B	All Groups C		All Groups A	All Groups B	All Groups C
Deck Department										
Algonac	19	7	2	2	3	0	0	34	14	2
Anchorage	4	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	2	3
Baltimore	6	2	1	6	0	1	0	6	5	0
Fort Lauderdale	20	9	5	14	12	7	11	36	15	6
Guam	0	2	0	3	1	0	0	3	2	0
Harvey	11	7	5	13	5	2	8	19	3	8
Honolulu	8	3	1	5	2	0	1	18	5	3
Houston	61	14	9	37	7	3	14	104	24	21
Jacksonville	44	16	17	26	11	5	20	64	24	18
Jersey City	46	8	3	26	9	5	17	75	18	5
Joliet	4	5	1	2	4	0	0	6	4	0
Mobile	14	2	5	6	2	2	6	25	4	10
Norfolk	19	10	7	17	14	2	16	36	23	12
Oakland	20	4	4	13	2	3	4	21	8	5
Philadelphia	11	5	0	6	4	1	2	6	4	1
Piney Point	2	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	1
Puerto Rico	6	7	0	4	3	0	2	10	7	0
Tacoma	30	9	6	32	7	5	13	56	17	8
St. Louis	1	4	0	0	2	0	0	4	5	0
Wilmington	32	10	5	23	11	2	11	59	16	8
TOTALS	358	128	75	239	102	39	129	586	201	111
Engine Department										
Algonac	0	2	2	0	1	1	2	2	3	0
Anchorage	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Baltimore	1	7	0	1	5	0	1	5	6	0
Fort Lauderdale	8	7	5	6	5	0	4	12	10	7
Guam	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Harvey	3	2	1	5	0	0	0	1	2	1
Honolulu	10	2	0	8	2	0	3	20	5	2
Houston	17	9	4	12	4	2	5	34	13	4
Jacksonville	21	16	3	12	18	1	11	38	24	2
Jersey City	14	8	0	9	4	0	5	21	11	0
Joliet	5	1	1	2	0	0	0	4	1	0
Mobile	8	6	1	4	5	0	1	8	8	1
Norfolk	11	8	5	11	6	5	6	21	16	6
Oakland	8	3	0	6	4	0	4	18	7	1
Philadelphia	3	3	0	1	2	0	2	4	2	0
Piney Point	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	1	6	1
Puerto Rico	1	2	0	1	2	0	0	2	6	0
Tacoma	18	3	4	10	5	3	4	36	7	5
St. Louis	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0
Wilmington	10	9	1	14	5	2	5	24	13	2
TOTALS	140	93	27	104	71	14	54	254	142	33
Steward Department										
Algonac	4	1	1	1	0	1	1	6	3	0
Anchorage	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Baltimore	2	1	0	3	1	0	1	3	0	0
Fort Lauderdale	15	2	1	2	1	1	1	20	4	1
Guam	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0
Harvey	11	0	1	7	1	0	5	11	1	3
Honolulu	12	2	1	9	1	1	5	19	4	0
Houston	15	3	6	12	2	2	8	28	11	8
Jacksonville	20	8	3	12	7	0	9	35	18	3
Jersey City	9	3	0	11	1	0	3	15	3	0
Joliet	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	1
Mobile	4	3	2	6	2	0	1	8	5	2
Norfolk	14	10	4	9	12	1	8	23	10	4
Oakland	13	2	2	11	3	0	6	28	6	4
Philadelphia	3	1	0	3	0	0	1	3	1	0
Piney Point	5	2	0	7	4	0	1	1	2	0
Puerto Rico	3	2	0	2	1	0	1	4	3	0
Tacoma	8	4	2	11	1	0	0	22	4	2
St. Louis	5	0	1	1	0	1	0	7	0	1
Wilmington	19	9	3	10	8	1	11	36	11	2
TOTALS	166	56	28	118	46	8	63	275	91	31
Entry Department										
Algonac	1	14	8	0	2	2	0	1	17	14
Anchorage	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	5
Baltimore	0	0	3	0	1	2	0	0	1	5
Fort Lauderdale	0	4	6	1	2	4	0	0	10	10
Guam	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
Harvey	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	0	1	5
Honolulu	2	5	6	0	3	4	1	2	8	9
Houston	2	15	6	1	7	5	3	6	25	29
Jacksonville	2	22	43	1	9	22	3	5	34	88
Jersey City	2	16	10	1	11	4	2	4	30	23
Joliet	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1
Mobile	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Norfolk	0	26	40	0	13	5	2	0	40	71
Oakland	3	10	10	1	2	3	1	3	15	18
Philadelphia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Piney Point	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
Puerto Rico	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Tacoma	1	12	11	3	10	13	3	6	22	23
St. Louis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wilmington	3	18	25	4	14	11	1	5	32	56
TOTALS	18	148	173	15	76	82	17	33	244	360
GRAND TOTAL:	682	425	303	476	295	143	263	1,148	678	535

Seafarers International Union Directory

Michael Sacco, *President*
Augustin Tellez, *Executive Vice President*
David Heindel, *Secretary-Treasurer*
George Tricker, *Vice President Contracts*
Tom Orzechowski,
Vice President Lakes and Inland Waters
Dean Corgey, *Vice President Gulf Coast*
Nicholas J. Marrone, *Vice President West Coast*
Joseph T. Soresi, *Vice President Atlantic Coast*

Kermett Mangram,
Vice President Government Services



HEADQUARTERS

5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, MD 20746
(301) 899-0675

ALGONAC

520 St. Clair River Dr., Algonac, MI 48001
(810) 794-4988

ANCHORAGE

721 Sesame St., #1C, Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 561-4988

BALTIMORE

2315 Essex St., Baltimore, MD 21224
(410) 327-4900

GUAM

P.O. Box 3328, Hagatna, Guam 96932
Cliffline Office Ctr. Bldg., Suite 103B
422 West O'Brien Dr., Hagatna, Guam 96910
(671) 477-1350

HONOLULU

606 Kalihi St., Honolulu, HI 96819
(808) 845-5222

HOUSTON

625 N. York St., Houston, TX 77003
(713) 659-5152

JACKSONVILLE

5100 Belfort Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32256
(904) 281-2622

JERSEY CITY

104 Broadway, Jersey City, NJ 07306
(201) 434-6000

JOLIET

10 East Clinton St., Joliet, IL 60432
(815) 723-8002

MOBILE

1640 Dauphin Island Pkwy, Mobile, AL 36605
(251) 478-0916

NEW ORLEANS

3911 Lapalco Blvd., Harvey, LA 70058
(504) 328-7545

NORFOLK

115 Third St., Norfolk, VA 23510
(757) 622-1892

OAKLAND

1121 7th St., Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 444-2360

PHILADELPHIA

2604 S. 4 St., Philadelphia, PA 19148
(215) 336-3818

PINEY POINT

P.O. Box 75, Piney Point, MD 20674
(301) 994-0010

PORT EVERGLADES

1221 S. Andrews Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316
(954) 522-7984

SANTURCE

1057 Fernandez Juncos Stop 16 ½
Santurce, PR 00907-4601
(787) 721-4033

ST. LOUIS/ALTON

4581 Gravois Ave., St. Louis, MO 63116
(314) 752-6500

TACOMA

3411 South Union Ave., Tacoma, WA 98409
(253) 272-7774

WILMINGTON

510 N. Broad Ave., Wilmington, CA 90744
(310) 549-4000



Inquiring Seafarer

This month's question was answered by Seafarers in Piney Point, Maryland, at the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education.

