

# SEAFARERS



# LOG

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

## Tanker Liberty Christened

### *Jones Act Vessel Means New Jobs for SIU Members*

Union shipyard General Dynamics NASSCO recently christened the SIU-contracted tanker *Liberty*, which will sail in the Jones Act trade. The vessel is pictured at the San Diego facility. It is part of an eight-ship new build order for two separate SIU-contracted companies. *Page 2.* (Photos courtesy General Dynamics NASSCO)



### Tacoma Seafarers Back Military Families In Yearly Outreach

The Christmas season marked another outstanding effort by Seafarers in the Tacoma, Washington, area who participated in the annual Santa's Castle outreach. SIU members, officials, friends and family members teamed up for approximately \$10,000 worth of donations to U.S. enlisted military families. Most of the goodies are pictured at left, at the SIU hall in Tacoma. It was the tenth straight year the SIU has taken part in Santa's Castle. That story and additional photos are on *Page 24* (back page). Also, check out *Page 6* for more highlights of SIU members' holiday philanthropy.



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# President's Report

## U.S. Troops Rely on U.S. Mariners

Secretary of Transportation nominee Elaine Chao made a vital point about the U.S. Merchant Marine's role in supporting our troops during her confirmation hearing in the United States Senate. While answering a question last month in the nation's capital, Secretary Chao noted that, in times of conflict, the vast majority of materiel needed by our men and women in uniform is delivered by civilian mariners on American-flag ships.



Michael Sacco

For those of us who work in the maritime industry, of course, that's common knowledge. But I think it was valuable and important to have those comments on the record, for the benefit of those less familiar with the crucial work performed by Seafarers and other U.S. mariners. Let's face it: We've all spent time in conversation explaining the basics of the U.S. Merchant Marine, often clearing up misconceptions in the process.

The pro-maritime segments of the confirmation hearing reminded me of comments made last year by General Darren McDew, commander, United States Transportation Command. During a hearing on the U.S. Maritime Security Program (MSP) — one of the key components of our industry — General McDew stated, "The nation is still a maritime nation.... I can deliver an immediate force anywhere on the planet tonight. But to deliver a decisive force it takes a fully-fledged, competent maritime fleet. And that's what the MSP provides us."

The general went on to describe the privately operated, U.S.-flag international fleet as "vital to moving military goods and hardware" and added, "without mariners, we don't have a capability."

These are some of the messages we will be amplifying March 1 at the annual Maritime Congressional Sail-In. As many Seafarers know, during this yearly outreach event, representatives from all segments of our industry team up for a full day of meetings with senators, congressional representatives and their staffs. Whether we're meeting with a freshman or an old friend who's been on Capitol Hill for years, we promote the laws and programs that keep the U.S. Merchant Marine afloat. Most importantly, we promote YOU — the rank-and-file mariner.

Parts of those discussions are history lessons, very much in line with Secretary Chao's comments last month. She specifically cited the Persian Gulf War and then Operation Iraqi Freedom as examples of times when our mariners ably and reliably delivered the goods for our troops. And of course, there are many other examples dating all the way back to our nation's founding. From the Revolutionary War to World War II to Korea and Vietnam to the present day, we've always been there, ready, willing and able to sail into harm's way. With a nod to our World War II mariners, "Damn the submarine! We're the men of the merchant marine!" (You youngsters can look up the lyric if you're not familiar with it.)

The way we'll stay ready to back our armed forces is by maintaining the MSP and the Jones Act and cargo preference laws. We also need to take the shackles off of the U.S. Export-Import Bank. And heaven knows, it's past time to sensibly ease the regulatory burdens on our women and men who go down to the sea in ships. As I've mentioned, no one is asking for a return to the days when a z-card was good for life and the only physical exam involved being able to fog a mirror. But all the red tape nowadays — however well-intended — is hurting our industry. There isn't an overnight cure but we will continue to seek a better balance that is less burdensome on Seafarers.

Meanwhile, we look forward to continuing our service as America's fourth arm of defense. That role has never been more important, and I want all of our military members and their families to know, you can count on us!



