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SIU Welcomes New Vessels

The SIU fleet recently saw an influx of vessels, including outright additions, replacement tonnage, and a new build set to begin sailing next year. One of the additions, the *Montauk* (Sealift), is pictured at right. The group photo (inset) was taken Oct. 10 after the ceremony at Hanwha Philly Shipyard (a union facility), where guests celebrated the christening of Matson's *Makua*. Pictured at the reception are (from left) SIU VP West Coast Joe Vincenzo, MFOW President Anthony Poplawski, SIU Sec.-Treas. Tom Orzechowski, MEBA Sec.-Treas. Roland Rexha, SIU President David Heindel, MEBA President Adam Vokac, and SIU Exec. VP Augie Tellez. Also joining the SIU fleet are the *Allied Atlantic* (Federated Crewing), the *ARC Freedom* and *ARC United* (American Roll-On/Roll-Off Carrier). *Page 4.*



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Seafarers Handle 2 Rescues

SIU members teamed up with mariners from the Seafarers-affiliated American Maritime Officers for two rescues less than three weeks apart. On Sept. 2, the SIU-crewed *Florida* (Intrepid) saved three people who were stranded aboard a disabled boat off the Oregon coast. Then, on Sept. 21, the SIU-crewed *American Phoenix* (Fairwater) rescued two fishermen whose boat sank a few hours earlier, near Georgia. The photo at left (inset) shows a rescue boat from the *American Phoenix* retrieving the two men, who'd been clinging to a beanbag. The other image shows the survivors as seen on the starboard bridge wing camera.

Pages 3 (American Phoenix) and 20 (Florida).



Stbd Bridge Wing

REPORT EXPOSES UNION-BUSTERS • PAGE 5 /// PAUL HALL CENTER CLASS PHOTOS • PAGES 18-19

Seafarers to the Rescue



David Heindel

the finest traditions of the Brotherhood of the Sea, and on behalf of our entire organizations, we applaud your dedication, your professionalism, and your composure. Great work!

Last month in this space, I mentioned that we were in the unusual position of thanking someone for assistance at sea, rather than being the ones rendering the aid. The specific incident involved the *SLNC York*, which, as I'm sure you know, ended with all hands safe.

It didn't take long for order to be restored in our corner of the universe, as two SIU-crewed vessels – the *American Phoenix* and the *Florida* – recently rescued others in separate events. Be sure to check out our coverage elsewhere in this edition, and in the meantime, I extend my congratulations and appreciation to the SIU members and AMO officers from both ships who stepped up and met the moment. You maintained

flag-of-convenience operators are taking advantage of it to move cargo that should support American vessels and American mariners.

We will continue working closely with our labor and industry partners and members of Congress to press the Trump administration to end the waiver and require commercial shippers to use available U.S. vessels and mariners. The waiver is scheduled to expire after the midterm elections. We will be watching closely – and making our voices heard.

After the Elections

Speaking of the midterms, this is a good time to remind everyone that the union's work promoting our industry and your job security never ends. While those efforts occur at every level of government, significant amounts involve federal-level outreach, simply because American maritime is so heavily regulated.

Regardless of how the midterms go, we will hit the ground running with new members of Congress, making sure they understand that the U.S. Merchant Marine is vital for national, economic and homeland security. That's in addition to our ongoing work with those already in office, and, as always, that's regardless of political party. Our motto has always been that we support those who support maritime, and that'll never change.

New Tonnage

This edition features great news about new ships entering the SIU-crewed fleet, which bodes well for the future. From outright additions to replacement tonnage, and from flag-ins to new-builds, we are excited for these opportunities to sustain and grow our union.

At the same time, these types of stories underscore the urgency of ending the Jones Act waiver. As noted in a separate AMP report, "A waiver may appear temporary, but investment decisions are long-term. Shippers will not sign contracts and owners will not order vessels if the government signals that new demand can be diverted to foreign operators that are not fully complying with U.S. laws whenever commercial markets tighten."

For example, according to that report, more than \$700 million in planned dredging replacement vessel projects have been deferred because of doubt related to the waiver – and that's despite the waiver not even applying to those vessels!

The solution remains simple: End the waiver.

Waiver Update

As the latest Jones Act waiver extension nears its scheduled conclusion, a recent report from the American Maritime Partnership (AMP) suggests that case-by-case waiver applications increasingly resemble a standing commercial shipping program rather than an emergency or national security movement. These applications cover recurring domestic movements of refined fuels, petrochemicals, and fertilizer, as well as other commodities.

MARAD's case-by-case reporting has helped reveal this pattern. Yet foreign shipping interests – including those linked to China – continue to benefit, while required reporting appears to remain incomplete. Ironically, the administration is calling for the revitalization of America's maritime industry to counter China's dominance while handing American cargo to the very foreign shipping interests whose dominance it seeks to challenge. It's hard not to wonder if the administration is sincere in its revitalization call.

The picture emerging from these reports is troubling: The waiver is being used for routine commercial shipments, with no demonstrated benefit of relief for American consumers at the gas pump and no clear connection to an immediate adverse impact on military operations. Foreign traders and

Unions Urge Senate Support of Maritime Provisions in NDAA

The SIU and several other unions recently encouraged U.S. Senate backing of the maritime components from the House-passed version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

The Steelworkers, Machinist, Boilermakers, and Electrical Workers joined the SIU in the Oct. 6 communication sent to Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi) and Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island). The unions wrote, "On behalf of the undersigned labor organizations with tens of thousands of members in the maritime sector, we write in strong support of the recently passed SHIPS for America Act and maritime provisions included in the House-passed NDAA FY2027. These provisions garnered broad bipartisan support throughout the process.

"Our members work across the full maritime supply chain and infrastructure – from raw material production and advanced manufacturing to vessel construction, repair, and workforce development, to crewing and operating the vessels," the letter

continued. "We are united around a common objective: rebuilding America's maritime industrial and seafaring base."

The unions noted they "strongly support the SHIPS Act provisions included in the House NDAA for FY2027 as they represent a significant step forward to restore U.S. maritime capacity and strengthen the industrial base that underpins both our economic and national security. For decades, the United States has experienced a steady decline in commercial shipbuilding and maritime capacity while strategic competitors, especially China, have expanded their shipbuilding industries and strengthened their position in global maritime power. The result is a growing dependence on foreign-built vessels and foreign-controlled maritime supply chains and logistics at a time when supply chain resilience, industrial capacity, and sealift readiness have become increasingly important national priorities."

The labor organizations added that the aforementioned provisions in the House-passed NDAA "lay a foundation to help reverse these trends by supporting the growth of the U.S.-flag fleet, strengthening domestic shipbuilding capacity, expanding maritime workforce development, encouraging long-term private investment, and creating the conditions necessary for sustained growth across the maritime industrial base.

"The benefits would extend well beyond America's shipyards," the letter added. "A stronger maritime sector would increase demand for domestically produced steel, manufactured components, transportation equipment, and other critical industrial inputs while supporting high-quality jobs in communities across the country. Just as importantly, a revitalized maritime industrial base would strengthen America's ability to move commerce, sustain military operations, and compete in an increasingly challenging global environment."

The letter concluded, "The objectives advanced by the House NDAA, from shipbuilding, to seafaring, to workforce development are consistent with the Administration's Maritime Action Plan and maritime legislative proposals transmitted to Congress. They reflect a growing bipartisan recognition that maritime revitalization is essential to America's long-term economic and national security. The National Defense Authorization Act is an appropriate vehicle for consideration of these policies, and we respectfully urge the Senate Armed Services Committee not only to maintain, but significantly expand upon these provisions as it considers the NDAA for FY2027."

Copies of the letter were sent to a dozen other senators and congressional representatives whose respective committees or subcommittees have jurisdiction on the U.S. maritime industry.

At press time, a Senate vote on the NDAA had not been scheduled.

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U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker
(R-Mississippi)

U.S. Sen. Jack Reed
(D-Rhode Island)



The SIU engaged an environmentally friendly printer for the production of this newspaper.

American Phoenix Rises To the Occasion

SIU-Crewed Jones Act Tanker
Rescues 2 Off Georgia Coast



The survivors are visible toward the right (circled), clinging to a bean bag.

SIU members have reliably conducted rescues at sea throughout the union's 88-year history, and the *American Phoenix* (Fairwater) recently added to that legacy.

On Sept. 21, the SIU crew and officers from the Seafarers-affiliated American Maritime Officers (AMO) saved two fishermen whose boat (the *Daasia Larae*) sank a few hours earlier, off the Georgia coast. The fishermen, identified by the U.S. Coast Guard as Zachary Wade and Calvin Roman, had been clinging to a bean bag. No major injuries were reported.

SIU members aboard the *American Phoenix* during the rescue included Bosun **Primo Bacalso**, ABs **Augusto Barbareno**, **Coreyian Garvin**, **Randell Paredes**, and **Gremar Rio**, QEP **Michael Blue**, OMUs **Floro Alcaide**, **Roy Martinez**, and **Wilson Montero**, Steward/Baker **Reynard Gibbs**, Chief Cook **Myles White**, and GVA **Anas Mihakel**.

In addition to the professionalism of the SIU and AMO members, another key to the successful outcome involved the fishing boat's emergency position-indicating radio beacon (EPIRB), a portable device that transmits a distress signal. One of the fishermen retrieved it before the boat sank.

"In the morning, we got word that a distress call had gone out," Blue recalled. "An hour later (at the request of the Coast Guard), we got to the site where the EPIRB signal went off, but they weren't there. We saw other fishing boats that weren't them. The captain (Tom Liebsch) got another ping from an EPIRB and the Coast Guard told him to try that location.

"When we arrived," Blue continued, "we saw debris floating that indicated maybe a vessel had sunk. We saw orange things floating that could have been life jackets, and radioed that this could be them."

Blue then used a modern tool of sorts that was at his immediate disposal.

"I zoomed in with my phone and did see it was two people in the water," he said. "We pretty much all saw them at the same time, and we turned

towards them. I threw them a life ring and the third mate threw another one. They swam towards it and then our rescue boat retrieved them."

The *Daasia Larae* went down a few minutes after 6 a.m., and the *American Phoenix*, approximately 20 nautical miles away, got word from the Coast Guard around 90 minutes later. Eventually, at 10:06 a.m., lookouts on the SIU-crewed tanker spotted the fishermen.

A mere eight minutes later, the fishermen were safely pulled aboard the rescue boat.

Chief Mate Ben Yuse noted that as soon as the *American Phoenix* was contacted by the Coast Guard, "the crew began preparing search and rescue equipment. The rescue boat was made ready, food and water rations were gathered, line throwing apparatus staged, accommodation ladder rigged, and the hospital was prepared."

He and Second Mate Diego Smith lowered and manned the rescue boat. When Smith pulled the first survivor aboard, the fisherman "collapsed on the bottom of the boat, tears in his eyes, thankful to be alive," Yuse said in a written account of the rescue. Smith then "grabbed the second survivor as he exhaustedly kicked his legs and pulled himself over the gunnel of the boat.... On deck, Third Mate Jacob Zahorsky, Third Assistant Engineer Justin Bulinsky and Bosun Primo Bacalso lowered the port accommodation ladder to the water's edge. Chief Mate Yuse maneuvered the rescue boat to the bottom of the ladder, and Second Mate Smith assisted in transferring the survivors onto the accommodation ladder."