Question: What was one of the most memorable voyages in your career, and what made it so memorable?



Ryan Joseph Cushing
Chief Steward

When I started back in 1994, I was working as a waiter on an American Hawaii cruise ship, which was an incredible experience. More recently, I was working in Diego, and it was like cruise-ship living out there – except you get paid!



Joseph Hernandez
Chief Cook

As a second-phase trainee, I was working on the *Liberty Grace* during a Food for Peace mission to South Africa. The training I received on that trip proved invaluable to my career, and the whole experience was really special.



Dionesio Monteclaro Jr.
Oiler

I work in the engine room, so most voyages go pretty smoothly for me. As long as the weather is good, and the sea is calm, any voyage can be a good one.



Liberato Viray
AB

Working on board the LNG ships on the run to Indonesia, Japan and Korea was a really memorable time. Of course, those old LNG ships are all gone and replaced now, but I'll always remember that run, and experiencing those different cultures and locations.



Kareem Walters
QMED

One of my most memorable trips was on the European run on the *Maersk Ohio*. Seeing all the different ports, seeing all those bigger ships getting loaded with cargo at once is really something. And of course, visiting Germany, Belgium and Rotterdam, Holland, were really memorable places. Rotterdam was really nice.



Jim Romeo
AB

My most memorable trip was on the *Sealand Consumer*. We went to the Mediterranean, Italy, Turkey, and then on to the Caribbean. It was a really great way to see a lot of different parts of the world in a short time. I really enjoyed learning about the different cultures in those places.

Pic From The Past



This photo first ran in an August 1945 issue of the *LOG*. The original caption: "Specimen rope board is being explained to two admiring SIU men by Warren Wymon who made it for the New York hall. On display in New York on the recreation deck, the board contains such fancy creations as a wheel, anchor, propeller, splices, sizings, whippings and the more essential knots used aboard ship. Across the top of the board is the word "Seafarers" spelled out in fancy braid."

*If anyone has a vintage union-related photograph he or she would like to share with other Seafarers *LOG* readers, please send it to the Seafarers *LOG*, 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, MD 20746. Photographs will be returned, if so requested. High-resolution digital images may be sent to webmaster@seafarers.org*

Welcome Ashore

Each month, the Seafarers LOG pays tribute to the SIU members who have devoted their working lives to sailing aboard U.S.-flag vessels on the deep seas, inland waterways or Great Lakes. Listed below are brief biographical sketches of those members who recently retired from the union. The brothers and sisters of the SIU thank those members for a job well done and wish them happiness and good health in the days ahead.



DEEP SEA

FAISAL ABDO

Brother Faisal Abdo, 67, signed on with the union in 2000. He worked as a member of both the deck and engine departments, initially sailing aboard the *American Merlin*. Brother Abdo upgraded on at the Piney Point school in 2003 before his last voyage aboard the *Black Eagle*. He makes his home in Lackawanna, New York.

FABIAN AGUILAR



Brother Fabian Aguilar, 65, signed on with the SIU in 1997. A member of the steward department, Brother Aguilar first sailed on the *Independence*. He last shipped on the *Overseas Long Beach* and makes his home in Bremerton, Washington.

JOSEPH BOEVINK

Brother Joseph Boevink, 65, first donned the SIU colors in 1975. Initially sailing on the *Bradford Island*, he worked as a member of the deck department. Brother Boevink upgraded on multiple occasions at the maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. He most recently sailed aboard the *Chilbar* and resides in Aberdeen, Washington.



BRUCE BUSSERT

Brother Bruce Bussert, 68, signed on with the SIU in 1998. Initially sailing on the *USNS Kayne*, he worked as a deck department member. Brother Bussert upgraded his skills in 2010 at the union-affiliated school in Piney Point, Maryland. He most recently sailed aboard the *Dewayne T. Williams* before settling in Agana, Guam.



WILFREDO CAIDOY

Brother Wilfredo Caidoy, 65, joined the SIU 1989, first working aboard the *Independence*. He sailed in the deck department and upgraded in 2002 at the Piney Point school. Brother Caidoy's last vessel was the *Horizon Enterprise*. He lives in Milpitas, California.



DARRELL CAMP

Brother Darrell Camp, 65, started shipping with Seafarers in 1974, initially working aboard the *Ultra-max*. He sailed in the deck department and upgraded often at the Paul Hall Center. Brother Camp most recently



shipped on the *Quality*. He calls Bacliff, Texas, home.

LARRY CHILDRESS

Brother Larry Childress, 65, signed on with the SIU in 1998, working aboard the *Baldomero Lopez*. A member of the deck department, he took advantage of the training opportunities at the Piney Point school and upgraded in both 2002 and 2003. Brother Childress most recently sailed on the *ITB Barbara Kessel*. He resides in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



LEESTHER COLLINS

Sister Leesther Collins, 65, joined the SIU in 2003, working aboard the *Cape Douglas*. She was a member of the steward department and upgraded on several occasions at the maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. Sister Collins most recently sailed on the *Cape Domingo*. She is a resident of Summerville, South Carolina.

THOMAS CONWAY

Brother Thomas Conway, 72, joined the union in 2003 and first sailed on the *Regulus*. A member of the engine department, he last worked aboard the *USNS Seay*. Brother Conway calls Las Cruces, New Mexico, home.

MICHAEL CORREA

Brother Michael Correa, 67, joined the SIU in 2009 and first sailed on the *Washington Express*. A member of the steward department, he upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Correa most recently shipped aboard the *Maersk Atlanta* and makes his home in Houston.



JEROME DAVIS

Brother Jerome Davis, 69, joined the union in 1981. He initially worked on the *Santa Maria* and was a member of the steward department. Brother Davis upgraded on multiple occasions before sailing on his final vessel, the *Washington Express*. He resides in Teaneck, New Jersey.



JACQUELINE ELLSWORTH

Sister Jacqueline Ellsworth, 65, started shipping with the Seafarers in 2003. Her first vessel was the *Atlantic Guardian*. A member of the steward department, Sister Ellsworth upgraded in 2004 and 2010 at the maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. She most recently sailed aboard the



USNS Denebola before settling in Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

BILLY GIGANTE

Brother Billy Gigante, 58, became a member of the SIU in 1980. Initially sailing aboard the *Atlantic*, he was a member of the steward department. Brother Gigante upgraded on several occasions at the Paul Hall Center before last shipping on the *Safmarine Kuramo*. He resides in Spring Hill, Florida.



DAVID HAMILTON

Brother David Hamilton, 66, signed on with the SIU in 1979, working aboard the *Del Sol*. A member of the engine department, he took advantage of the training opportunities at the Piney Point school and upgraded on several occasions. He last sailed on the *Green Bay* before settling in Glendora, California.