Recertified Bosun Carlos Loureiro (left) and SIU Port Agent Jeff Turkus attend the christening.



Debora Denning breaks the ceremonial champagne bottle, christening the *Liberty*. (Photo courtesy General Dynamics NASSCO)

## Union Shipyard Christens ECO Class Vessel

The domestic fleet of SIU-contracted ships got a boost before the New Year with the christening of a tanker on the West Coast.

On Dec. 17, union shipyard General Dynamics NASSCO christened the *Liberty*, the third ECO Class tanker under contract with SEA-Vista LLC (following the *Independence* and the *Constitution*). SEA-Vista is a partnership between SEACOR Holdings Inc. and Avista Capital Partners.

SIU Port Agent Jeff Turkus and Recertified Bosun Carlos Loureiro were in attendance in San Diego at the ceremony. SIU mariners will crew the *Liberty* when the vessel enters service.

Mrs. Debora Denning, wife of SEACOR Vice President Tom Denning, christened the ship with the traditional break of a champagne bottle on the side of the hull.

Designed for improved fuel efficiency, the 610-foot-long, 50,000 deadweight ton, LNG-conversion-ready ECO Class tanker symbolizes the emerging direction of the shipping industry in the U.S. toward cleaner modes of transporting product, according to NASSCO. The ship's

advanced design achieves 33 percent increased fuel efficiency through several features.

As part of an eight-tanker program for two separate SIU-contracted customers, American Petroleum Tankers and SEA-Vista LLC, the construction and operation of the new ECO Class tankers are aligned with the Jones Act. The Jones Act mandates that cargo moving between U.S. ports must be carried on vessels that are flagged, built, crewed and owned American. The Jones Act is responsible for more than 500,000 good-paying jobs countrywide and is considered a key element in the nation's defense capabilities.

In 2016, NASSCO shipbuilders processed more than 60,000 tons of steel and delivered six vessels.

"NASSCO is the only major shipyard on the West Coast of the United States conducting design, new construction and repair of commercial and U.S. Navy ships," the yard reported. "In the past decade, NASSCO delivered 30 oceangoing ships to government and commercial customers—including the world's first LNG-powered container ships."

## SIU-Crewed Bowditch Makes International News In Scientific Drone Incident in South China Sea

An SIU-crewed vessel was in the news in mid-December during a brief but tense incident that sparked international headlines along with a social-media comment by then President-Elect Donald Trump.

On Dec. 15, the *USNS Bowditch* was performing part of a planned scientific mission in the South China Sea. The vessel, a Pathfinder-class oceanographic ship operated by USMMI on a Military Sealift Command (MSC) contract, was surveying 50 nautical miles off the Subic Bay when a Chinese warship intercepted one of the *Bowditch's* deployed "ocean glider" scientific drones.

After establishing bridge-to-bridge contact with the Chinese vessel, the crew of the *Bowditch* instructed the Chinese to return the drone, to which the only response was: "We are returning to normal operations." The warship then left the area.

The drone in question is a small, torpedo-shaped craft that glides beneath the waves to collect various data. Such drones are often used for weather research but have a variety of roles. According to multiple news reports and comments from the United States government, it was clearly labeled, and the *Bowditch* was a mere 500 yards from the drone when it was seized.

"This incident was inconsistent with both international law and standards of professionalism for conduct between navies at sea," Pentagon press secretary Peter Cook said in a statement. "The U.S. has addressed those

facts with the Chinese through the appropriate diplomatic and military channels, and have called on Chinese authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and to refrain from further efforts to impede lawful U.S. activities."

The drone was returned to the U.S. on Dec. 20, after American officials condemned the seizure as unlawful (and also after President-Elect Trump said in a Twitter comment the Chinese could keep it).

The Pentagon emphasized that the United States "remains committed to upholding the accepted principles and norms of international law and freedom of navigation and overflight and will continue to fly, sail, and operate in the South China Sea wherever international law allows, in the same way that we operate everywhere else around the world."

The SIU crew members aboard the *USNS Bowditch* during the incident were advised by the U.S. Navy not to comment on the event, in the interest of national security.