Yuse continued, "The survivors were escorted back to the ship's hospital, where they were given clean coveralls, and one was treated for a small laceration on his right leg. The survivors were then brought up to a spare stateroom and given a warm meal, water and a place to rest and recover. The men recounted their harrowing experience of abandoning their vessel as she sank into the ocean, and treading water alone for hours.... Dehydration had started to set in, and the survivors were not

sure how much longer they would have had the strength to stay afloat if not for the actions of the U.S. Coast Guard and *American Phoenix* crew."

Per the Coast Guard's request, the *American Phoenix* delivered the fishermen to one of the agency's patrol boats near Jacksonville, Florida, so they could be transferred ashore.

"The entire evolution ran like clockwork," Yuse added. "Everyone was in the right place at the right time with excellent communication. The crew was prepared for this scenario by performing thorough man overboard drills with Williamson turns and regular rescue boat launching operations."

"We're incredibly proud of our crew," Fairwater said in a web post. "This is a reminder of why they stay ready, day and night, to answer the call when it matters most."

For SIU member Blue, being part of a rescue for the first time proved emotional.

"The anxiety was up there, but I mainly was just hoping it was only those two people," he said. "We of course didn't want to see any dead bodies floating, so there was a sigh of relief once we knew. It was nerve-wracking a little bit, but it felt good once they were on board and situated."



Mariners from the *American Phoenix* are pictured with the survivors (fourth and fifth from right).



The second survivor is pulled aboard the rescue craft.



Another view of the survivors in the water



The rescue boat returns to the *American Phoenix*.

Five New Ships Enter SIU Fleet



The *ARC Freedom*, shortly after reflagging under the Stars and Stripes.

New jobs for Seafarers recently arrived and more are on the horizon following recent ref-lags and a christening that collectively help to modernize and increase the available tonnage for the U.S. Merchant Marine.

On Oct. 10, Matson christened the *Makua* in a ceremony at Hanwha Philly Shipyard (a union facility) attended by SIU officials including President David Heindel, Executive Vice President Augie Tellez, Secretary-Treasurer Tom Orzechowski and Vice President West Coast Joe Vincenzo. The vessel – the first of three sister ships, with the remaining vessels expected to be delivered in 2027 and 2028, respectively – was built to match the size and speed of Matson’s existing Aloha class.

“We look forward to putting *Makua* to work serving our customers early next year,” said Matt Cox, Matson chairman and chief executive officer. “We’re excited that adding three new Aloha class ships to Matson’s fleet over the next 18 months will improve operating

efficiencies and reliability, and increase capacity in our core Hawaii service, as well as our China-Long Beach Express service. And we’re proud that building them here supports hundreds of good-paying shipyard jobs and will provide more than 2,500 job opportunities for U.S. mariners over the lifespan of each ship.”

A month earlier, the *Allied Atlantic* (Federated Maritime) was flagged in under the Stars and Stripes during a ceremony in South Korea. The vessel, operating under a Military Sealift Command (MSC) charter, is an outright addition to the fleet, bringing new jobs and sealift capability with it. The contract was negotiated by SIU Asst. Vice President Kris Hopkins and ratified by the membership shortly thereafter.

Around that time, the *Montauk* (Sealift) also was reflagged into the U.S. Registry, bringing with it new, good-paying union jobs for SIU members. The vessel was reflagged in Lithuania, at which time it was crewed by Seafarers and entered into service.

Also in September, the *ARC Freedom* was added to SIU-contracted American Roll-On/Roll-Off Carrier Group’s existing fleet of vessels. The ship entered the Maritime Security Program (MSP) as the replacement tonnage for the retiring *ARC Liberty*.

“Adding the *ARC Freedom* to the U.S.-flag fleet is a major win for America’s national security. As a member of the Maritime Security Program, this vessel will deliver the rapid response our military depends on to keep America safe. ARC continues to be a vital partner in ensuring the American merchant marine remains strong and prepared,” said Capt. Stephen M. Carmel, Administrator of the Maritime Administration (MARAD) at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

As of press time, the *ARC United* had also been flagged in, replacing the similarly retiring *ARC Resolve*. Both ships will retain their SIU jobs, ensuring a smooth transition.



The crew of the *Montauk* pose with the Sealift flag.



Lt. Gen. Jered P. Helwig, Deputy Commander of USTRANSCOM, speaks during the christening ceremony for the *Makua*.



The crew of the newly-reflagged *ARC Freedom*.



Taken during the christening ceremony of the *Makua*. (Photo courtesy of Matson)



The *Allied Atlantic*. (Photo by mgklingsick@aol.com via VesselFinder)

SIU President: Attacks Against Jones Act 'Should Concern Every Maritime Nation'

Addressing convention delegates from the Norwegian Seafarers' Union (NSU), SIU President David Heindel underscored the urgent fight to protect the Jones Act – a battle that should resonate around the world.

Heindel spoke at the NSU Congress in Oslo on Sept. 22, where he represented both the SIU and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). SIU Secretary-Treasurer Tom Orzechowski, who serves in several capacities for the ITF, also participated in the gathering.

After detailing the U.S. domestic maritime industry's efforts to uphold the nation's freight cabotage law in the face of controversial waivers, Heindel stated, "The lesson extends well beyond the United States. If a cabotage law as established as the Jones Act can be weakened through broad and repeated waivers, then no nation's cabotage protections should be taken for granted."

The Trump administration in mid-March issued a 60-day waiver that was followed by a 90-day extension and then another 90-day waiver currently set to expire in mid-November.

"The American domestic maritime industry has been deeply frustrated by this course of action," said Heindel. "By our count, the waiver has resulted in more than 200 domestic voyages being handled by foreign-flag vessels. We maintain that many of those cargoes could have been carried by American crews aboard American tonnage."

"Those are not theoretical losses," he continued. "They represent jobs, wages, training opportunities and commercial experience taken away from American mariners. They also affect future investment, because companies are less likely to order new ships when they cannot be confident that domestic cargo will remain available to them."

The administration's stated rationale for the waivers simply doesn't stand up to scrutiny, Heindel noted before adding, "We have also seen waiver applications submitted even when American vessels or other domestic transportation solutions were available. What began as an emergency measure has increasingly been used for routine, recurring commercial

transportation. That should concern every maritime nation."

Further crystalizing the risks of giving away domestic maritime sovereignty, the SIU president relayed that in September, two senior U.S. administration officials alleged that concealed equipment aboard ships operated by China's state-owned COSCO had been used to collect military communications and maritime intelligence near foreign coastlines, including those of the United States.

"Regardless of how those allegations are ultimately resolved, they underscore the strategic risks that arise when foreign state-linked shipping companies become deeply embedded in another nation's trade and transportation networks," Heindel said. "To us, those risks support maintaining national control over domestic commerce – not opening more coastwise cargo to foreign operators. That is why maritime labor must remain aggressive in building and maintaining political, public and industry support for the laws



SIU President David Heindel addresses the Norwegian Seafarers' Union gathering in Oslo.

and programs that sustain our fleets, shipyards and mariners."

Addressing another major concern, Heindel said that the war involving Iran has created grave dangers for the entire seagoing workforce.

"It is a complex and prolonged conflict, but the ITF has worked with affiliates, employers and governments around the world to protect crews and secure appropriate compensation and rights for seafarers operating in dangerous areas," he stated. "The same principle applies in the Russia-Ukraine war, and every other conflict: Civilian seafarers and transport workers should not be killed, injured or treated as expendable participants in wars they did not create. They deserve clear information, proper protections, fair compensation and the right to refuse work in designated warlike or high-risk areas."

Heindel serves as chair of the ITF Seafarers' Section. The federation itself consists of hundreds of worldwide affiliates (including the SIU) with a collective membership of approximately 16.6 million transport workers.

The Jones Act requires that cargo moving between U.S. ports is carried aboard vessels that are crewed, built, flagged and owned American. It has protected U.S. national, economic and homeland security for more than a century, and is considered the key foundational piece of American maritime.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg Government recently reported that foreign vessel operators have moved petroleum products between U.S. ports without complying with the waiver's reporting requirements. Specifically, Bloomberg Government identified at least a dozen foreign-flagged vessels that moved more than \$40 million in petroleum products from the Gulf Coast to the East Coast, West Coast, and Puerto Rico without appearing in the statutorily required public reporting.

Jennifer Carpenter, president of the coalition American Maritime Partnership (the SIU is a member), stated, "It's outrageous that foreign operators are not reporting their movements under the Jones Act waiver. Reporting is specifically required by law, which was emphasized in the U.S. Customs and Border Protection notice of the waiver. It begs the question of what other U.S. laws – like immigration, taxation, and labor – are not being followed by foreign vessels using the waiver. It's time for the administration to end the waiver, and it's also time for Congress to conduct vigorous oversight of the waiver process."

New Study Reveals Firms Spent at Least \$1.7 Billion on Union-Busting Last Year

Editor's note: The following article, edited for local style, is reprinted with permission from the Press Associates union news service.

The nation's corporations spent \$1.7 billion on union-busters last year – and that figure is an understatement.

A new report from LaborLab, which mined the data it received from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) and from forms the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) requires such "persuaders" to file, breaks down the sum into \$1.5 billion for "union avoidance" law firms, who can charge up to thousands of dollars a day for their services, and \$200 million more for "consulting fees."

The understatement occurs for two reasons. One is straightforward: Though the union-busters must report to the DOL their expenses for services to companies, 57% of them leave the "fees" box on the department's required LM-20 form blank.

The second is a big loophole in the 1959 Landrum-Griffin (Labor-Management Relations and Disclosure) Act. That law requires unions and union-sponsored organizations – such as central labor councils and health and welfare funds – to itemize, and publicly post, all their expenses down to the penny, covering everything from paychecks for their executive directors to paper clips.

Union-busters, and corporations, don't have to be as specific as unions must be. And if the union-busters just give "advice" to employers, they don't have to report at all.

And since the "advice" often comes with a wink-wink-nod-nod from the union-buster about breaking

labor laws and the weak penalties for doing so, a lot of union-buster spending escapes disclosure.

LaborLab, like EPI before it, paints a picture of a lucrative and burgeoning industry designed specifically to prevent workers from organizing to protect themselves, by unions or otherwise. LaborLab's report on the union-busters, and interactive tools for workers, is available online at www.laborlab.us

The "persuaders" fees start at \$400 an hour per lawyer and spiral upwards into the thousands of dollars per hour and millions of dollars in spending. And firms hire union-busters to "advise" on how to battle workers in 71%-87% of organizing drives, depending on the industry involved.

The champion corporate spender last year on union busters and against organizing was Amazon. Owned by Jeff Bezos, one of the U.S.'s three richest people and who still controls most of the company's Class I stock, Amazon shelled out \$26.64 million to union-busters in 2025 alone.