BILLY HANBURY

Brother Billy Hanbury, 61, started shipping with the Seafarers in 1979. He initially sailed on the *El Paso Arzew*. Working as a member of the deck department, Brother Hanbury most recently sailed aboard the *Resolve*. He resides in Suffolk, Virginia.



DOUGLAS HODGES

Brother Douglas Hodges, 66, started shipping with the SIU in 1974, sailing aboard the *Monticello*. A member of the deck department, he upgraded his skills at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Hodges last sailed on the *Alliance Norfolk* before settling in Jacksonville, Florida.

JOE LOCKETTE

Brother Joe Lockette, 65, joined the SIU in 2002, initially sailing aboard the *Developer*. He worked in the deck department, most recently aboard the *Green Cove*. Brother Lockette is a resident of Houston.

JAMES MILLER

Brother James Miller, 65, began his seafaring career in 1989, working aboard the *American Condor*. The deck department member upgraded his skills at the Piney Point school in 2001. Brother Miller last worked aboard the *Noble Star*. He makes his home in Napoleon, Ohio.



WILLIAM MOKRY

Brother William Mokry, 65, started sailing with the SIU in 2004, working aboard the *Prince William Sound*. A member of the deck department who formerly sailed with



the NMU, he most recently worked on the *Alaskan Navigator*. Brother Mokry lives in Chula Vista, California.

LINCOLN PINN

Brother Lincoln Pinn, 69, became a Seafarer in 1982 when he worked on the *President Taylor*. A member of the steward department, Brother Pinn upgraded on several occasions at the Piney Point school. His final vessel was the *Horizon Tacoma* and he calls Ellensburg, Washington, home.

LONNIE PORCHEA

Brother Lonnie Porchea, 69, started shipping with the Seafarers in 1997, first working on the *Integrity*. The deck department member took advantage of the training opportunities at the Paul Hall Center and upgraded on multiple occasions. Brother Porchea last sailed aboard the *Overseas Texas City* before settling in Gresham, South Carolina.

OWEN RICHARDS

Brother Owen Richards, 75, started shipping with the SIU in 1980. His first vessel was the *Cove Sailor*. Brother Richards upgraded on several occasions at the Paul Hall Center before working on his final vessel, the *Great Republic*. He sailed in all three departments and resides in Brooklyn, New York.



FADEL SALEH

Brother Fadel Saleh, 62, became an SIU member in 1975. A member of the deck department, he first sailed on the *Galveston*. Brother Saleh upgraded his skills at the Paul Hall Center in 2001 before sailing on his final vessel, the *Midnight Sun*. He makes his home in Tacoma, Washington.

NORBERTO VERA

Brother Norberto Vera, 72, first donned the SIU colors in 1988 when he worked on the *Overseas Arctic*. A member of the deck department, he upgraded often at the Paul Hall Center. Brother Vera's final vessel was the *St Louis Express*. He resides in Houston.

INLAND

GERALD BISHOP

Brother Gerald Bishop, 63, began his career with the SIU in 1977. He first worked for Hvide Marine and was a member of the deck department. Brother Bishop upgraded his skills on multiple occasions at the maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. He last worked for Crowley Towing and Transportation and lives in Westminster, California.



ROBERT GEORGE

Brother Robert George, 63, signed on with the SIU in 1989, initially working for Dixie Carriers. He took advantage of the training opportunities at the Paul Hall Center and upgraded in both 2004 and 2016. He sailed in both the deck and engine departments and most recently worked for Penn Maritime before settling in Tucson, Arizona.



CHARLES LOWE

Brother Charles Lowe, 62, started shipping with the Seafarers in 1994, when he worked for Penn Maritime. He upgraded in 2003 at the maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. Brother Lowe sailed in the deck department and remained with the same company for the duration of his career. He lives in Moss Point, Mississippi.

JAMES MOORE

Brother James Moore, 66, joined the SIU in 1973 when he worked for Inland Tugs. A member of the deck department, he upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on several occasions. Brother Moore most recently shipped aboard the *Liberty* and makes his home in Orange, Texas.

JOHN TANNER

Brother John Tanner, 62, started shipping with the SIU in 1978, sailing with Steuart Transportation. A member of the engine department, he upgraded his skills at the Paul Hall Center in 1982. Brother Tanner last sailed with Piney Point Transportation before settling in Portsmouth, Virginia.

GREAT LAKES

SCOTT COBURN

Brother Scott Coburn, 62, joined the SIU in 1981, working aboard the *Richard J. Reiss*. The deck department member upgraded on multiple occasions at the maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. Brother Coburn last worked for Luedtke Engineering and resides in Bloomingdale, Michigan.



TERRANCE DEMENTER

Brother Terrance Demeter, 62, became an SIU member in 1977 when he worked for Quality Quarries Inc. A member of the deck department, he upgraded his skills at the Paul Hall Center in 1993. Brother Demeter concluded his career after working last with Upper Lakes Towing. He makes his home in Gladstone, Michigan.



Final Departures



DEEP SEA

PERFECTO AMPER

Pensioner Perfecto Amper, 90, passed away November 17. He joined the union in 1964 and first sailed aboard the *Western Comet*. Brother Amper was a member of the deck department. His final trip was aboard the *Long Lines* before he retired in 1995. He resided in Concord, California.



ALLAN CAMPBELL

Pensioner Allan Campbell, 80, died December 7. Brother Campbell joined the SIU in 1974 and worked as a member of the deck department. He first sailed on the *Anchorage* and last worked aboard the *Integrity* before retiring in 2002. He resided in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.



JOHN CLARKE

Pensioner John Clarke, 85, passed away December 8. His first trip to sea with the SIU was in 1953, when he sailed aboard the *Royal Oak*. A member of the steward department, he last sailed on the *Overseas Valdez*. Brother Clarke retired in 1994 and settled in Houston.



CHARLES CLAUSEN

Pensioner Charles Clausen, 71, died December 22. He signed on with the SIU in 1974, when he sailed on the *McLean*. Brother Clausen was a member of the engine department, last sailing on the *Performance*. He became a pensioner in 2009 and settled in Lexington Park, Maryland.

HERBERT DAVIS

Pensioner Herbert Davis, 62, passed away December 24. He joined the union in 1978, first sailing with Southern Ohio Towing. Brother Davis shipped as a member of the steward department. He last worked on the *Atlantic Forest* and became a pensioner in 2006. He was a resident of Hertford, North Carolina.



ROBERTO ESCOBAR

Pensioner Roberto Escobar, 75, died September 7. The steward department member's first vessel was the *Trans-eastern* in 1961. Brother Escobar most recently sailed on the *Carolina* before going on pension in 1995. He resided in Carolina, Puerto Rico.



ABDUL HASSAN

Pensioner Abdul Hassan, 87, passed

away December 10. He joined the SIU in 1966, initially working aboard the *East Point Victory*. Brother Hassan was a steward department member and last sailed on the *Sealand Value*. He became a pensioner in 1995 and lived in Inverness, Florida.