The SIU crew included Bosun Thomas Weber, ABs Tracy Austin, Mark Bolitho and Melvin Kennedy, OSs Blake Braye and Frederick Murray, QE3 Mervin Cruzat, QE4 Eric Cunanan, GVA's Ronnie Rankin and Camilo Villafania, Steward/Baker Elston Yu-Mateo, MDR Leonard Renaud, CSKS Dorine Kendall and Steward Assistant Joseph Allen.

## Secretary Chao Backs Jones Act, U.S. Mariners

During her confirmation hearing Jan. 11 before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Elaine L. Chao voiced strong support for the U.S. Merchant Marine and the Jones Act.

A longtime backer of the American maritime industry, Secretary Chao — the Transportation Secretary designee — stated during the hearing, "The Jones Act is a very important program that secures national security. We have seen two wars now in the last 25 years.... If we did not have the merchant marine assets to assist the gray hulls (U.S. Navy ships) on these campaigns, our country would not have been able to supply our troops, bring the necessary equipment. All of that is not done on the gray bottoms, but rather the merchant marine bottoms."

She added, "The national security of the merchant marine fleet is part of the way that we are able to be effective overseas and protect this country. So, I am a great proponent of the U.S.-flag Merchant Marine fleet."

Earlier in the hearing, Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi) described Jones Act as "a vitally important part of our maritime industry."

Addressing Secretary Chao, Wicker stated, "I hope you will be a strong supporter of the Jones Act and advocate for our domestic maritime sector as a bipartisan majority of this committee has always done."

Also at the hearing, Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) said the Jones Act is "the foundation of the domestic U.S.-flag maritime industry and it is also essential to our national security." He noted the steadfast support of the nation's freight cabotage law from "every Secretary of Defense, every Secretary of the Navy for generations."

The Jones Act helps sustain an estimated 500,000 American jobs, according to a study by PricewaterhouseCoopers. It requires that cargo moving between domestic ports be carried on vessels that are crewed, built, flagged and owned American.

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The Seafarers International Union engaged an environmentally friendly printer for the production of this newspaper.



Members of the union's election tallying committee took a break from their duties Jan. 6 at SIU headquarters in Camp Springs, Maryland to pose for this photo. Joining the rank-and-file group on the occasion were SIU Executive VP Augie Tellez (standing fourth from right in the second row); SIU Asst. VP Ambrose Cucinotta (second from right, second row); SIU VP Contracts George Tricker (second row, far right) and SIU Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel (seated fourth from right in the front row.)

## Committee Announces Results of SIU Election

### *Michael Sacco is Re-elected President of Seafarers International Union*

A committee of rank-and-file members recently released its official report on the voting for national officers of the Seafarers International Union's Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters. Voting took place Nov. 1 through Dec. 31, 2016.

The union's tallying committee consisted of 20 Seafarers (two members elected from each of the SIU's 10 constitutional halls). The group certified the reelections of Michael Sacco as president of the SIU; Augie Tellez as the union's executive vice president; David Heindel as secretary-treasurer; and George Tricker as vice president of contracts and contract enforcement, among other results.

The tallying committee's report will be submitted for approval by the membership at union meetings in March.

According to the report, the two contested races for office were decided by large margins. The committee disclosed the election of the following officers, who will serve four-year terms:

- Michael Sacco, president;
- Augie Tellez, executive vice president;
- David Heindel, secretary-treasurer;
- George Tricker, contracts and contract enforcement vice president;
- Joseph Soresi, Atlantic Coast vice president;
- Dean Corgey, Gulf Coast vice president;
- Nick Marrone, West Coast vice president;
- Tom Orzechowski, Southern Region, Great Lakes and inland waters vice president;
- Kermet Mangram, Government Services and fishing industries vice president;
- Archie Ware, contracts and contract enforcement assistant vice president;

- Nick Celona, Atlantic Coast assistant vice president;
- Ambrose Cucinotta, Gulf Coast assistant vice president;
- Bryan Powell, West Coast assistant vice president;
- Mike Russo, Southern Region, Great Lakes and inland waters assistant vice president;
- Chet Wheeler, Government Services and fishing industries assistant vice president;
- Pat Vandegrift, Piney Point port agent;
- Mark von Siegel, New York/New Jersey port agent;
- Joe Baselice, Philadelphia port agent;
- Georg Kenny, Baltimore port agent;
- Jimmy White, Mobile port agent;
- Chris Westbrook, New Orleans Port Agent;
- Kris Hopkins, Houston port agent;
- Nick Marrone II, Oakland port agent;
- Chad Partridge, St. Louis port agent;
- Todd Brdak, Detroit-Algonac port agent.