It's also been battling its 5,500 workers at its JFK1 warehouse on Staten Island, New York, for four years or more, ever since deaths and illnesses from the coronavirus pandemic, and Amazon's refusal to share information, drove them to vote in the independent Amazon Labor Union (ALU). The ALU is now a semi-independent Teamsters sector.

Amazon, Elon Musk's Tesla and SpaceX and other firms are also funding an anti-National Labor Relations Board lawsuit, pending at the Trump-appointed-dominated Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of

Appeals in New Orleans. It challenges the constitutionality of the NLRB and the act that created it.

There were three main union-busting firms last year, a separate table from EPI shows.

Los Angeles-based Littler Mendelson took more labor law cases as a percentage of its total business (5.7%) and had one of every six of its lawyers working on them. It garnered \$58.6 million from them.

Littler Mendelson also got heavily involved in anti-worker referendums in California, notably the win by Uber, Lyft and Door Dash overturning a state law which made their drivers "employees" eligible for unionizing, returning them to being "independent contractors."

Ogletree-Deakins was second in percentage of labor cases as part of its total business (4%), but ahead of Littler in percentage of attorneys working on them (19.1%) and in revenue, \$68.9 million.

Jackson Lewis was third in all the categories: labor case percentage (3.6%), share of attorneys working on them (14.2%) and revenue from them (\$49.6 million).

While the study does not make the point, for firms like Amazon, even union-buster fees of thousands of dollars a day cost less than the profits they would "lose" if they actually agreed to unionization and reached contracts with their workers.

What is unquantifiable is that unionized firms have more productive workers, less turnover and better morale, ultimately producing higher profits for bosses than their non-union counterparts. Those workers contribute proportionately more to the local and national economy,

Continued on Page 17

At Sea & Ashore with the SIU



ABOARD AMERICAN ENERGY – During a recent meeting aboard the Intrepid ship, members and officials discussed the importance of the Jones Act. Pictured in the posed group photo are SA Brianna Ortiz, Chief Cook Simone Smith, Oiler Juan Martinez, Safety Director Ricky Rivera, Electrician Dominic Jones, ABM Ronald McCray, Wiper/Apprentice Jade Frehner, ABG Monasser Ali, ABM Victor Cortes, Recertified Bosun Ion Irimia, Recertified Steward Jacob Parrilla, Oiler Richard Vega, and ABM Jan Jalloh. SIU Asst. VP Amancio Crespo is standing at far right in the other photo, with Safety Director Rivera.



ABOARD EL COQUI – Pictured aboard the Intrepid vessel are (front) Capt. Nick St. Jean and Electrician Rodney Passapera.



ABOARD ATB MILLVILLE – Many thanks to Recertified Bosun Billy Yurick and Second Mate Jimmy Hargrove for these photos of the Stars and Stripes proudly displayed on the Key Marine vessel. American crews remain vital to our national, economic and homeland security.



DIVING INTO NAVITA – Bosun Harold Harper (foreground) registers on the National Maritime Center's new Navita platform to renew his credential. Admin. Asst. Caitlyn Wharton is pictured with him at the Honolulu hall.



WITH SEAFARERS IN HOUSTON – ABM Rony Guity Martinez (center in photo at left) and SA Mary Rochez (second from left in remaining photo) recently secured their respective B books at the Houston hall. Pictured from left with Martinez are SIU Patrolman Kirk Pegan and Safety Director Kevin Sykes. Pictured with Rochez are Pegan, SIU Port Agent J.B. Niday, and Sykes.



ABOARD JEAN ANNE – Pictured aboard the Pasha vessel are (from left) Safety Director Amber Akana, Steward/Baker Brittany Steward, and SIU VP Hazel Galbiso.



ABOARD KAMAINA HILA – Pictured from left aboard the Matson ship are Safety Director Amber Akana, Recertified Steward Emmanuel Laureta, Chief Cook Freddie Castro, and ACU Philip Valentine.



ABOARD MAERSK SUPERIOR – Pictured from left (standing) are ABM John Mbelwa, Chief Cook Nassr Ahmed, SIU Patrolman Victor Mak, Chief Cook William Fortner, ABM Terrance Paige, Steward/Baker Gilbert Allende, (front) AB Eric Johnson, Bosun Mohamed Alzawkari, and SA Nagi Alzaim. The *Superior* recently flagged in and replaced the *Maersk Denver* as part of the company's fleet renewal program.

At Sea & Ashore with the SIU



WELCOME ABOARD – Receiving their full books are Hunter Daisey (left) and Kevin Kuhne of the Association of Maryland Pilots. SIU Piney Point Port Agent Kelly Krick is at right.



WELCOME ABOARD IN PINEY POINT – ABM Michael Collins (center) receives his full book. He's pictured at the Seafarers-affiliated Paul Hall Center with SIU Port Agent Kelly Krick (left) and SIU Patrolman Jon Kavanagh.



ABOARD PERLA DEL CARIBE – Pictured from left aboard the TOTE vessel are Bosun Charles Ortiz, Chief Cook Fernando Marques, Safety Director Ricky Rivera, GUDE Julianne Perez, Recertified Steward Antonio Mendez, AB Jorge Soler, and Apprentice Maria Ortiz.



BOOKS GALORE IN NOROLK – Several Seafarers recently picked up their respective books at the hiring hall. Starting with photo at far left and continuing left to right: AB Kenneth Williams (right) secures his B book. He's pictured with SIU Patrolman Gabriel Rivera. QEE Shawn Smith (right) obtains his A-seniority book. He's pictured SIU Port Agent Josh Rawls. SA Tracey Ward receives her B book.



WELCOME ASHORE IN VIRGINIA – Chief Steward Robert Greenwood (right) picks up his first pension check at the hiring hall in Norfolk. He's pictured with SIU VP Sam Spain at the September membership meeting.



TALKING MARITIME IN DC – Starting with photo at left and continuing left to right, SIU personnel recently met with legislators to reiterate the importance of a strong U.S. Merchant Marine. In the first photo (from left): Brenda Otterson of the Seafarers-affiliated American Maritime Officers, U.S. Rep. Hillary Scholten (D-Michigan), and SIU Deputy Legislative Director Mario Torrey. In the second photo: Torrey, SIU VP Chris Westbrook, U.S. Rep Marylin Strickland (D-Washington), and SIU Asst. VP Michael Russo.



TAKING THE OATH IN FLORIDA – ABM Artavius Coco (left) and QMED Alfred Washington are sworn in for their respective B books during the October membership meeting in Jacksonville, Florida. SIU Port Agent Ashley Nelson is at right.



ABOARD SLNC SEVERN – Pictured from left in the galley photo are Steward/Baker Yohanes Pribadi and ACU Saeed Alasfor. In the Seafaring Selfie aboard the Argent Marine vessel are STOS Ian Elder, Bosun Jerald Isenbarger, SIU VP Hazel Galbiso, Pribadi and Alasfor.



ABOARD REDWOOD TRADER – Pictured aboard the U.S. Marine Management vessel are Bosun Brayen Crisanto, QMED Reny Arzu, QMED Anibal Lopes, AB Richard Russ, AB Alexandar Holmes, AB Dennis McLean, and Chief Steward Aaron Helton-Cox.

‘Mind At Sea’: ITF Campaign to Protect Mariners’ Mental Health Goes Global

On World Mental Health Day (Oct. 10), the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) launched a campaign “to bring wellbeing conversations into ship visits and press for stronger protections for seafarers and their families,” the federation announced.

The ITF further described the outreach, named Mind At Sea, as “a global mental health and suicide prevention campaign to help seafarers access support and make their wellbeing a routine part of ship visits.”

The SIU is an ITF affiliate. SIU President David Heindel is the longtime chair of the ITF Seafarers’ Section.

Mind At Sea kicked off in Sydney, Australia, carrying the message “It’s ok not to be ok,” and will run across multiple countries on different continents until early December.

“Life at sea can put enormous strain on seafarers, and too many still feel they have to keep that to themselves. We want every seafarer to know that it’s ok not to be ok, and to know where they can turn for help,” said ITF Wellbeing Program Coordinator Dr. Asif Altaf. “Our global network of ship inspectors and unions already talk to seafarers about their pay and working conditions. Mind At Sea will help make talking about mental health part of those conversations, so we can recognize when someone is struggling and connect them with the support they need.”

The ITF plans to run the campaign annually,

with the longer-term aim of including mental health and wellbeing in routine ship visits by all ITF inspectors. Initial activities will focus on selected countries across different continents.

The campaign will support the ITF’s longer-term goal of including suicide in death compensation provisions in all its collective bargaining agreements. It follows a commitment made by India’s Directorate General of Shipping at an ITF event in April 2025 to ensure compensation for all deaths on board Indian-flagged ships, including suicide, under new and existing agreements.

In announcing the campaign, the ITF noted,

“Seafarers’ mental health is a workplace health and safety issue, and it must be treated as one.”
-ITF Maritime Coordinator Jacqueline Smith

“Long periods away from family, isolation, fatigue and demanding working conditions can all affect seafarers’ wellbeing. A 2019 study by Yale University, funded by the ITF Seafarers’ Trust, surveyed 1,572 seafarers and found that 25% had scores suggesting depression. Twenty percent reported thoughts of being better off dead or of hurting themselves during the preceding two weeks.”

During participating ship visits, inspectors will be encouraged to hold informal wellbeing discussions of around 10–15 minutes, covering issues such as stress, fatigue, sleep and isolation, and where to get help. They will share campaign materials and promote the ITF Seafarers App, mental

health helplines and other assistance services.

Built around four actions – reflect, recognize, respond and reach out – the campaign will encourage open conversations and help seafarers recognize when they or a colleague may need support. ITF-affiliated unions will also be encouraged to develop peer support and share resources with seafarers’ families.

ITF Maritime Coordinator Jacqueline Smith said, “Seafarers’ mental health is a workplace health and safety issue, and it must be treated as one. Adequate rest, protection from bullying and access to professional help are essential to a healthy workplace.

“Shipowners and governments must do much more to protect seafarers from mental ill-health,” she continued. “Families who lose a loved one to suicide deserve support and financial protection – and we want to see death compensation for suicide included in all our collective bargaining agreements. This has been done in the Norwegian Seafarers’ Union’s cruise agreements, but it now needs to be the standard for all agreements, everywhere.”

The ITF has struck a series of agreements in recent years to expand its pioneering mental health work with transport workers, including partnerships with the governments of India, Indonesia and

the Philippines, and with Pertamina International Shipping. These cover mental health training and the development of support services for seafarers, dock workers, civil aviation and rail workers.



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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.

MARINER (Eco-Tankers Crew Management), May 17 – Chairman **Reny Arzu**, Secretary **Breon Lucas**, Educational Director **James Grant**, Deck Delegate **Yafet Antah**, Engine Delegate **Bertram Solomon**, Steward Delegate **Trason Glynn**. Secretary reminded crew to keep up with credentials. Educational director encouraged members to take advantage of the upgrading opportunities offered at the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, located in Piney Point, Maryland. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members would like more vacation and increases in eyeglass cost coverage. Crew discussed concerns regarding the extension of the Jones Act waiver. They also mentioned lack of penalty pay for trash or stores, plus no reimbursement for airport travel.