EDGEL LUZIER

Pensioner Edgel Luzier, 93, died January 14. Brother Luzier worked as a deck department member and signed on with the SIU in 1951. His first vessel was the *Yorkmar*; his last, the *Discovery*. Brother Luzier began collecting his pension in 1993 and settled in Diana, West Virginia.



WILLIE MANUEL

Pensioner Willie Manuel, 68, passed away November 22. He began his seafaring career in 1967 when he worked aboard the *Kyska*. Brother Manuel sailed in the steward department. His final voyage was aboard the *Liberty Wave* before he retired in 1996. He resided in his home state of Alabama in the city of Mobile.



DOMINGO MELANIO

Pensioner Domingo Melanio, 86, died November 13. He began his seafaring career in 1969, working aboard an Overseas Carriers vessel. A member of the engine department, he last sailed on the *Mariner* before going on pension in 1997. Brother Melanio was a resident of Fremont, California.



PETER PATRICK

Pensioner Peter Patrick, 88, passed away November 30. He began sailing with the SIU in 1951. One of his first trips to sea was aboard the *Lafayette* as a member of the steward department. He last worked as the port steward for Puerto Rico Marine before becoming a pensioner in 1986. Brother Patrick lived in Monroe Township, New Jersey.



PETER SCHMITT

Pensioner Peter Schmitt, 64, died November 8. He joined the union in 1985 and initially worked in the inland division, with Crowley Towing and Transportation. Brother Schmitt



was a steward department member and last sailed on the *Maersk Denver*. He began collecting his pension in 2016 and lived in Paradise, California.

JOHANNES SOREL

Pensioner Johannes Sorel, 94, died December 18. Brother Sorel's first trip to sea was in 1951, when he worked aboard the *Fort Bridge*. A deck department member, he most recently sailed on the *Innovation* and began collecting his pension in 1989. Brother Sorel made his home in Milton, Florida.



ROBERT STEVENSON

Pensioner Robert Stevenson, 68, passed away November 22. He joined the SIU in 1988 and worked as a member of the engine department. He first sailed with Bay Tankers and last worked aboard the *Liberty Glory*. He was a resident of New Orleans.



OSWALD STOIBER

Pensioner Oswald Stoiber, 76, died December 30. Working in the steward department, he initially sailed on the *Independence* in 1991. Brother Stoiber most recently worked aboard the *Overseas Los Angeles* before going on pension in 2013. He called Sonora, California, home.



DONAL SWANNER

Pensioner Donal Swanner, 81, passed away November 11. Brother Swanner joined the SIU in 1977 and worked as a member of the engine department. The Oklahoma native first worked for Western Towing and last sailed aboard the *Paul Buck* before retiring in 1999. He lived in Pasadena, Texas.



RONALD WESTERFIELD

Brother Ronald Westerfield, 58, died September 12. His first trip to sea was in 2005, when he worked aboard the *Brenton Reef* as an engine department member. Brother Westerfield was native to Pennsylvania and last shipped aboard the *Constitution*. He called St Louis home.

GREAT LAKES

DONALD GORDON

Pensioner Donald Gordon, 89, passed away December 30. He joined the union in 1962, initially working for Great Lakes Towing

Brother Gordon also concluded his career with the same company when he retired in 1990. He lived in Kingsville, Ohio.

JAMES SMITH

Brother James Smith, 55, passed away December 9. He joined the SIU in 1987, first sailing aboard the *Charles E Wilson*. A deck department member, he last sailed aboard the *Sam Laud* before settling in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

INLAND

RICHARD DIXON

Pensioner Richard Dixon, 71, died December 11. He signed on with the SIU in 1965, working for Crescent Towing and Salvage. The deck department member continued to work for the same company until his retirement in 2013. Brother Dixon lived in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



WILLIAM FITZGERALD

Pensioner William Fitzgerald, 74, passed away December 6. He joined the SIU in 1997, working as a member of the deck department. He began collecting pension in 2005, after sailing with Crowley Towing and Transportation for his entire SIU career. He was a resident of McDade, Texas.



JOSEPH KLEIMANN

Pensioner Joseph Kleimann, 90, died December 30. Working for G&H Towing, he became a member of the SIU in 1962. Brother Kleimann sailed as an engine department member, and remained with G&H Towing for the duration of his career. He lived in Galveston, Texas.

STEPHEN OLSON

Brother Stephen Olson, 49, passed away April 19. He signed on with the SIU in 1993, when he worked for G&H Towing. Brother Olson remained with the same company for the duration of his career and sailed as a member of the deck department. He resided in his home state of Texas in the city of Aransas Pass.

VINCENT THOMPSON

Pensioner Vincent Thompson, 73, died December 1. A member of the deck department, he first worked with Red Circle Transport in 1980. Brother Thompson last sailed with G&H Towing before becoming a pensioner in 2006. He lived in Pass Christian, Mississippi.



CHARLES WILLIAMS

Pensioner Charles Williams, 82,



passed away December 19. He became an SIU member in 1969 when he worked for Dixie Carriers. Brother Williams was a member of the deck department. He last sailed with Michigan Tankers before retiring in 1998. He called Bogalusa, Louisiana, home.

PACIFIC MARINE

JORGE BARAHONA

Pensioner Jorge Barahona, 73, died January 12. Working in the steward department, he became an SIU member in 1968. Brother Barahona's first vessel was the *Andrew Jackson*; his last, the *Mahi Mahi*. He became a pensioner in 2006 and settled in Las Vegas.



NATIONAL MARITIME UNION

THOMAS ITO

Pensioner Thomas Ito, 82, passed away November 25. Brother Ito was born in Japan. He went on pension in 1990 and was a resident of Las Vegas.

HARRIE NELSON

Pensioner Harrie Nelson, 83, died November 17. Born in Georgia, Brother Nelson became a pensioner in 1989. He was a resident of Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

Editor's note: The following individuals, all former members of the National Maritime Union, have also passed away. Insufficient information was available in their respective personnel files to develop written accounts of their careers.

Name	Age	DOD
Acosta, Diego	86	12/26/2017
Adams, Juan	78	01/02/2018
Aracri, Anthony	84	12/17/2017
Bradsher, Linwood	94	12/24/2017
Collins, Randolph	93	12/07/2017
Colon, Jesus	92	12/16/2017
Davis, Charles	91	12/12/2017
Fields, Otis	88	01/05/2018
Fitzpatrick, Julia	85	11/14/2017
Flowers, Rufus	91	12/29/2017
Franklin, Charles	90	12/20/2017
Jackman, Harold	93	12/02/2017
Joseph, Conrad	81	12/18/2017
Le Fave, Anne	101	12/27/2017
Kitchings, Willie	95	12/26/2017
Miller, Sidney	90	12/01/2017
Murphy Jr., Ernest	90	11/21/2017
Reyes, Damian	91	12/20/2017
Rivera, Jose	91	12/14/2017
Rivers, Nathan	85	01/17/2018
Romano, Nicholas	89	10/11/2017
Villegas, Rodrigo	88	10/15/2017



Digest of Shipboard Union Meetings

The Seafarers LOG attempts to print as many digests of union shipboard minutes as possible. On occasion, because of space limitations, some will be omitted.