The committee arrived on Jan. 4 to begin their work by the constitutionally required date of Jan. 5. They met during that week and weekend at the union's headquarters in Camp Springs, Maryland, and at the SIU-affiliated school in Piney Point, Maryland.

Serving as co-chairmen of the tallying committee were **John Cain** and **John Wozunk**, both of whom credited their fellow Seafarers for being thorough and efficient (and for remaining flexible when inclement weather threatened to disrupt the schedule).

Joining them on the committee were Seafarers **Ritche Acuman, Michael Keogh, Earl Castain, Mark Kotajarvi, Cleofe Castro, Ann Mensch, Peter Crum, Rafael**



Committee members and authorized employees from the secretary-treasurer's office commence their work Jan. 5 in Camp Springs, Maryland

**Pereira, Jeffery Eckhart, Chester Piaskowski, Robert Fitzhugh, George Price, Richard Grubbs, Scott Smith, Rolando Guity, Cleveland West, Romalies Jones and Glenn Williams.**

Unanimously approved by the committee, the report consists of more than 7,000 words. The committee members concluded that they "wish to express [our] deep appreciation for

the cooperation and assistance given to us by the union's legal department and its technical and clerical staff. Finally, the members of the union tallying committee wish to congratulate the elected officers and jobholders. We extend our best wishes for the next four years. We hope that you will carry on the tradition of our union and advance the strength of the maritime industry."

### **Philly Shipyard Hosts APT Tanker Keel Laying**

Signaling confidence in the Jones Act and new jobs for Seafarers, Philly Shipyard, Inc. (PSI) on Jan. 12 conducted a keel-laying ceremony for the final vessel in a four-ship order placed by SIU-contracted American Petroleum Tankers (APT).

The union shipyard is building the ship so it eventually may be converted to liquefied natural gas (LNG) propulsion.

"Once completed, this vessel will con-

tinue to exemplify APT's continued commitment to American shipping and the Jones Act," said SIU Vice President Contracts George Tricker. "These state-of-the-art ships help maintain the well-earned reputation of Jones Act shipping as safe, reliable and environmentally conscious."

Keeping with long held shipbuilding tradition, coins were placed by representatives from Philly Shipyard and Kinder Morgan (APT's parent company) on one of the keel blocks as a sign of good fortune and safe travels, before the 650-ton unit was lowered into place in the dry dock. Philly Shipyard representatives included the 15 new hires that began orientation the previous week. This first orientation class of 2017 included 10 new apprentices, one transportation

worker, one machine operator, one shipbuilder, and two interns.

Steinar Nerbovik, PSI's president and CEO, remarked, "Within the last 17 years of building great ships, we've also built great teams and a best-in-class workforce. The shipyard is a place where you can be a part of something big, and we are always looking for additional skilled men and women to join our family. The new hires participating in today's keel laying have joined over 1,100 other shipbuilders to continue the proud legacy of building and delivering ships right here in the city of brotherly love."

When completed, the product tanker will be 600 feet long and capable of carrying 50,000 tons of crude oil or refined

petroleum products. The Tier II 50,000 dead weight ton (dwt) vessel is based on a proven Hyundai Mipo Dockyards (HMD) design which incorporates numerous fuel efficiency features, flexible cargo capability and the latest regulatory requirements, according to PSI.

Philly Shipyard has delivered 25 ships in its 17-year history, including the first product tanker for APT in December 2016. The three remaining product tankers for APT are currently under construction and have planned deliveries throughout 2017. Also under construction at the shipyard are two 3,600 TEU containerships for Seafarers-contracted Matson Navigation Company, Inc. with planned deliveries in 2018 and 2019.