GOLDEN STATE (Intrepid Personnel & Provisioning), May 18 – Chairman **Orvin Mejia**, Secretary **Ashley Fabor**, Educational Director **Luis Sepulveda**, Deck Delegate **Abdulla Munassar Omar**, Engine Delegate **Melchor Lapac**, Steward Delegate **Awadh Abdulla**. Deep fryer and steam table needed in galley. Oven in need of repair. Chairman praised steward department for providing great food and doing a great job overall. Education director urged crew to upgrade at the Piney Point school. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members would like increases in vacation pay as well as increases

in health and retirement benefits. Crew discussed work boot reimbursement policy and requested company-matched 401k benefits.

MARINER (Eco-Tankers Crew Management), July 12 – Chairman **Reny Arzu**, Secretary **Breon Lucas**, Educational Director **Antonio Griffin**, Deck Delegate **Enrique Estipona**, Engine Delegate **Tony Washington**, Steward Delegate **John Chaney**. Secretary advised crew to update credentials as soon as realistically possible. Educational director encouraged members to take every chance they get to upgrade at the Paul Hall Center. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Crew requested new carpet installation during next shipyard period.

ALLIANCE NORFOLK (Maersk Line, Limited), July 19 – Chairman **Kenney Gaston**. All rooms in need of new mattresses. Educational director talked about upgrading at the Piney Point school and reiterated the importance of keeping documents updated. No beefs or disputed OT reported. New chairs and fans needed in all rooms. Members would like increases in vacation days, penalty rates and in eye and dental care coverage. They would like to reduce tour of duty to 120 days and increase danger pay to double the daily rate. Steward department was thanked for doing a good job preparing meals.

MARINER (Eco-Tankers Crew Man-

agement), August 9 – Chairman **Reny Arzu**, Secretary **Breon Lucas**, Engine Delegate **Tony Washington**, Steward Delegate **John Chaney**. Carpet still needs replacement as well as kitchen tile near GVA sink. New pillows, washcloths, towels, shower curtains and chairs needed. Chairman encouraged members to go to union for anything they may need. Secretary reminded members to keep trash separated. Educational director encouraged crew to upgrade their skills at the Paul Hall Center. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Crew requested new gym equipment and new cable network. Members would like vacation to be 20 for 30 with 45 days for eligibility instead of 60. Everyone is happy with the steward department.

LONE STAR STATE (Intrepid Personnel & Provisioning), August 30 – Chairman **Lionel Rivas**, Secretary **Cayetano Toledo**, Educational Director **Teon Shelton**, Deck Delegate **Collin Showers**. Chairman announced upcoming arrival in Lake Charles and thanked steward department for providing good food. He encouraged members to look out for one another, to stay hydrated and to follow the proper chain of command when reporting problems on board. Secretary thanked crew for keeping the house clean at all times. He reminded everyone to keep documents updated, to support the Jones Act and to contribute to SPAD (Seafarers Po-

litical Activity Donation, the union's voluntary political action fund). Educational director advised crew to set up 401k contributions and to take advantage of the upgrading opportunities offered at the Piney Point school. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members would like 18 for 30 vacation. Crew was thanked for a job well done taking stores and installing new dryer.

EVERGREEN STATE (Intrepid Personnel & Provisioning), September 1 – Chairman **John Cedeno**, Secretary **Craig Wooten**, Educational Director **Tyrone Ellis**. New mattresses and new dryers are needed. Satellite TV has not been functioning for months. Chairman addressed important updates regarding credential applications and pension plan improvements. He discussed union's statement on the second extension of the Jones Act waiver and reminded crew to stay hydrated. Members were encouraged to take 10-to-15-minute cooldown breaks in shaded areas during work hours. Secretary announced arrival of new linens, pillows and bathmats. Educational director urged crew to take upgrading courses offered at the Paul Hall Center and to keep up with credentials. He explained the importance and purposes of both Maritime Defense League (MDL) and SPAD donations. No beefs or disputed OT reported.

Know Your Rights

FINANCIAL REPORTS. The Constitution of the SIU Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters 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 District 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:

George Tricker, Chairman
Seafarers Appeals Board
5201 Capital Gateway Drive
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 David Heindel at headquarters by certified mail, return receipt requested. The address is:

David Heindel, President
Seafarers International Union
5201 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Jennifer Senner-Ceco

Editor's note: This article is the fifth in an occasional series featuring former SIU members who have gone up through the hawsepipe. Jennifer Senner-Ceco graduated from the Paul Hall Center's Apprentice Program in 2002. She sailed with the union until 2008 and later sailed as a deep-sea captain. She's currently a Supervisory Marine Transportation Specialist for the U.S. Navy.

Why did you enter the maritime industry?

To be honest, it wasn't something I had ever really considered; in fact, I hadn't even set foot on a ship until I was 25 years old. I had spent six years in the Air Force and was just trying to find my footing in the civilian world. I worked on expedition cruise ships for a year, then bounced over to private yachts.

Then, one day, I received a phone call from my uncle who essentially asked me what the hell I was doing with my life. He must have made a recommendation, because the next thing I knew, I got a call from the Seafarers International Union. Two weeks later, I found myself in Piney Point, Maryland, enrolled in their maritime training academy as a member of Class 622. I was 28 at the time, which was past the cutoff, but they waived the age limit for military veterans.

Because of my Air Force background, re-assimilating into the pseudo-military environment of the apprentice program was easy for me. But it was during my initial 90-day shipboard training phase that a switch flipped. I knew right then that I wanted to be in the deck department and eventually become an officer. From that moment on, it was never a question to do anything else.

What do you remember about your years sailing with the SIU? At what point did you decide to pursue a license?

My time sailing with the SIU was where the foundation was laid. I actually knew during my Phase II apprentice training that I was going to get my license one day. The subsequent years I spent working on deck as an ordinary seaman (OS) and able seaman (AB) only reaffirmed that decision.

During those early years, I experienced a wild spectrum of personalities in every captain, mate, and bosun I sailed under – and occasionally, I encountered multiple personalities within the exact same individual! Observing how they ran their ships taught me a lot about the kind of leader I wanted to be.

What I loved most about those SIU years was the freedom. I enjoyed the flexibility to choose which vessels to work on and which operating companies to sail with. But more than anything, sailing gave me a genuine sense of purpose. At the end of the day, I just thought it was a really cool job to have.

Without any false bravado, prior participants in this series have indicated that earning a license, while properly challenging, isn't unreasonably difficult if you prepare. How does that align with your experience going up the hawsepipe? Is it something that pretty much anyone with the right mindset can do?

I completely agree that it's not unreasonably difficult, but you have to be willing to put in the work. For context, I didn't go to college; I graduated high school, and that was it. I certainly don't consider myself a naturally 'book-smart' person, especially when it comes to math.

Because of that, I'm not going to give the cliché answer of, 'If I can do it, anyone can.' It really just comes down to one thing: how much a person wants it.

In 2007, the American Maritime Officers (AMO) union sponsored me for my upgrade to third mate. I submitted my application, gathered my letters of recommendation, and was approved. I then spent four intense months at the AMO school in Toledo, Ohio, completing all the prerequisite classes. Honestly, some of those classes were a massive struggle for me. But because I wanted that license, I put in the time. I spent another few months just grinding and studying, and I successfully passed my license exams in mid-2008.

What are some of the main differences you experienced when sailing in unlicensed capacities versus sailing as an officer?

It really boils down to two things: accountability and responsibility.

When you are sailing in an unlicensed capacity, your focus is primarily on the physical execution of the job – working hard, keeping the ship running, and doing your part of the labor. But the moment you step up and become an officer, the weight of the ship shifts onto your shoulders. Suddenly, there is an immense sense of 'all eyes on you' for every single decision you make, good or bad.

As an officer, you aren't just responsible for your own tasks anymore; you are responsible for the safety of the entire crew, the integrity of the cargo, and the millions of dollars of steel beneath you. Every decision you make is scrutinized, and in the tight-knit maritime world, your reputation definitely precedes you. If you make a bad call, word travels fast before you even step foot on your next ship. That shift from hands-on worker to ultimate decision-maker is a massive mental transition.

What are some reasons you've stuck with the industry?

I've always enjoyed the time off, which is probably the most common answer you'll get from any mariner. It's a double-edged sword, of course – nobody enjoys missing family events or important moments back home. But having four to five months



Former Seafarer Jennifer Senner-Ceco sailed until 2024 and now works for the Navy.

completely off at a stretch is a lifestyle you can't find in a standard 9-to-5. When you couple that unique freedom with good money, it's a win-win.

At this point, it's also just who I am. Now, 25 years after that wake-up call from my uncle, ships and maritime-related logistics are all I know. It's a challenging life, but it's a good one.

What was one of your most memorable voyages, and what made it so?

In January 2020, I was commanding the *USNS Benavidez* when the vessel was activated for a mission to Northern Europe. It was my very first activation as master. Anyone who has ever gone through a rapid military activation knows just how incredibly intense and high-pressure that process is.

We got underway exactly as planned. But less than an hour after dropping the harbor pilot off, a call blared over the IMC – the ship's general PA system: 'Fire in the engine room.'

I ran up to the bridge, but just before opening the door, I forced myself to stop. I took a brief second to collect my thoughts and compose my face, knowing that whatever energy I brought into that room would set the tone for the entire ship. I opened the door, everyone turned to look at me, and we immediately went to work. We handled the emergency exactly the way we had all been trained to do. Nobody panicked, the crew handled themselves superbly, and we resolved the issue safely.



Senner-Ceco is pictured third from left, in front, with her Piney Point classmates



Sailing as an OS aboard the *SS Wright*

In Their Own Words: Seafarers Rising Through the Ranks



Celebrating her promotion to vessel master with Maersk Line, Limited personnel at the company's office

We resumed the voyage down one engine, but we made it to Texas. After departing Texas, the ship suffered numerous other engineering casualties. To make things even more intense, our vessel was taking part in the first tactical convoy since the Cold War. Then, right as we arrived in Europe, COVID-19 shut the world down. We ended up stuck in the Netherlands for over a month with the crew entirely restricted to the ship.

On the return voyage, the hits just kept coming. We had a medical emergency that required a MEDEVAC. We had to turn the ship around, pull into Lisbon, Portugal, and complete a shipboard transfer to get the individual to a hospital (thankfully, they turned out to be completely fine). That was my very first voyage as master, and it was certainly one I will never forget.

Our industry seemingly only gets attention during times of crisis. What's something you wish more people knew about American maritime?

Honestly? I wish more people knew that we actually exist.

The average person has no idea about the massive network of deep-sea ships, Great Lakes freighters, coastal tankers, tugs, and ferries operating every single day. People walk into a store, buy what they need, and assume those items on the shelves just magically appeared there.