Ships' minutes first are reviewed by the union's contract department. Those issues requiring attention or resolution are addressed by the union upon receipt of the ships' minutes. The minutes are then forwarded to the Seafarers LOG for publication.

USNS STOCKHAM (Crowley), October 29 – Chairman **Fadhel Mohamed**, Secretary **Shanita Flachbart**, Educational Director **Randy Slue**. Crew discussed old business including vacation pay as well as pay for transport to and from airport. Chairman reported new jobs due to Watson-class contract award. Secretary reminded crew to check all documents before joining ship to ensure up-to-date physicals. Educational director encouraged members to take advantage of all upgrading courses by going to the Piney Point school. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Crew discussed engineer's efforts to turn water back on and made resolution for better communication while at sea. Upon discussion, members were informed of compensation rate for the indefinite water restriction. Crew mentioned including compensation for any water restrictions in the next contract. Members expressed need for additional laundry facilities. Chairman reminded crew to close all watertight doors while at sea.

SLNC GOODWILL (Chesapeake Crewing), October 31 – Chairman **Bernardino Eda**, Secretary **Thomas Brooks**, Deck Delegate **Joran Hough**, Engine Delegate **Shawn Alexander**, Steward Delegate **Cody Herndon**. Chairman discussed how to use member portal. He thanked steward department for good food, and encouraged crew to upgrade in Piney Point. Secretary thanked crew for cleanliness. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Crew discussed SIU President Michael Sacco's *Seafarers LOG* column on Jones Act and Puerto Rico. Next port: Diego Garcia.

LIBERTY GLORY (Liberty Maritime), November 19 –

Chairman **Lionel Rivas**, Secretary **Gordon Major**, Deck Delegate **Lloyd Lindsey**. New washing machine ordered. Chairman announced payoff and reminded departing crew to clean rooms and leave keys. Secretary said new linen will be distributed. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Crew requested new galley equipment, sat phone and cleaning agents. Everyone was thanked for doing a good job. It was a good trip with no lost-time injuries. Crew reiterated need to always stay safe.

MAERSK IDAHO (Maersk Line, Limited), November 25 – Chairman **Ronald Mena**, Secretary **Alonzo Belcher**, Educational Director **Richard Huffman**, Steward Delegate **Marcus Logan**. Crew discussed old business regarding requests for new refrigerator in the crew lounge. Chairman thanked mariners for a smooth voyage. Secretary reminded crew members to leave fresh linen for oncoming mariners before departing the vessel. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members discussed health and optical benefit plans. They were reminded to remove all belongings from rooms upon departure, allowing joining members to have space for their respective belongings.

HORIZON KODIAK (Matson), November 29 – Chairman **Christopher Pompel**, Secretary **Antoinette Amato**, Educational Director **Lon Maduro**. Chairman discussed upcoming schedule including shipyard period. He reminded crew to keep current with dues and to make sure proper beneficiary information is on file. Educational Director advised members to upgrade at the SIU-affiliated Paul Hall

Center for Maritime Training and Education, located in Piney Point, Maryland. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Steward department was thanked for great meals and a job well done keeping up with ship cleanliness. Members expressed interest in purchasing disability insurance through the union and for relief positions no less than 60 days. Next port: Portland, Oregon.

HORIZON PACIFIC (PASHA), December 1 – Chairman **Daniel Ticer**, Secretary **Clifton Medley**, Educational Director **Thomas Flynn**, Steward Delegate **Mercurion Abuan**. Crew discussed concerns with standby pay, frequency of physicals, crew lounge conditions and additional topics under old business. These concerns were later forwarded to Oakland patrolman. Chairman talked about Jones Act and Puerto Rico and referred to SIU President Michael Sacco's related column in union newspaper. Educational director reminded members to take advantage of upgrading opportunities at the Piney Point school. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members mentioned lack of ventilation in crew lounge. Requests made for clock, fan and toaster oven. Crew suggested changing how contracts are negotiated. They extended wishes for happy holidays "to all our fellow Seafarers, family and friends." Next port: Oakland, California.

MICHIGAN (Maersk Line, Limited), December 10 – Chairman **Gerald Alford**, Secretary **Gregory Keene**, Educational Director **Moses Mickens**. Chairman spoke about the importance of union meetings and

Aboard USNS Seay



Seafarers aboard the USNS Seay gather for a photo after successfully installing a satellite drone (background). The vessel is operated by U.S. Marine Management.

the attendance of all crew members. Crew was reminded to make sure Coast Guard certificates are up to date. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members mentioned contact with company representative, in hopes of receiving a new microwave. Need for repaired dishwasher reported, as well as new mattresses and adaptors for TVs.

MV JEAN ANNE (Tote), December 30 – Chairman **Thomas Johnson**, Secretary **Ingra Maddox**, Educational Director **Joseph Letang**, Deck Delegate **Mohamed Saleh**, Engine Delegate **Servando Canales**, Steward Delegate **Mary Maddox**. Chairman reported safe

voyage. Educational Director reminded crew to apply for scholarships for themselves and to also encourage dependents to apply. He encouraged members to go to the Paul Hall Center to upgrade their skills. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Crew advised to read *LOG* and were instructed how to find it on the ship's computer. Members were reminded of how to request exams via member portal. They reviewed new method of filling out overtime sheets. Crew requested physical exam requirement frequency be changed to once a year. Steward department thanked for a good job providing crew with great meals.

Aboard Dodge Island



AB Darryl Nelson (front) and Third Mate Mike Mennella (rear left) are pictured on the Great Lakes Dredge and Dock vessel late last year in Florida. Thanks to Patrolman Adam Bucalo for the photo.

SHBP Offers Eight Scholarships For Mariners, Family Members

Eight scholarships totalling \$132,000 are available to Seafarers and their dependents under the Seafarers Health and Benefit Plan's 2018 Scholarship program.

Three scholarships (one for \$20,000 and two for \$6,000) have been designated for active Seafarers while five others have been set aside for dependents. Each of the dependents offerings will be for \$20,000.

To take advantage of these opportunities online, visit the SIU website, navigate to the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan menu and select Scholarship Booklet (PDF). Although the booklet says 2016, all information is still current for the 2018 SHBP Scholarships.

Letter to the Editor

Letters may be edited for conciseness and clarity. Submissions may be mailed to 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, MD 20746 or e-mailed to webmaster@seafarers.org.

Retired Recertified Bosun Thankful For SIU Experience

I started my career as a merchant mariner in 1974, when I entered the Harry Lundeberg School as a trainee. Four years later, I upgraded to AB.

I had a personal goal of continuing to hone my craft as a mariner. Part of my drive for career growth came from family members who were members of the Longshoremen. As I learned about their backgrounds, I also gained knowledge about the maritime industry and the AFL-CIO. That's what led me to Piney Point.