# Canadian Unions March Across Country To Protect Cabotage Laws, Mariner Jobs

Canadian union members took to the streets to make their voices heard loud and clear. Their message: Don't let CETA take away Canadian maritime jobs.

"I am so proud of all the union members who marched all across Canada calling on members of parliament to reject provisions that would give good Canadian jobs to foreigners," declared SIU of Canada President Jim Given. "We put maritime and its issues front-and-center all across the country."

Thousands of union members and supporters marched on Jan. 12 in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Victoria, Prince Rupert (British Columbia) and St. John's (Newfoundland) under the banner of the Canadian Maritime & Supply Chain Coalition (CMSCC). Given is CMSCC chair and also serves as a Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO Eastern Area executive board member.

The coalition was protesting language in the Canadian-European Union Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) that would open certain domestic trading routes to foreign and flag-of-convenience shipping, which would risk Canadian jobs as well as the nation's security and environment. It noted the changes proposed by CETA could result in not only unemployment of Canadian mariners, but also diminish the important role Canadian-flag shipping plays in the



Unionists show their support for the Canadian cabotage laws in St. John's, Newfoundland.

national economy.

Additionally, the CMSCC reported that documents leaked from talks for the Trade in Services Agreement between Canada and 22 other nations reveal negotiators seeking to liberalize market access to the country's coastal trades. If implemented, this would allow foreign-crewed vessels access to cargo that currently is handled by Canadian-flag, Canadian-crewed vessels.

Finally, protesters were concerned that the Canada Transportation Act Review (also known as the Emerson Report) calls for the elimination of cab-

otage laws regarding domestic maritime transportation without any regard to the economic and social outcome of the Canadian merchant marine and the 250,000 people employed in the coastal trades.

"This cannot stand unchallenged," added Given. "All these actions affect our jobs and our communities. That is why all unions, not just those in maritime, have a stake in this important fight."

Among the unions taking part in the marches were the SIU of Canada, Steelworkers, ILA, UFCW, ILWU, Machinists, IBEW, UNIFOR,

Operating Engineers, IUPAT, Transport and General Workers, Teamsters, and Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Given stated more actions and protests could be expected in the coming weeks, as several European nations followed suit with farmers and other concerned individuals protesting in a Decentralized Day of Action Against CETA on Jan. 21. While the trade agreement has received some approval, not all countries involved have agreed to support it. European Parliament's trade committee is expected to vote on the agreement in the near future.

## USCG Schedules Third and Final El Faro Hearing

The U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation has scheduled the final hearing on the loss of the SIU-crewed *El Faro* to begin on Feb. 6 in Jacksonville, Florida.

This third hearing will examine additional data included in the investigation, primarily the information gathered from the retrieval of the vessel's voyage data recorder (VDR). The data extracted from the VDR that will be discussed during the hearing will include the transcript of bridge audio recordings, which was released in December 2016 by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

The NTSB, which is conducting its own investigation, will participate in the upcoming hearing. In addition to reviewing information from the VDR, the hearing will also include mariner witnesses, representatives from the vessel's owner (TOTE Inc.) and officials from the Coast Guard.

According to the official announcement, the hearing will take place at the Prime F. Osborn Convention Center, 1000 Water Street, Jacksonville, Florida 32204. For those unable to attend, the Coast Guard will be streaming the entire hearing online at [livestream.com/USCGInvestigations](http://livestream.com/USCGInvestigations), which also contains an archive of past hearings on the loss of the *El Faro*.

Look for full coverage of the hearing in the March issue of the *Seafarers LOG* and in the News section of the SIU website, [www.seafarers.org](http://www.seafarers.org)

## Heindel Promotes International Solidarity With All Japan Seamen's Union

SIU Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel was a guest speaker last November at the All Japan Seamen's Union (AJSU) congress. Representing both the SIU and the International Transport Workers' Federation (he chairs the latter organization's Seafarers' Section), Heindel discussed several important subjects including the Maritime Labor Convention and the International Bargaining Forum. He's at the same podium in both photos – at right in the snapshot at the immediate right.





AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler points out that unions are a sure way to protect maritime workers.



SIU Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel (left) makes a point during the gathering in the nation's capital. Directly in the background is ITF Maritime Coordinator Jacqueline Smith.



Investigative reporter Ian Urbina plans to continue his series on crime on the high seas.

# Journalist Provides Look into Maritime Crimes

## MTD Hosts Forum Illuminating Important Work of NY Times Reporter Urbina

The AFL-CIO's Maritime Trades Department (MTD) recently hosted a presentation by *New York Times* investigative reporter Ian Urbina, who in 2015 wrote an exhaustive, in-depth series of articles covering crime and lawlessness on the ocean, particularly in Southeast Asian waters.

During the Jan. 10 gathering in Washington, D.C., Urbina stated, "The contours of these stories have been told before, but never before in such detail." Those details include up-close views on human trafficking, intentional dumping, poaching and indentured servitude, to name a few. Some of the reporting also focuses on the dangers of so-called flag-of-convenience shipping, also known as runaway-flag shipping.

Throughout his reporting, Urbina showed Western readers the horrors of fishermen forced to work on boats for little or no pay, in deplorable conditions, with no practical way out of their situations. These men are "employed" by less-than-reputable manning agencies, who prey on migrant and down-on-their-luck men who are desperate for work.

But indentured servitude or "soft slavery," as Urbina described it, is just one of the multitude of crimes happening every day on the seas, including human trafficking, or his self-described "hard slavery." The level of detail and accuracy in his reporting offers a first look for many readers into the world of shipping in Southeast Asian waters, while also shining a spotlight on these very serious issues for those involved in the maritime industry.

He was joined in the discussion by SIU Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler, and International Transportation Workers' Federation (ITF) Maritime Coordinator Jacqueline Smith, as well as other national and interna-

tional guests of the MTD.

Heindel, who chairs the ITF Seafarers' Section, reflected on the series and the truths that it presents to the reader: "When you look at what goes on with the fishermen ... it's hard to imagine that still goes on today."

The series, called "The Outlaw Ocean" and currently consisting of eight installments, is not complete, Urbina told those in attendance. He shared a few stories from his travels and investigations, and offered his views on the problems with eradicating these crimes.

"I found this real divide between those who care to protect labor and human rights,

and those who look out for fish, dolphins and eco damage," he said, referring to the divided attention of those trying to offer help in the region. He also spoke about the difficult task of singling out those perpetrating the crimes, specifically talking about the hundreds of manning agencies operating in that region.

Shuler noted the differences between the workers featured in the series and American, unionized workers. "It's the fundamental right of workers to be safe on the job," she said, "but no one can be safe without unions."

Smith spoke after Urbina's presentation, and discussed the ITF's plans to help combat the rampant crime in that area, especially

concerning shady manning agencies that prey on those most desperate for a job. However, stopping those manning agencies is no simple task, as Smith said: "There are hundreds - thousands - of manning agencies." She explained that not every manning agency is illegitimate, and making that distinction is where at least part of the root of the problem lies.

The ITF is planning to launch a campaign on unlawful shipping in the near future, with attempted enforcement to begin initially off the coast of Ireland. The federation already runs a decades-long, highly effective campaign against runaway-flag shipping.



Attendees meet at AFL-CIO headquarters.

### USCG Issues Merchant Mariner Credential Processing Update

*Editor's note: The U.S. Coast Guard's National Maritime Center issued the following news release on December 28.*

The National Maritime Center (NMC) continues to experience a greater-than-average volume of applications for Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC). This bulletin outlines actions to be taken for U.S. mariners holding national and STCW endorsements.

**National Endorsements:** The United

States Coast Guard (USCG) is exercising its authority under Title 46, United States Code, Section 7507, and is granting an extension of national endorsements for any mariner whose MMC expires on or after December 1, 2016. This extension is effective immediately and will be valid until September 30, 2017. Mariners, employers, and owner/operators are encouraged to print a copy of the letter explaining the extension. All mariners sailing exclusively under the authority of their national endorsement on inland or coastwise voyages are advised to carry a copy of this letter with their expired credentials and produce it upon the request of USCG personnel or other officials. Expiration dates of new MMCs will be 5 years from the date of expiration of the

previous MMC, in accordance with current policy. The extension of validity of expired credentials provides the opportunity for a mariner to work under the authority of that credential during this period, so there is no loss of MMC validity associated with this decision.