The reality is that our entire modern way of life relies on an invisible fleet of mariners working in quiet, grueling conditions to keep the global supply chain moving. We are the backbone of both commerce and national defense, but we only get talked about when a ship gets stuck in a canal or a crisis hits. I wish people realized that even on the quietest, most normal days, we are out there delivering the world.

What advice would you give to someone who's considering entering the industry or has already taken the very first steps in that direction?

My biggest piece of advice is to understand that there are no unnecessary jobs on board a ship.



Meeting with U.S. Army personnel aboard the *USNS Fisher* in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

One of the things I've noticed over the past 10 years is that some people will accept an entry-level position, but the moment they are asked to actually perform the duties of that role, they become argumentative and refuse. The galley needs cleaning, the engine room needs oil wiped up, and the rust on deck needs busting.

Anyone who has worked their way up the hawsepipe has done all of those exact jobs. I cleaned toilets, I soogeed the bulkheads, and I took out the trash. But I viewed each of those tasks as a stepping stone. I did them, I upgraded, and then I upgraded again.

Of course, nobody wants to be cleaning all the time. But it's the position you're in right now. Keep your head down, stay out of the shipboard drama, and do the job with a decent attitude. Get your sea time in, learn everything you can, and move on to the next level.

We are running a separate series titled "SIU Women at Sea," aimed at encouraging our seafaring sisters to view the maritime industry as a viable career while being candid about the gender-specific challenges that exist in a mostly male field. Have you experienced those types of trials and, if so, how did you handle them?

While the industry is certainly not where it needs to be yet, I have seen the on-board culture toward women change for the better since I started in 2001.

Earlier in my career, I experienced the worst of it – I was sexually assaulted, verbally abused, and received threats. As I upgraded and gained rank, the nature of the hostility shifted from physical threats to professional ones, with people trying to undermine my authority. Through all of it, my response was to keep doing my job to the absolute best of my ability. I let my performance speak for itself, kept earning promotions, and simply refused to be driven out. I stuck it out.

But the real shift happened when I began sailing as master. For the first time, I was finally in a position of authority where I could actually do something about the hostile behavior. I made it abundantly clear to my crews that harassment of any kind would not be tolerated on my ship, and that those shenanigans were over. Going from trying to survive that environment to having the power to protect the next generation of female mariners has been one of the most meaningful parts of my career.



In the bosun's chair as a Phase II apprentice, aboard *Sealand Defender*

Your current work title is a long one. How did you end up with this gig, what does a typical day look like, and how does it compare to sailing?

In 2023, I sold my house, my car, and pretty much everything I owned to go gallivanting around Europe, completely unsure of what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. Call it a mid-life crisis, I suppose. Anyway, I happened to be poking around on USAJobs and came across a posting for this position in Naples, Italy. I thought it sounded interesting, submitted my resume, and promptly forgot about it.

A few months later, I was taking a maritime training class at the AMO STAR Center when I received an email asking for an interview the very next day. I did the interview, and four days later, I had a job offer. That essentially made the decision for me on whether or not I was going back to sea.

My current title – Supervisory Marine Transportation Specialist – is definitely a mouthful, but my actual job is essentially being the orchestra conductor for the Navy's support fleet across Europe and Africa. Instead of being the master of a single ship, I'm now shore-side, directing a massive, moving puzzle of cargo vessels, oilers, and ocean tugs. A typical day involves looking at the big picture: I work with military planners to match the right ship to the right mission, oversee commercial ship charters, and manage the team of experts that keeps all these operations running smoothly.

Compared to sailing as a master, it's a complete shift in perspective. When you're a ship's captain, your entire universe is the steel beneath your feet, your crew, and safely navigating from point A to point B. It's highly tactical and hands-on. In my current gig, the scope is much broader. I'm no longer dealing with the immediate challenges of the sea on one hull; instead, I'm coordinating the logistics, routing, and readiness for dozens of vessels across two continents. I still get out of the office to do hands-on ship inspections, which keeps me connected to the deck plates, but my primary focus now is strategic – making sure our military forces always have the maritime support they need, exactly when and where they need it.

Feel Free to Add Any Other Thoughts

Looking back, I certainly made my share of bonehead mistakes and bad decisions over the years, and I'm fully aware that some people reading this article will remember those moments. But I like to think we all learn and grow from our past.

As I progressed through my career, I made it my mission to be the kind of captain my crew felt comfortable with. On a ship, the little things matter. I made it a strict priority to learn everyone's name within a few days of them signing on board, and I strove to be as fair and transparent as possible.

I've sailed with far too many chief mates and masters who purposely kept the crew in the dark about schedules, crew changes, or other critical details. I never did that. I believed my crew deserved to know what was going on. My goal was always to lead with openness, treat people with respect, and build a ship where everyone knew they were part of the team.



With fellow officers and crew on the *USNS Benavidez*

David Heindel, President

Augustin Tellez, Executive Vice President

Tom Orzechowski, Secretary-Treasurer

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(310) 549-4000

Inquiring Seafarer

This month's question was answered by a group of upgraders present at the September 2026 membership meeting in Piney Point, Maryland.

Question: How did you first hear about the SIU?



Brenda Gonzales
OMU

My mom sails and I heard about the SIU through her. She was a part of Class 771, and I think she's been at it for 15 or 16 years now. She loves what she does and that encouraged me to enroll.



Rony Lacayo
Oiler

I heard about SIU through my cousin Oscar Lacayo Ruiz, who sails.



Alexis Gordon Brown
OMU

My cousin, who is a chief steward, told me about the SIU. He's been sailing for 25 years and is still going. I'm going on three years sailing myself.



Randall Cox
OMU

I'm from Charleston, and there are a lot of seafarers in Charleston. There's no hall, but you see a lot of officers and unlicensed. Anywhere I go, when I say I'm a mariner it's not big news because everybody knows what it means and what I do.



Marshod Hawkins
GUDE

I first heard about the SIU through social media. I was searching for offshore jobs because I have access to the ports in Houston, because I have a CDL and I have a trucking company. I was trying to see how to actually start working on ships.



Gerald Joseph
Chief Cook

I heard about it through my dad, but my whole family sails. My dad has since retired but my brother still sails as an AB and my son just started sailing a few years back. I've been sailing now for 26 years.

Pic from the Past



Pictured aboard the *Delta Bolivia* in 1978 are Seafarers Billy Edelson, John Davis, Hector De Jesus, Michael Rolle, Vernon Douglas, James Barclay, and Darry Sanders.



November & December Membership Meetings

Piney Point	Monday: Nov. 2, Dec. 7
Algonac	Thursday: Nov. 12, Dec. 17
Baltimore	Thursday: Nov. 5, Dec. 10
Guam	Thursday: Nov. 19, Dec. 24
Honolulu	Friday: Nov. 13, Dec. 18
Houston	Monday: Nov. 9, Dec. 14
Jacksonville	Thursday: Nov. 5, Dec. 10
Joliet	Thursday: Nov. 12, Dec. 17
Mobile	Thursday: Nov. 12, Wednesday: Dec. 16,
New Orleans	Tuesday: Nov. 10, Dec. 15
Jersey City	Tuesday: Nov. 3, Dec. 8
Norfolk	Friday: Nov. 6, Dec. 11
Oakland	Thursday: Nov. 12, Dec. 17
Philadelphia	Wednesday: Nov. 4, Dec. 9
Port Everglades	Thursday: Nov. 12, Dec. 17
San Juan	Thursday: Nov. 5, Dec. 10
St. Louis	Friday: Nov. 13, Dec. 18
Tacoma	Friday: Nov. 20, Monday: Dec. 28
Wilmington	Monday: Nov. 16, Dec. 21

Meeting date changed due to holiday observance
Each port's meeting starts at 10:30 a.m.

Dispatchers' Report for Deep Sea

"Total Registered" and "Total Shipped" data is cumulative from September 14, 2026 - October 13, 2026.
"Registered on the Beach" data is as of October 14, 2026.

Port	Total Registered All Groups			Total Shipped All Groups			Trip Reliefs	Registered on Beach All Groups		
	A	B	C	A	B	C		A	B	C
Deck Department										
Algonac	18	11	2	20	10	0	5	19	11	2
Anchorage	1	0	1	3	0	1	2	2	1	1
Baltimore	2	9	1	5	4	0	4	5	7	2
Fort Lauderdale	15	23	10	18	10	4	10	19	25	14
Guam	3	1	1	3	1	2	1	5	2	0
Harvey	8	7	3	7	3	2	4	15	6	9
Honolulu	8	2	0	3	2	0	1	10	2	1
Houston	21	24	13	17	22	4	6	54	26	18
Jacksonville	36	32	12	23	32	9	22	50	43	11
Jersey City	18	10	1	11	6	0	8	32	14	4
Joliet	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	2	1
Mobile	6	5	0	6	3	0	2	10	8	3
Norfolk	17	22	8	19	15	5	12	30	20	8
Oakland	7	3	0	3	4	0	2	10	3	4
Philadelphia	4	1	0	3	0	1	0	4	3	0
Piney Point	1	4	0	0	1	0	1	2	3	0
Puerto Rico	6	4	2	3	5	0	2	10	3	4
St. Louis	4	5	1	0	0	0	0	4	4	1
Tacoma	15	9	1	17	5	0	4	29	11	2
Wilmington	22	14	6	19	9	2	11	54	20	7
TOTAL	213	187	63	180	132	31	97	367	214	92
Engine Department										
Algonac	2	5	0	6	2	1	2	7	4	0
Anchorage	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	1
Baltimore	4	5	1	4	2	1	3	5	4	1
Fort Lauderdale	6	6	3	8	8	0	5	6	9	3
Guam	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	1
Harvey	3	2	1	3	1	2	2	3	2	1
Honolulu	5	1	1	2	1	2	2	9	2	0
Houston	3	15	8	5	8	2	4	15	16	11
Jacksonville	25	26	2	13	19	0	7	34	32	3
Jersey City	8	7	0	8	4	0	2	10	9	1
Joliet	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
Mobile	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	7	2	0
Norfolk	18	10	5	13	10	4	4	23	15	8
Oakland	3	3	3	2	0	1	0	6	5	2
Philadelphia	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0
Piney Point	2	2	0	2	3	0	1	2	1	0
Puerto Rico	6	2	0	2	3	0	1	6	2	0
St. Louis	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0
Tacoma	5	4	0	6	4	0	6	14	8	0
Wilmington	14	5	2	13	3	2	8	19	7	4
TOTAL	116	95	27	93	70	16	48	174	121	36
Steward Department										
Algonac	1	0	0	5	1	0	1	4	0	1
Anchorage	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Baltimore	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
Fort Lauderdale	10	8	1	5	7	0	3	11	5	1
Guam	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Harvey	7	4	0	2	0	0	0	6	3	0
Honolulu	8	2	1	2	1	0	1	11	2	1
Houston	14	7	5	13	8	3	2	15	13	4
Jacksonville	22	14	5	16	17	1	10	29	26	8
Jersey City	8	5	0	7	6	1	4	9	3	1
Joliet	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Mobile	2	2	0	1	2	0	1	3	3	0
Norfolk	11	4	2	6	9	3	3	23	10	1
Oakland	8	6	1	4	1	0	1	14	8	1
Philadelphia	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	4	0
Piney Point	1	2	0	0	4	0	1	3	1	1
Puerto Rico	7	3	1	4	2	0	0	8	6	1
St. Louis	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Tacoma	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	8	5	2
Wilmington	18	4	0	16	6	1	10	35	11	5
TOTAL	124	68	18	84	69	10	40	185	104	27
Entry Department										
Algonac	0	15	9	1	5	2	2	0	16	12
Anchorage	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Baltimore	0	4	0	0	1	1	1	0	5	0
Fort Lauderdale	1	9	10	0	8	5	1	1	7	12
Guam	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Harvey	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	7	3
Honolulu	0	1	4	0	0	2	0	0	3	8
Houston	1	15	7	3	7	2	2	2	29	15
Jacksonville	1	29	55	0	25	15	1	2	44	84
Jersey City	0	18	8	0	8	4	3	2	21	14
Joliet	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	2
Mobile	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	4
Norfolk	0	19	34	0	12	17	0	0	23	67
Oakland	0	3	4	0	7	5	0	0	12	14
Philadelphia	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Piney Point	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	1
Puerto Rico	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
St. Louis	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Tacoma	2	3	6	3	4	1	2	1	6	8
Wilmington	2	9	15	0	12	15	0	2	9	43
TOTAL	8	138	159	8	95	70	16	11	188	291
GRAND TOTAL	461	488	267	365	366	127	201	737	627	446

Welcome Ashore!