My career wasn't only about advancement. I wanted to understand politics and everything that went into laws being enacted. That hunger was fed in 1993 when the SIU gave me the opportunity to be part of the bosun recertification program. Afterward, I was



Cowans (center) trains in Piney Point in 1993.



Cowans (left) participates in a rally for Doug Wilder (right) in Virginia in the late 1980s. Wilder became the nation's first black governor in 1989.

better equipped to share knowledge and insight aboard our ships. It was an honor to be in that position, and I was able to be a mentor for other mariners who came aboard the vessels. Educating them was my way of giving back to an industry that has been such a tremendous blessing to me and my family over the years. It's part of the legacy I would like to leave as my career comes to a close.

As I begin to transition into retirement, I want to continue being a strong supporter of the maritime industry. The next step for me is entry into the political arena. I've seen some positive changes in my home state of Alabama, where Doug Jones just won an election. I want to continue to be a voice promoting the Jones Act and other laws that will help to support all maritime workers, and help ensure equal opportunity and fairness.

Finally, I will be working on a book

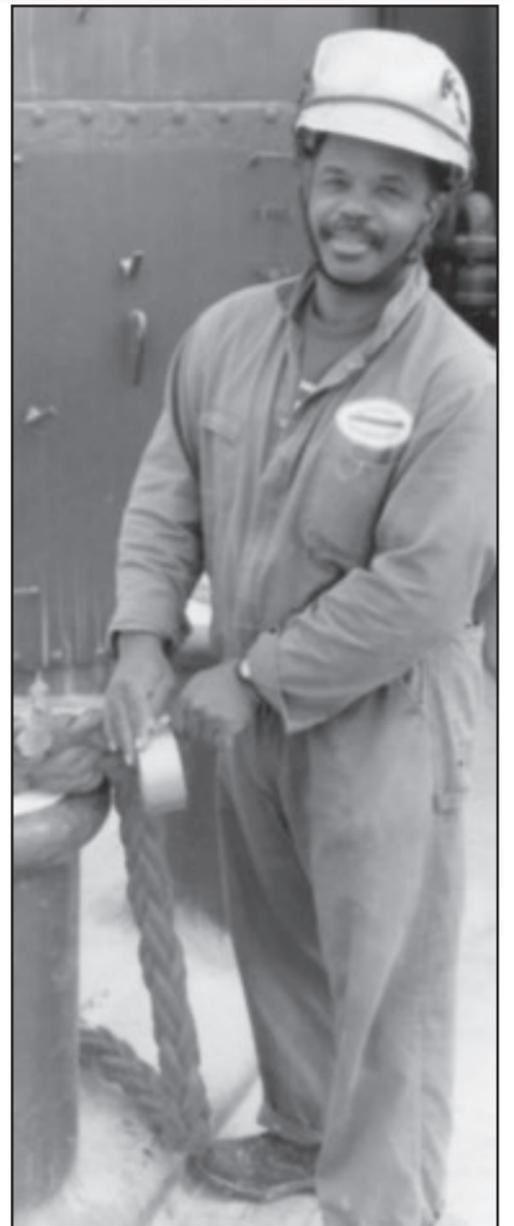
to share with others about my career as a merchant mariner. Again, my goal is to make a positive impact and give back to an industry that has been very rewarding for me.

I want to thank the Seafarers International Union for giving me the opportunity to enjoy a great career and a secure retirement. I owe a lot to the union.

Terry D. Cowans, Sr.
Mobile, Alabama



This recent photo of Terry Cowans was taken shortly after he retired.



Cowans is pictured Aboard the ITB Groton in 2007

Know Your Rights

FINANCIAL REPORTS. The Constitution of the SIU Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters District/NMU makes specific provision for safeguarding the membership's money and union finances. The constitution requires a detailed audit by certified public accountants every year, which is to be submitted to the membership by the secretary-treasurer. A yearly finance committee of rank-and-file members, elected by the membership, each year examines the finances of the union and reports fully their findings and recommendations. Members of this committee may make dissenting reports, specific recommendations and separate findings.

TRUST FUNDS. All trust funds of the SIU Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters are administered in accordance with the provisions of various trust fund agreements. All these agreements specify that the trustees in charge of these funds shall equally consist of union and management representatives and their alternates. All expenditures and disbursements of trust funds are made only upon approval by a majority of the trustees. All trust fund financial records are available at the headquarters of the various trust funds.

SHIPPING RIGHTS. A member's shipping rights and seniority are protected exclusively by contracts between the union and the employers. Members should get to know their shipping rights. Copies of these contracts are posted and available in all union halls. If members believe there have been violations of their shipping or seniority rights as contained in the contracts between the union and the employers, they should notify the Seafarers Appeals Board by certified mail, return receipt requested. The proper address for this is:

Augustin Tellez, Chairman
Seafarers Appeals Board
5201 Auth Way
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Full copies of contracts as referred to are available to members at all times, either by writing directly to the union or to the Seafarers Appeals Board.

CONTRACTS. Copies of all SIU contracts are available in all SIU halls. These contracts specify the wages and conditions under which an SIU member works and lives aboard a ship or boat. Members should know their contract rights, as well as their obligations, such as filing for overtime (OT) on the proper sheets and in the proper manner. If, at any time, a member believes that an SIU patrolman or other union official fails to protect their contractual rights properly, he or she should contact the nearest SIU port agent.

EDITORIAL POLICY — THE SEAFARERS LOG. The *Seafarers LOG* traditionally has refrained from publishing any article serving the political purposes of any individual in the union, officer or member. It also has refrained from publishing articles deemed harmful to the union or its collective membership. This established policy has been reaffirmed by membership action at the September 1960 meetings in all constitutional ports. The responsibility for *Seafarers LOG* policy is vested in an editorial board which consists of the executive board of the union. The executive board may delegate, from among its ranks, one individual to carry out this responsibility.

PAYMENT OF MONIES. No monies are to be paid to anyone in any official

capacity in the SIU unless an official union receipt is given for same. Under no circumstances should any member pay any money for any reason unless he is given such receipt. In the event anyone attempts to require any such payment be made without supplying a receipt, or if a member is required to make a payment and is given an official receipt, but feels that he or she should not have been required to make such payment, this should immediately be reported to union headquarters.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS. Copies of the SIU Constitution are available in all union halls. All members should obtain copies of this constitution so as to familiarize themselves with its contents. Any time a member feels any other member or officer is attempting to deprive him or her of any constitutional right or obligation by any methods, such as dealing with charges, trials, etc., as well as all other details, the member so affected should immediately notify headquarters.

EQUAL RIGHTS. All members are guaranteed equal rights in employment and as members of the SIU. These rights are clearly set forth in the SIU Constitution and in the contracts which the union has negotiated with the employers. Consequently, no member may be discriminated against because of race, creed, color, sex, national or geographic origin.

If any member feels that he or she is denied the equal rights to which he or she is entitled, the member should notify union headquarters.

SEAFARERS POLITICAL ACTIVITY DONATION — SPAD.