**STCW Endorsements:** The NMC is focusing on evaluating applications with International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watch-keeping for Seafarers (STCW) endorsements. In accordance with Regulation I/2 of STCW, we are unable to extend the validity of these endorsements. As a result, applications containing MMCs with STCW endorsements will be processed as quickly as possible. This includes credential applications with an

endorsement currently has a limitation of "Not valid after Dec. 31, 2016" associated with it.

**Mariner Medical Certificates:** Mariners must continue to maintain a valid mariner medical certificate. Nothing stated in this bulletin is intended to relieve mariners from their responsibility to submit timely applications. Mariners should continue to submit their renewal requests in time to receive a new MMC prior to the expiration date of their credentials. Mariners who have already submitted renewal applications do not need to resubmit their requests for renewal.

For additional information, please visit the NMC website, call 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662), or e-mail IASKNMC@uscg.mil



Many of the recipients are pictured in the larger group photo at left, while the photo above features children presenting a thank-you message to the *Wheeler* (which had already departed on its next mission).

## Wheeler Mariners Make Holiday Donations to Korean Orphanage

*Editor's note: This write-up and the accompanying photos were submitted by Capt. Glenn Macario, vessel master of the USNS Wheeler (and its associated USNS Fast Tempo). The vessels are operated by Tote Services.*

For the fifth year in a row, the USNS VADM K.R. Wheeler crew raised money and purchased toys for the Miewon Or-

phanage in Busan, Korea. The toys were presented to the children at the Military Sealift Command Office Korea Christmas party at Pier 8, Busan on Dec. 16, 2016. The Wheeler crew raised \$1,700 and then bought the toys during a special run to COSTCO in Busan. Unfortunately, the Wheeler had to depart for Saipan a month before the party, but the children presented

MSCO-Korea with a "thank you" to the Wheeler.

The USNS Wheeler's SIU crew consists of Bosun **Jesse Toves**, ABs **Brian Frederick**, **Al Bharrat**, **Jay Aki**, and **Lynne Winstanley**, QMED **Jasper McGirt**, Wiper **Julio Soriano**, Chief Steward **Jean Favreaux** and Chief Cook **Michelle Taylor**.

The USNS Wheeler's American Maritime Officers (AMO) crew consists of Captain Glenn Macario, Chief Engineer Patrick Yarbrough, Chief Mate Patrick Leahy, 1 A/E Chris Blouch, 2/M Alfredo Noriega, 2 A/E Matt Farmer, 3/Ms Mark Blom, James McLaughlin, and Tommaso Giannetti, and 3 A/Es Jason Peters, Jeff Polek, and John Melcher.

### Seafarers Toy Drive in Fort Lauderdale

Here's a sampling of donations by Seafarers in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, that were given to Lifenet 4 Families, a local community support organization. "We know that a number of their assisted families will appreciate having something for a child at Christmas," noted SIU Port Agent Kris Hopkins. "It's important to help our neighbors."



### Petty's Island Seafarers Brighten Christmas Holidays



Leading up to Christmas, SIU members employed at the Crowley terminal at Petty's Island conducted a toy drive to benefit others in the region. Deep-sea member Vernell Cornell started the effort, with cooperation from Crowley Maritime and the SIU hall in Philadelphia. The organization receiving the donations (including monetary ones) is the Camden County (N.J.) Women's Center. A number of the contributing Seafarers are pictured here, with some of the donations. That's Cornell in front, with a representative from the shelter. Petty's Island is located in the Delaware River between Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

# SIU-Crewed ARC Vessels Support Military Exercise

Three SIU-crewed ships recently played supporting roles in Operation Atlantic Resolve, a multinational military exercise.