We pay tribute to our brothers and sisters of the SIU who have recently retired. THANK YOU for a job well done and we wish you fair winds and following seas.

DEEP SEA

HASSAIN AHMED

Brother Hassain Ahmed, 65, joined the union in 1991, initially sailing aboard the *Independence*. He worked in the steward department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Brother Ahmed last shipped on the *Charger* and lives in Dearborn, Michigan.

STEVEN ANTHONY

Brother Steven Anthony, 66, started sailing with the SIU in 1978 and first worked on the *Overseas Ulla*. He shipped primarily in the deck department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on numerous occasions. Brother Anthony concluded his career aboard the *Gopher State*. He resides in Arverne, New York.



ALBERT BALATICO

Brother Albert Balatico, 66, became a member of the union in 1990 when he sailed aboard the *USNS Assertive*. He sailed in the deck department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Brother Balatico concluded his career aboard the *Potomac Express*. He makes his home in Mandeville, Louisiana.



ADRIANO DADULO

Brother Adriano Dadulo, 65, joined the Seafarers International Union in 2004. He first sailed aboard the *Paul Buck* and was a member of the deck department. Brother Dadulo last sailed aboard the *Matson Tacoma* and settled in Rochester, Washington.



RODNEY DAVIS

Brother Rodney Davis, 77, embarked on his career with the SIU in 1990 when he sailed on the *Independence*. He shipped in the deck department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on several occasions. Brother Davis most recently shipped on the *USNS Mary Sears*. He lives in The Philippines.



FRANCES DVOROZNAK

Sister Frances Dvoroznak, 73, signed on with the union in 2000. She initially sailed aboard the *William Baugh* and worked in the steward department. Sister Dvoroznak upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. She last shipped on the *Dewayne T. Williams* and is a resident of Rockport, Texas.



CRISELDO ESPINOSA

Brother Criseldo Espinosa, 65, started sailing with the SIU in 2000 when he shipped on the *HMI Dynachem*. He sailed in the engine department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Brother Espinosa's final vessel was the *Seakay Star*. He makes his home in Kent, Washington.



MAURICIO FERNANDEZ

Brother Mauricio Fernandez, 65, began his career with the Seafarers International Union in 2001. A steward department member, he first sailed aboard the *Patriot*. Brother Fernandez upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. He most recently shipped on the *Garden State* and is a Miami resident.



RAFAEL FRANCO

Brother Rafael Franco, 62, began sailing with the Seafarers in 1991 and first worked with Crowley Puerto Rico Services. He shipped in the deck department and upgraded often at the Piney Point school. Brother Franco concluded his career on the *Taino* and settled in Caguas, Puerto Rico.



FELIX GARCIA-ARCE

Brother Felix Garcia-Arce, 81, became a member of the SIU in 2012 when he shipped on the *Delta Mariner*. Brother Garcia-Arce upgraded on multiple occasions at the Paul Hall Center and worked in the deck department. He most recently sailed aboard the *Green Wave*. Brother Garcia-Arce is a Miami resident.



RUBEN GONZALEZ RIVERA

Brother Ruben Gonzalez Rivera, 65, began sailing with the Seafarers in 2000. He was a deck department member and first shipped on the *Cape Johnson*. Brother Gonzalez Rivera upgraded his skills at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. He last sailed on the *Maersk Texas* and lives in Levittown, Puerto Rico.

ROBERT GREENWOOD

Brother Robert Greenwood, 65, joined the union in 2005 and first sailed aboard the *USNS Watson*. He was a member of the steward department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Greenwood most recently shipped on the *USNS Red Cloud* and resides in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



TIMOTHY HEIL

Brother Timothy Heil, 65, donned the SIU colors in 2006 when he sailed aboard the *Edward A. Carter Jr.* He upgraded often at the Paul Hall Center and worked in the deck department. Brother Heil concluded his career aboard the *Baldomero Lopez* and resides in Palmetto, Florida.



WILLIAM HUMPHREY

Brother William Humphrey, 61, became an SIU member in 1990. He was a deck department member and upgraded on multiple occasions at the Piney Point school. Brother Humphrey's first vessel was the *USNS Chauvenet*; his last, the *Cape Race*. He makes his home in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.



JERRY JOHNSON

Brother Jerry Johnson, 65, joined the union in 1980. He first shipped on the *El Paso Savannah* and sailed in the engine department. Brother Johnson upgraded at the union-affiliated Piney Point school on multiple occasions and last sailed aboard the *Virgo*. He resides in Shoreline, Washington.



CORNELL KNOX

Brother Cornell Knox, 65, embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 2000. He first sailed aboard the *USNS Red Cloud* and worked in the engine department. Brother Knox upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. He last sailed aboard the *Courage* and makes his home in College Park, Maryland.



DAMON LOBEL

Brother Damon Lobel, 65, signed on with the SIU in 1991 when he sailed aboard the *Lawrence Gianella*. He shipped in the deck department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Brother Lobel's final vessel was the *Maersk Atlanta*. He resides in Navarre, Florida.



FERNANDO LOPES

Brother Fernando Lopes, 67, began sailing with the Seafarers in 2001. A steward department member, he first sailed aboard the *Chelsea*. Brother Lopes upgraded on numerous occasions at the Paul Hall Center. He last sailed aboard the *Hawaii* and settled in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.



WILFREDO LOPEZ

Brother Wilfredo Lopez, 68, donned the SIU colors in 2013. He worked as an engine department member, initially aboard the *Pride of America*. Brother Lopez upgraded often at the Piney Point school. He most recently shipped aboard the *Jack Lummus* and lives in The Philippines.



CHARLES MCPHERSON

Brother Charles McPherson, 65, started sailing with the union in 1985, initially working with Delta Queen Steamboat Company. He sailed in the deck department and last shipped on the *Liberty Sun*. Brother McPherson makes his home in Lithonia, Georgia.

DARYL MOORE

Brother Daryl Moore, 71, joined the SIU in 2005. He first shipped on the *Westward Venture* and worked in the engine department. Brother Moore last shipped on the *USNS Pathfinder*. He resides in Cordova, South Carolina.

Welcome Ashore!

We pay tribute to our brothers and sisters of the SIU who have recently retired. THANK YOU for a job well done and we wish you fair winds and following seas.

DANIEL MURLEY

Brother Daniel Murley, 65, embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 1989. He first sailed with OSG Ship Management and was a member of the deck department. Brother Murley upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions and concluded his career aboard the *Maersk Atlanta*. He lives in Dedham, Maine.



SCOTT SEILER

Brother Scott Seiler, 67, became a member of the union in 1978. He worked in the deck department, initially with CSX Lines. Brother Seiler upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. His last vessel was the *Capricorn*. He resides in Kearneysville, West Virginia.

JERRY SOBIERAJ

Brother Jerry Sobieraj, 68, joined the Seafarers International Union in 2001 and first sailed aboard the *Maersk Maine*. He upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions and worked in the deck department. Brother Sobieraj concluded his career aboard the *Liberty Power*. He makes his home in Mineral Wells, West Virginia.

MEDARDO THOMAS

Brother Medardo Thomas, 62, donned the SIU colors in 1999. He first sailed aboard the *Cape Jacob* and was a steward department member. Brother Thomas upgraded his skills at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions and most recently shipped aboard the *Endurance*. He lives in Spring, Texas.



RONALDO TORRES

Brother Ronaldo Torres, 65, signed on with the union in 1997. He worked in the steward department and upgraded on numerous occasions at the union-affiliated Piney Point school. Brother Torres's first vessel was the *McDonnell*; his last, the *Maersk Iowa*. He resides in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



WILLIAM WINNETT

Brother William Winnett, 65, joined the Seafarers in 2000, initially sailing aboard the *Prudhoe Bay*. A deck department member, he upgraded on multiple occasions at the Paul Hall Center. Brother Winnett's final vessel was the *Overseas Nikiski*. He makes his home in San Francisco.



GREAT LAKES

FRANK KOLE

Brother Frank Kole, 65, embarked on his career with the union in 1979 when he shipped on the *Frank Denton*. Brother Kole was an engine department member. He upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions and concluded his career aboard the *Buffalo*. Brother Kole lives in Alpena, Michigan.

GAY MADARA

Sister Gay Madara, 74, donned the SIU colors in 2001. She worked as a member of the steward department. Sister Madara's first and last vessel was the *Walter J. McCarthy*. She calls Melbourne Beach, Florida, home.



RODMAN SMITH

Brother Rodman Smith, 65, signed on with the Seafarers in 1980, first sailing aboard the *Manhattan*. Brother Smith worked in the deck department. He concluded his career aboard the *Charles E. Wilson* and settled in Las Vegas.

INLAND

CAESAR DEL GRECO

Brother Caesar Del Greco, 62, began sailing with the Seafarers International Union in 1998. He was a deck department member and upgraded his skills at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Del Greco worked with McAllister Towing of Philadelphia for the duration of his career. He makes his home in Milford, New Jersey.



GEORGE ERWIN

Brother George Erwin, 63, joined the SIU in 1995 when he worked with Crowley Towing and Transportation. Brother Erwin sailed in the steward department. He concluded his career with Allied Transportation Company and lives in Jacksonville, Florida.



STANLEY JACKSON

Brother Stanley Jackson, 62, started his career with the Seafarers in 1994. He worked in the steward department. Brother Jackson was employed with Delta Queen Steamboat Company for the duration of his career. He last shipped on the *Mississippi Queen* and settled in Houston.

DARREN JAMES

Brother Darren James, 62, signed on with the union in 1993. He primarily sailed in the deck department and was employed with G&H Towing for his entire career. Brother James resides in Texas City, Texas.