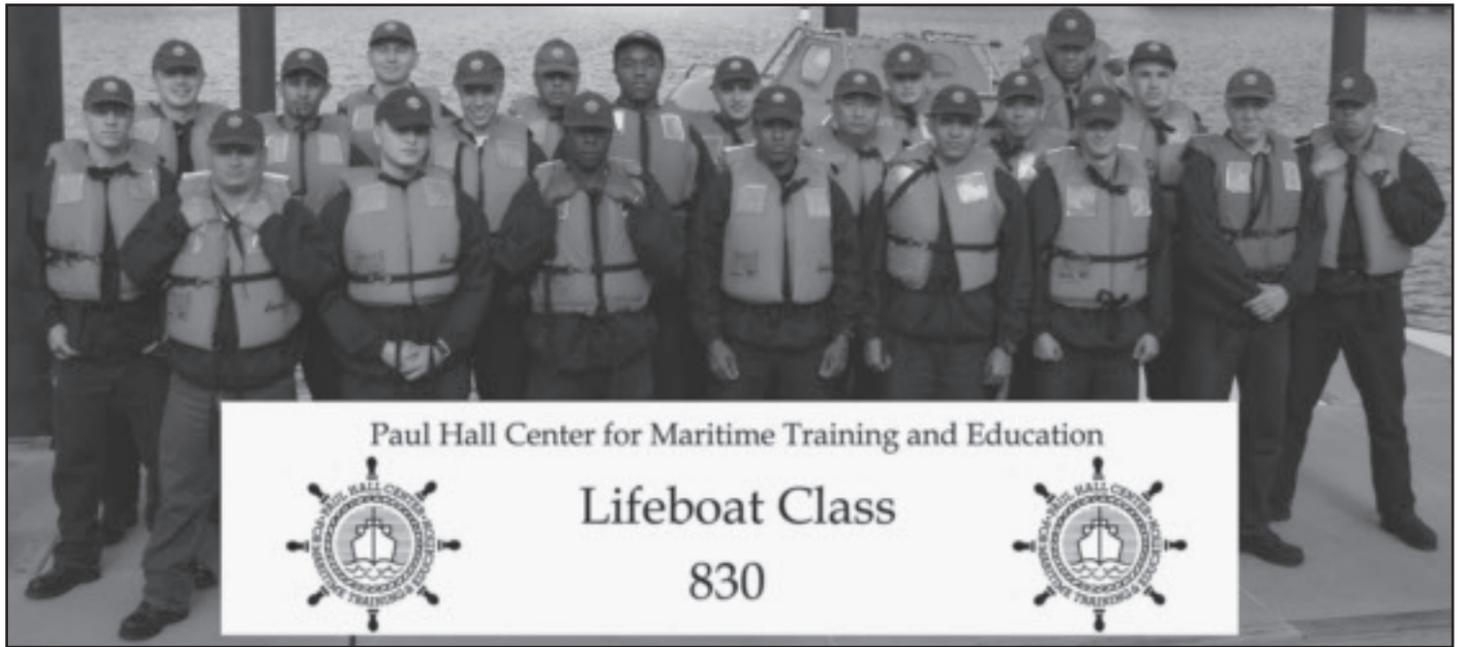
SPAD is a separate segregated fund. Its proceeds are used to further its objects and purposes including, but not limited to, furthering the political, social and economic interests of maritime workers, the preservation and furthering of the American merchant marine with improved employment opportunities for seamen and boatmen and the advancement of trade union concepts. In connection with such objects, SPAD supports and contributes to political candidates for elective office. All contributions are voluntary. No contribution may be solicited or received because of force, job discrimination, financial reprisal, or threat of such conduct, or as a condition of membership in the union or of employment. If a contribution is made by reason of the above improper conduct, the member should notify the Seafarers International Union or SPAD by certified mail within 30 days of the contribution for investigation and appropriate action and refund, if involuntary. A member should support SPAD to protect and further his or her economic, political and social interests, and American trade union concepts.

NOTIFYING THE UNION. If at any time a member feels that any of the above rights have been violated, or that he or she has been denied the constitutional right of access to union records or information, the member should immediately notify SIU President Michael Sacco at headquarters by certified mail, return receipt requested. The address is:

Michael Sacco, President
Seafarers International Union
5201 Auth Way
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Paul Hall Center Classes

Apprentice Water Survival Class #830 – The following Phase I apprentices (photo at right, in alphabetical order) graduated from this course Nov. 3: Austen Amoroso, Tommy Romero Benton, Justin Bodnar, Jose Luis Borrero Rodriguez, Kevin Campfield Jr., Tyler Catron, Micah Champion, Carlos Colon De Jesus, Elhassene Elkori, Samuel Fanjoy, Devin Hoerr, Terkwon Knight, Ryan Manlapit, Myles Otis, Somitya Rana, Christopher Redding, Andy Salado, Gabriel Santa-Ramos, Nicolas Smith, Brian Wendler and Omaree Oshae Williams



Welding & Metallurgy – Three upgraders honed their skills by completing this course Nov. 10. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Kenneth Cabrera, Elliot Duncan and Richard Lawson. Chris Raley, their instructor, is at the far right.



FOWT – Seven individuals completed their requirements in this course Nov. 3. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Ferdinand Malicay Cabanlit, Arsenio Jenkins, Tarrell Jones, Vincent Knight, Viliamu Milikini, Al Carnel Seay II and Kyle Savage. Class instructor John Wiegman III is at the far left.



UA to AS-D – The following individuals (above, in alphabetical order) graduated from this course Nov. 3: Eduardo Yesier Centeno-Rosario, Nestor Antonio Costas Lugo, Darla Ferranti, Kaila Foster, Madigan Angelica Gilligan, Mohsen Abdulshafiq Hassain, Frank McCracken, Joseph Parr, Edward Voskamp, Derek Willis and Mehdi Youssef. Thomas Truitt, their instructor, is at the far right.



RFPNW – Seven Phase III apprentices finished their requirements in this course Nov. 6. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Arnold Dimaandal Baluyot, Jordan Bates, Hector Ulises Garibaldi, Macey Horne, Jared Nichols, Levon Prophet and Charles Turner Jr.

Basic Training (Basic Firefighting) – The following upgraders (photo at right, in alphabetical order) graduated from this course Nov. 27: Mohamed Mossad Abdelwahab GAD, Martin Allred, Maurice Backey, Sotero Sumalinog Berame Jr., Randall Craig, Henry Jimenez Crespo, Luddy Duffey, Sherrod Frazier, Victor Frazier, Harold Harding, Leola Johnson, Bonnie Kropolinsky-Hinkle, Carl Pedersen, Luis Guillermo Ramos Rosa, Joel Ramos, Kaled Minasar Saleh, David Sexton, Nabil Mohamed Ali Sharif, Benjamin Sivells, Darryl Smith and Ivan Moises Vargas. Class instructors Joe Zienda and Mark Cates are at the far left and far right, respectively.



Paul Hall Center Classes



Combined Basic & Advanced Firefighting – Thirteen upgraders improved their skills by completing this course Oct. 27. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Christopher Bean, Charles Borsellino Jr., Edward Mateo Galbis, Bobbie Gibbs, Devin Dangelo Gordon, James Kayser, Grayson Ross, Frank Sambula, Anthony Sanchez Villarrubia, Christopher Shivalier, Christopher Sykes, Brett Van Pelt and Antjuan Webb.



Government Vessels (Upgraders and GAP) – The following individuals (photo above and the one immediately below, in alphabetical order) graduated from this course Oct. 20: George Burton Jr., James Cherico, Michael Cruz, Ernest Frank III, Reynard Gibbs, Paula Blanca Gomez, Jack Gourgue, Brittany Harris, Joseph Huls, Ernest Latimore, Milan Marshall Hampton, Nina McFall, Anthony McAfee, Pedro Rodriguez, Anthony Sanchez Villarrubia, Insook Smith, Nakeya White and Rick Worthington. (Note: Not all are pictured.)



Basic Training (Basic Firefighting) – Twelve upgraders (above, in alphabetical order) graduated from this course Oct. 20: Sure Anitak, Roberto Avila, Christopher Bean, Steven Blair, Kenneth Cabrera, John Canson, James Crate, Kenneth Long, Clayton Lupton, James May, Julio Soriano and Ahmed Sultan.



Basic Training Revalidation – The following upgraders (above, in alphabetical order) finished their requirements in this course Oct. 13: Nasser Saleh Ahmed, Saleh Abubakar Ahmed, Jared Charles Blavat, Michael Cruz, Nicole Donald, Ramadan Elsayed Edres, Edward Mateo Galbis, Paula Blanca Gomez, Mark Jones Jr., James Kayser, Brian Lunsford, Lon Oliver, Arnedo Barco Paredes Jr., Kevin Penrose, Cary Pratts, Dennis Salvatore Saggese, Neonito Salle Sodusta, Javier Oswaldo Wurtele and Ibrahim Mohamed Yahya. (Note: Not all are pictured.)



Government Vessels – Nineteen upgraders completed the enhancement of their skills when they finished this course Oct. 6. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Abdulghafor Nasr Ahmed, Bentley Arrundell, Charlito Aseberos, Chris Badouin, Eric Baynes, Ernest Bullcock Jr., Nathan Elliott, Dominic Gilmartin, Derek Ivory, Ali Ahmed Matari, Kenneth McDaniel, Daniel Mensah, Abdul Hakeem Muhammad, Leonard Elad Soriano, Terry Taylor Jr., Armando Madiaga Vicente, Reginald Walker, Timmy Williams and Devin Zug. Class instructor Mark Cates is at the far right.



Advanced Galley Operations – Four Seafarers who sail in the steward department improved their skills by finishing this course Nov. 3. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Jorcell Rashad Davis, Ryan Marquez Gallano, Cynora Hunter and Marilou Dumlao Toledo. Their instructor, Bryan Owens, is at the far right.



Certified Chief Cook – Three steward department Seafarers recently graduated from modules in this course. Craig Wooten (photo directly above) finished Module 3 Oct. 6 while Stacy Fuller (left in photo at right) and John Jewell each completed Module 5 Nov. 3



SEAFARERS LOG



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION • ATLANTIC, GULF, LAKES AND INLAND WATERS

**Paul Hall Center
Class Photos
Pages 22-23**



Seafarers donated nearly \$9,500 (photo at left) worth of gifts for military families. Carrying some of the toys (photo above) to the delivery truck are (from left) SA Ahmed Shamman, DEU Edmondo Monteclaro, SA Raul Ventanilla and Recertified Bosun Sanjay Gupta. In photo at right, SAs Marcelino Pabito (left) and Abdufatah Abdulla enthusiastically transport some of the goodies outside.



'I Love the Way Our Union Gets Involved'

SIU Again Steps Up for Santa's Castle; Military Families Benefit

From a distance, it may seem as if the steady philanthropic outreach practiced by SIU members in the Pacific Northwest happens by rote.

But even a brief series of conversations with those most closely involved in projects including Santa's Castle quickly and powerfully illustrates joyful, thoughtful giving that makes a difference in people's lives.

Most recently, the SIU participated in Santa's Castle for the eleventh straight year. The all-volunteer program is dedicated to providing Christmas gifts to U.S. military families (primarily E-4 and below) who are experiencing financial hardship.

For the 2017 holiday season, Seafarers (including retirees, family members and union employees) teamed up to donate approximately \$9,500 worth of toys through the hall in Tacoma, Wash-

ington. The haul included nearly 30 bicycles, dozens of drones and remote-controlled helicopters and cars, American Girl dolls, musical instruments and much more.

Recertified Steward **Amanda Suncin** stated, "Any time I can be a part of something so beautiful that makes such a difference, I want to be part of it. The military does so much for us, and we have so many blessings throughout our lives.... I just love the way that our union gets involved. To me, it's an honor, and a lot of credit goes to Joe (Port Agent Joe Vincenzo, who spearheads the SIU's participation)."

QMED **Elliott Duncan** sounded similarly enthused.

"It's a really positive thing," he said. "Everybody seems to enjoy donating and having a good time giving back. I've definitely enjoyed being a part of it. Paint Tacoma is another great program." (The SIU also participates in Paint Tacoma Beautiful each summer. It's a program through which area volunteers paint and repair dwellings for homeowners who are unable to do it themselves.)

Shelly Hinzman is the president of Santa's Castle, which is the formal name of both the program and the organization itself (it's a private 501(c)(3)). She said, "The donation that we get from the Seafarers always blows us away. We are always so appreciative.

Hinzman also enjoyed the annual luncheon during which the toys were moved from the hall to delivery trucks. The hall was packed with volunteers (and with good food).

"I've been to three of those luncheons and the SIU always treats us so wonder-

fully," she noted. "It's the highlight of our season to go visit them."

Hinzman said the overall program "went very well this year," and benefited 925 military families (2,131 children).

Anita Vargo also is familiar with the SIU. She's the purchasing vice president for Santa's Castle.

"The Seafarers always start our year off for us," she said. "The men and women who donate all the presents are amazing. They go way far beyond our expectations every year. The families are so appreciative, and we are blessed to be partners with you."

Vincenzo emphasized the specific desire to brighten the holidays for military

personnel. He said the donations "make a difference in the lives of those who dedicate themselves in service to others. There is some fanfare that arises in connection with our annual toy drive and holiday luncheon, but that is not the story and doesn't speak to why Seafarers step up every year bearing gifts."

He continued, "The story is the gift of giving itself, and knowing that in a small way and for a time, a soldier and his or her family's life was made better around the holidays.... It brings out the best of who we are, and the good will that it generates is worth far more than the actual dollar amounts of all the toy drives that we have done to date."



Port Agent Joe Vincenzo (left) chats with Seafarer Jozef Ignacak and the member's daughter.



Pictured from left are Santa's Castle VP Anita Vargo, Santa's Castle President Shelly Hinzman, Port Agent Joe Vincenzo, another Santa's Castle volunteer, Admin. Asst. Brenda Flesner, Patrolman Warren Asp and Safety Director Ben Anderson.