SAMMY MURPHY

Sister Sammy Murphy, 78, began sailing with the Seafarers International Union in 1966. She upgraded her skills at the Piney Point school in 1973. Sister Murphy worked with G&H Towing for the duration of her career. She makes her home in Utopia, Texas.

STEVEN PECKHAM

Brother Steven Peckham, 62, joined the SIU in 2008. Brother Peckham worked in the deck department. He upgraded his skills at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions and worked for Crowley Towing and Transportation for his entire career. Brother Peckham lives in Middletown, Rhode Island.



GEOFFREY PHELPS

Brother Geoffrey Phelps, 62, became a member of the Seafarers International Union in 2006. A deck department member, he sailed with Crowley Towing and Transportation for almost his entire career. Brother Phelps lives in Wylie, Texas.

JOHN POLLARD

Brother John Pollard, 66, donned the SIU colors in 2009. He sailed in the deck department. Brother Pollard was employed with Penn Maritime for the duration of his career. He calls Townshend, Vermont, home.

DARRYL REED

Brother Darryl Reed, 62, embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 1996. He sailed in the steward department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Brother Reed was employed with Delta Queen Steamboat Company for his entire career. He resides in LaPlace, Louisiana.

RANDY SIKES

Brother Randy Sikes, 65, joined the union in 2004. A deck department member, he worked with Crescent Towing and Salvage for the duration of his career. Brother Sikes makes his home in Savannah, Georgia.



CHRISTOPHER VALLEY

Brother Christopher Valley, 62, signed on with the SIU in 2003, initially sailing aboard the *Coastal Reliance*. Brother Valley shipped in the deck department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. He most recently sailed aboard the *Achievement* and settled in Chehalis, Washington.



ROBERTO VARGAS

Brother Roberto Vargas, 67, began his career with the Seafarers International Union in 1994 when he sailed with Crowley Puerto Rico Services. Brother Vargas was a deck department member. He last shipped with Crowley Towing and Transportation. Brother Vargas lives in Las Piedras, Puerto Rico.



WILLIAM VIUST BONILLA

Brother William Viust Bonilla, 63, joined the SIU in 1981. He first worked with Crowley Puerto Rico Services and upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Brother Viust Bonilla sailed in the deck department. He last shipped with OSG Ship Management and makes his home in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.



TODD VORHEES

Brother Todd Vorhees, 55, started sailing with the Seafarers in 2009, initially aboard the *Terrapin Island*. Brother Vorhees was a deck department member. He upgraded at the Piney Point school in 2015. Brother Vorhees concluded his career aboard the *Douglas B. Mackie*. He resides in Palm Harbor, Florida.



Final Departures

In solemn remembrance, we honor the legacies of these union members who have crossed the final bar. May they rest in peace.

DEEP SEA

LUIS FUENTES

Pensioner Luis Fuentes, 80, has passed away. He joined the Seafarers International Union in 1968, initially sailing aboard the *Kent*. Brother Fuentes worked in the steward department. He concluded his career aboard the *Sealift Arabian Sea* and went on pension in 2009. Brother Fuentes lived in Brooklyn, New York.

DAVID HAMILTON

Pensioner David Hamilton, 74, died July 27. He became a member of the SIU in 1979 when he shipped on the *Del Sol*. Brother Hamilton sailed in the engine department. He last shipped aboard the *Green Bay* and became a pensioner in 2017. Brother Hamilton made his home in Glendora, California.



DANIEL JOHNSON

Pensioner Daniel Johnson, 67, passed away August 3. He began his career with the Seafarers in 1976, initially sailing aboard the *Ponce*. Brother Johnson was an engine department member and last sailed on the *Performance*. He went on pension in 2023 and lived in Lake City, Florida.



WILMER MCCANTS

Pensioner Wilmer McCants, 71, died August 5. He signed on with the Seafarers International Union in 1973 and first sailed aboard the *Mobile*. Brother McCants worked in the engine department and concluded his career aboard the *Seakay Spirit*. He retired in 2017 and resided in Mobile, Alabama.



CARLOS OLASCOAGA

Pensioner Carlos Olascoaga, 77, passed away August 2. He joined the SIU in 1979 and first shipped on the *Montpelier Victory*. Brother Olascoaga sailed in the steward department. He last shipped on the *Ocean Grand* and became a pensioner in 2020. Brother Olascoaga lived in Ponce, Puerto Rico.



MICHAEL PELL

Pensioner Michael Pell, 71, died July 16. He began his career with the Seafarers in 1971, initially working on Hudson Waterways vessel. Brother Pell was a deck department member and concluded his career aboard the *Guayama*. He began collecting his pension in 2000 and resided in Atkinson, North Carolina.

FRANCO PIZZUTO

Pensioner Franco Pizzuto, 77, passed away August 7. He donned the SIU colors in 1989. A steward department member, Brother Pizzuto first shipped on the *Independence*. He last sailed aboard the *Moku Pahu* and became a pensioner in 2014. Brother Pizzuto lived in Las Vegas.



MIGUEL ROBLES

Pensioner Miguel Robles, 80, died June 30. He embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 1968 when he sailed with Penn Navigation Company. Brother Robles was a steward department member. He last shipped on the *Horizon Challenger* and went on pension in 2007. Brother Robles resided in Carolina, Puerto Rico.



BARBARA TOOMEY

Pensioner Barbara Toomey, 76, passed away July 29. A steward department member, Sister Toomey started shipping in 1991. Her first and last vessel was the *Global Link*. Sister Toomey became a pensioner in 2015. She lived in Middle River, Maryland.



INLAND

WILLIAM CALLIS

Pensioner William Callis, 95, died July 10. He signed on with the Seafarers International Union in 1959. Brother Callis was employed with Chesapeake and Ohio Railway for the duration of his career. He went on pension in 1992 and lived in Hudgins, Virginia.

ALEX GOLDEN

Pensioner Alex Golden, 82, passed away August 1. He embarked on his career with the union in 1973 when he shipped with Allied Transportation. An engine department member, Brother Golden was last employed with Steuart Transportation. He began collecting his pension in 2007 and resided in Marshallberg, North Carolina.



STEVE PALMER

Pensioner Steve Palmer, 72, died February 20. He began sailing with the SIU in 1977 when he worked aboard the *Mt. Vernon Victory*. Brother Palmer worked in both the deck and engine departments. He last sailed with Mariner Towing in 1987. Brother Palmer went on pension in 2018 and settled in Keystone Heights, Florida.

LOUIE PAYNE

Pensioner Louie Payne, 92, passed away May 17. He joined the SIU in 1980. An engine department member, Brother Payne was employed with Allied Transportation for the duration of his career. He became a pensioner in 2000 and made his home in Wanchese, North Carolina.



ALAN SCOTT

Pensioner Alan Scott, 72, died August 11. He embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 1974 when he worked with IBC Company. Brother Scott was a deck department member and last sailed with McAllister Towing of Virginia. He became a pensioner in 2019 and lived in Norfolk, Virginia.



JOSEPH STEPHENS

Pensioner Joseph Stephens, 79, passed away August 1. Brother Stephens started shipping in 1978. He was a deck department member and first sailed with Z Tug Management. Brother Stephens last shipped with Crowley Towing and Transportation before retiring in 2005. He lived in Dade City, Florida.



STEVE WELLS

Pensioner Steve Wells, 78, died June 29. He became a member of the SIU in 1973. Brother Wells initially sailed with Puget Sound. He worked in the deck department and concluded his career aboard the *Defender*. Brother Wells went on pension in 2005 and settled in Nederland, Texas.



NMU

ANGEL BELARDO

Pensioner Angel Belardo, 100, passed away August 3. Brother Belardo started sailing in 1951. He worked in the engine department and first shipped on the *Everet*. Brother Belardo last sailed aboard the *American Lark* and went on pension in 2002. He was a resident of San Juan, Puerto Rico.



DONALD OUELLETTE

Pensioner Donald Ouellette, 90, died January 26. Brother Ouellette worked in the engine department and last shipped on the *Detroit Princess*. He retired in 2008 and lived in Trenton, Michigan.

HERMINIO PAGAN

Pensioner Herminio Pagan, 88, died June 9. Brother Pagan worked in the steward department and last shipped on the *Maersk Maryland*. He became a pensioner in 2006 and settled in Cayey, Puerto Rico.



ALFRED PERSSON

Pensioner Alfred Persson, 72, passed away February 23. Brother Persson sailed in the deck department. He concluded his career aboard the *Glacier Bay* and began collecting his pension in 2019. Brother Persson lived in Hemet, California.

HAKON RANDSBORG

Pensioner Hakon Randsborg, 91, died April 25. Brother Randsborg began sailing in 1966. He first shipped on a Moore-McCormack Lines vessel and was a member of the deck department. Brother Randsborg last sailed aboard the *Admiralty Bay* and retired in 1993. He made his home in Marieholms Bruk, Sweden.



Paul Hall Center Upgrading Course Dates

Sign Up for Courses



Printed below are dates for courses scheduled to take place at the SIU-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, located in Piney Point, Maryland. The QR code at right connects to a web page with the latest course dates (they may differ from what's printed here, though in most cases the only changes are additions that haven't yet made it into the LOG). Seafarers are welcome to contact the admissions office with questions about upgrading courses: (301) 899-0657, admissions@seafarers.org

Latest Course Dates



Title of Course	Start Date	Date of Completion
DECK DEPARTMENT UPGRADING COURSES		
Able Seafarer - Deck	November 16	December 4
RFPNW	November 16 December 14 January 11	December 4 January 1 January 29
Lifeboat/Water Survival	November 23 December 21 January 18	December 4 January 1 January 29
ENGINE DEPARTMENT UPGRADING COURSES		
Adv. Refrig. Cont. Maint. (ARCM)	December 7	December 18
RFPEW	November 16 December 14	December 11 January 8
Welding	November 16	December 4

STEWARD DEPARTMENT UPGRADING COURSES		
Galley Operations	November 16 December 14	December 11 January 8
Chief Steward	December 7	January 1
OPEN/SAFETY UPGRADING COURSES		
Basic Training Revalidation	November 16 November 20 December 14	November 16 November 20 December 14
Tanker Ship Fam. - DL	December 7 January 4	December 11 January 8

LaborLab Report on Union Busting

Continued from Page 5

LaborLab "is launching new tools to give workers a clearer picture of what they're up against" when they try to organize, the non-profit organization said.

One feature of its site is referral to an EPI chart of all the steps and tactics companies use to delay and deny unions from representing workers, even when workers triumph in union recognition votes.

The picture unions have painted over the years of a labor law obstacle course to actually getting a first contract, a course erected by the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act and subsequent National Labor Relations Board rulings and federal court decisions, is mild compared to all the steps on LaborLab's chart.

A calculator, using the per-hour charges by the union-busters, when available, plus how many hours they worked to stop particular unionizing drives, lets workers know how much corporate chieftains are willing to pay to stop workers in their tracks. The calculator also lets workers know how much their bosses would have spent on raising their pay and benefits by recognizing and bargaining with the union to success, immediately after the recognition vote, rather than employing the union-buster.

LaborLab debuted its new tool, with all the information, including links to the forms union-busters are supposed to file, on Sept. 8, the day after Labor Day 2026.

"Together, the tools help workers better understand, expose and push back against the specialists and resources mobilized by their employer to deny them a voice in the workplace," it explains.

"These tools advance LaborLab's vision of providing resources that can help directly empower workers to organize their workplaces," said Bob Funk, its executive director.

One positive point in all the data: LaborLab reports that not only do unions win an overwhelming majority of recognition votes, which has been the pattern for years, but union-busters vary in their success. Some can conjure tactics that halt organizing drives. Others fail often.

LaborLab's tool presents those success and failure rates, too.

"We envision worker-organizers, union staffers and labor attorneys using the search tool to identify unions that previously dealt with a particular anti-union attorney or consultant, learn from their experience and share that information with other workers," said Funk.

Organized labor's solution to the problems its unionization drives face has been to rewrite labor law by removing the obstacles lawmakers erected in 1947 with the Taft-Hartley Act - which virtually emasculated the original National Labor Relations Act of 1935 - and the Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959.

Its current vehicle is the Protect The Right To Organize (PRO) Act, to outlaw tactics, such as captive audience meetings and attempts, before and after an election, to alter the composition of the bargaining unit in the boss's favor. The PRO Act would also permanently legalize card-check recognition of unions.

Moreover, the PRO Act would increase penalties for violating labor law and would give the NLRB more power and more incentive to go to court for injunctions against chronic lawbreakers, such as Amazon, Starbucks and the Block Brothers, who owned the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. They then shut the paper down rather than bargain a new contract with the News Guild of Pittsburgh, despite the NLRB-won injunction ordering them to do so.

NAVITA and Medical Certificates – What Seafarers Need to Know

The U.S. Coast Guard has launched NAVITA, a new website for generating and submitting the 719K and other materials required to obtain your medical certificate.

What this means for you:

The union hall **CANNOT** submit the 719K on your behalf.

Creating an account

Establish a NAVITA account

-Sign in to NAVITA through the USCG National Maritime Center website – https://www.dco.uscg.mil/national_maritime_center/

-There is an orange box that says "Launch NAVITA" towards the top left of the NMC Home Page. Click there (the images below are only screenshots).

Create an account - You will be brought to a screen with a picture of the NMC in the background. Click the prompt "Sign In/Create an Account." This is where you will be sent to Login.gov

At this point you will be redirected to LOGIN.GOV to sign in.

-Complete mariner profile information.

-Make sure you set up a MARINER account (not proxy)

Generating a new 719K

-Once an account is established you will be able to go back to the NAVITA home screen and click on medical certificate.

-Choose "I am applying for Officer, Tankerman, or STCW vessel service"

-Choose CG-719K

-Note that the SIU does not accept CG-719K/E even if you are an entry rating.

-There are further options to add additional information

-This is for mariners who have waivers, or are applying for waivers, or additional medical information the USCG would need to issue you a certificate.

-At this point you can generate a blank 719K for your medical exam

Please note that the SIU Medical Department and Acuity International are developing a process to transmit the 719K that is generated by you to the clinic, and for the clinic/Acuity to return the completed exam to the mariner so the mariner can submit the documentation back to the USCG via NAVITA. For now, it is recommended that you print your own copy of the 719K, and hand carry it to the clinic if you have an examination scheduled before the new process is completely rolled out. We will update this information as warranted.



For More Information



Paul Hall Center Class Photos



Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education
Lifeboat Class
937

APPRENTICE WATER SURVIVAL CLASS #937 – Recently graduated: Hubert-Jon Anton, Clifton Armstead III, Natalie Barry, Abigail Brissett, Chadrack Buteau, Zachary Clary, Christopher Demore, Jake Doherty, Thomas Gibbons, Vander Horton, Nicholas Kopko, Ashton Landry, Boris Lev, Benjamin McCraw, Conner McDaniel, Carmell Noisette, Tristan Pinzon, Adrian Proo, Elvin Rivera Aviles, Storm Strickland, Christopher Vincent and Daylen Williams.



WATER SURVIVAL (UPGRADERS) – Graduated August 14: Shanitta Felton.



VESSEL OPS – Above (not all are pictured): Patrick Ballard II, Gerald Blaney III, Patrick Brittingham Jr., Boaz Brown, Jaheim Collins, Sean Jordan, Marco Leguizamo, Travis Lofton Jr., Kara Martin, Cornelius McConville, Douglas McConville, William Pomaes Rodriguez, Samuel Ramos III, Ali Rodriguez Colon, Conner Sommerfield, Maciej Szymkowski, Michael Ulloa and Alexander Ward.



GOVERNMENT VESSELS – Not all are pictured: Jeremy Aldrich, Justin Bell, Clarence Billups Jr., Bobby Byers Jr., Jelani Byfield, Jacob Clausen, Salvatore Detillo, Johan Flores, Hayden Fugit, Amanda Hernandez Claudio, Zackary Hoff, Kaizen Mandley, Joseph Nugent Jr., Ajay Ray, Jacob Richardson, Mas'ud Sills, Cody Smiddy, Adrian Virgen, Kerra Williams and Nathaniel Zelada.



RFPEW (UPGRADERS) – Graduated recently: Richmond Almocera (left). Instructor John Wiegman III is at right.



TANK SHIP FAMILIARIZATION (LG) – Above: Gabriel Araujo, Christian Bennett, Shane Beychok-Boyer, Andrew Castillo, Zachariah Davis, Nicholas Fiorello, William Hayes, Megan Leaver, Jessica Owens, Nency Perez Santos, August Reader, Abdixander Reyes Guzman, Tyler Sansoucy, Peyton Snyder, Julien Verreault, Tommy White and Shekeyour Harris.

Paul Hall Center Class Photos



TANK SHIP FAMILIARIZATION (DL) – Recently graduated: Gabriel Araujo, Christian Bennett, Shane Beychok-Boyer, Andrew Castillo, Zachariah Davis, Nicholas Fiorello, Omar Guity, William Hayes, Megan Leaver, Jessica Owens, Nency Perez Santos, August Reader, Abdixander Reyes Guzman, Tyler Sansoucy, Peyton Snyder, Deina Solorzano, Julien Verreault and Tommy White.



ADV. GALLEY OPS – From left to right: Gamal Asaad, Branden Williams and Cody Younghans.



RADAR/ARPA – Graduated recently: Nathaniel Balos, Anthony Brown Jr., Juan Chevalier Heredia, Sterling Kirk, Derek Lowe, Manuel Manzur-Rosado, Tanner Page and Abraham Quiner.



MARINE ELECTRICIAN – Graduated recently (not all are pictured): Saif Altamimi, Loren Arriola, Samuel Ayers, David Chatoff, Jose Gari, Michael Lane, Juan Rochez, Julian Rubbo, Alton Simpson, Ryan Sotomayor, Paul Watts and Saddam Yahia.



MACHINIST – Graduated recently: Keondre Bell, Jahnica Cain, Gregory Crowder, Darriona Noisette, Dennis Smith Jr. and Nashell Williams.



FOWT (COMBINED) – Graduated recently (not all are pictured): Tyler Allen, Paris Belcher, Raenell Brewster, David Cipriano, Daquwan Cleveland, Corey Covington Jr., Stevenjohn Eustaquio, Travis Flippin, Cayden Foster, Jorge Garcia Gutierrez, Marshod Hawkins, David Hebb, Giveric Henderson, David Levin, Nicholas Livingston, Mitchell Mangold, Amahd Manigault, Latisha Manns Paige, Bryan Marty Barrera, Mark Mitchell, Lawrence Neloms, Escrovan Tisdale-Anderson, Alexi Vasquez and Tristan Wilson.

SEAFARERS LOG

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION – ATLANTIC, GULF, LAKES AND INLAND WATERS, AFL-CIO

Jones Act Tanker Rescues Army Veterans (and Cats)

Seafarers aboard the tanker *Florida* (Intrepid) recently demonstrated that their prowess for rescues at sea extends to the animal kingdom while also reinforcing the 88-year-old bond between the union and the United States military.

SIU members and mariners from the Seafarers-affiliated American Maritime Officers (AMO) on Sept. 2 saved three people and their three cats who were stranded aboard a disabled boat off the Oregon coast. That 41-foot craft, the *Welcome Home*, was taking on water. Its battery had died and the bilge pump on the vessel couldn't stop the incursion.

The human occupants of the *Welcome Home* – Gabriel Gonzalez, Gino Gonzalez, and Gary Dixon – recently had completed their respective service in the U.S. Army and were headed to San Francisco from Tacoma, Washington, to start college. They told *Florida* vessel master Capt. Ben Hopkins they'd planned to live on the boat as a cost-saving measure, but had been stranded for five days.

SIU members aboard the Jones Act tanker during the rescue included Recertified Bosun **Samuel Duah**, ABs **Malik Oxendine**, **Dauron Mitchell**, **Burton Uys**, **Lucas Anderson** and **Stephen Woods**, QMEDs **Van Dixon** and **David Sanchez Flores**, GVA **Ali Suwaileh**, Recertified Steward **Christopher Amigable**, Chief Cook **Gedrick Reyes**, and SA **Nasser Qasem**.

The *Florida* was on its standard route, carrying fuel from Tacoma to Martinez, California. At 10:20 a.m., they responded to a distress relay from a neighboring vessel. Hopkins immediately rerouted the ship and assembled the crew to formulate a rescue plan.

"It's the law of the sea and at the heart of being a mariner to assist people in need – be it fellow shipmates or others in distress," Hopkins said.

The fractured sailboat, battered by 60-knot winds, was found with a broken mast. Despite low visibility and rough waves, the *Florida* crew threw a tow line to the stranded sailors, bringing them alongside the vessel and aboard the ship.

Before their rescue, one of the individuals aboard the *Welcome Home* had fallen over due to the rough waves and suffered a concussion. That person was the first brought onto the tanker, via a line and scramble net created by *Florida* crew members. The other seasick sailors were taken aboard the ship using the pilot ladder along with three cats, after receiving assistance from the deck crew. Upon boarding the vessel, they received fresh sets of clothes, food, and water before getting a ride to San Francisco.

Although it was the captain's first rescue, he had the support of his crew behind him. "They did a phenomenal job, and we got them home safely," he said.

Hopkins gave special thanks to Duah and to Chief Mate Zachary Jones for organizing the rescue on deck while ensuring everyone's safety as it was completed.

"It was an all-hands effort. The whole crew was out there," said Hopkins. "The crew performed with absolute professionalism, from expertly handling the heaving line in strong winds and bringing them alongside in challenging conditions. Everyone immediately jumped into action. It was super dynamic conditions."



Seafarers, AMO members, and the rescued individuals are pictured aboard the Jones Act tanker.



Along with three people, the *Florida* rescued three felines.



The SIU-crewed *Florida* uses a towline to maneuver alongside the sailboat *Welcome Home* off the coast of Oregon.



One of the sailboat occupants climbs aboard the *Florida*.