Late last year, the *MV Resolve*, *MV Freedom* and *MV Endurance* – all part of Seafarers-contracted American Roll-On/Roll-Off Carrier's (ARC) American-flag fleet – loaded more than 400,000 square feet of military rolling stock and other cargo over the course of one week in Beaumont, Texas. The vessels are operated by Tote Services for ARC.

When the cargo was being loaded in mid-December, ARC reported, "The 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) of the 4th Infantry Division is deploying from the United States to Europe. The loading operation was coordinated by the Army's 842nd Transportation Battalion.... The 3rd ABCT

will set up operations in eight countries across central and Eastern Europe, as U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) increases its presence across the region to help strengthen NATO's defense and deterrence measures. Operation Atlantic Resolve has been ongoing since 2014. Cargo logistics are being coordinated by ARC with U.S. Transportation Command, Military Surface Deployment & Distribution Command, and USAREUR's 21st Theater Sustainment Command."

The three Seafarers-crewed ships carried more than 2,700 vehicles and pieces of equipment.

Comprehensive information about Operation Atlantic Resolve is available on the Department of Defense website at:

[https://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/0514\\_Atlantic-Resolve](https://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/0514_Atlantic-Resolve)

The SIU-crewed *M/V Resolve* is seen in the background of these photos taken in Bremerhaven, Germany, in early January. In the photo at right, a group of U.S. Army Bradley Fighting Vehicles await loading onto railcars to shipment to Poland. In photo immediately below, Maj. Gen. Timothy McGuire, deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Europe, Maj. Gen. Duane Gamble, commanding general, 21st Theater Sustainment Command and German Maj. Gen. Josef Blotz, director of operations at NATO's International Military Staff, speak to media and answer questions about the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. The remaining photo shows an M1A2 Abrams tank departing from the ship. (U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Micah VanDyke)



## All Hands Safe as Mariners Extinguish Fire on Car Carrier

SIU mariners sailing aboard the car carrier *Alliance St. Louis* recently put their firefighting skills to the test when a malfunction left the vessel adrift off the coast of Louisiana.

At 3:28 a.m. on Jan. 16, the U.S. Coast Guard first received news of the fire, which started in the engine room of the Maersk Line, Limited-operated, 653-foot car carrier. Thanks to the quick actions and response of the crew and officers on board, the fire was quickly extinguished and no injuries were reported.

"About five minutes until 3 a.m., the bridge got the 'all call' that there was a fire in the engine room," said Bosun **Nicholas Smithling**, who went on to describe the rapid loss of other critical systems. "We were dressed out and ready to fight within minutes, but the blaze was out of control, and they had to dump CO2 four times to put out the fire. Both the unions - SIU and MEBA - worked together to gain control over the fire."

The SIU crew included Smithling, **ABs Vicente Mansilungan, Adiawor Otumfo, Norman Rodriguez, Durlas Ruiz and Shawn Williams**, **QEE Herbert Hyde**, **Oilers Andy Illiscupidez and Malachi Tannis**, **Steward/Baker Robert Seim**, **Chief Cook Leopold Calderon**, and **Steward Assistant Armando Castillo**. The officers on board are represented by the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association

(MEBA).

Calderon, a Seafarer for nearly 19 years, said the crew remained composed throughout the ordeal: "There was concern, of course, and some of the people were nervous, but we weren't panicked. Nobody was hurt. Everybody is fine, and that's the most important thing. Thank God nothing major happened."

All 12 of the SIU mariners had received thorough firefighting training during their respective times studying at the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Education and Training. Officials from Maersk Line, Limited were quick to credit the crew's training as responsible for containing the blaze.

Smithling added, "After the fire, the crew had to work together to get fuel from the 5 deck up to the main deck by block and tackle." He went on to describe the rest of the trip into Houston, on emergency power and running low on water. Tugboats were dispatched to tow the vessel into port, and it arrived in Houston on Jan. 24.

The bosun concluded by thanking the crew for their efforts. "I'd like to thank everybody for helping keep it together. We were running out of water, couldn't shower, sweating in our beds at night, but everybody really came together," he said. "It really made a good experience out of a bad experience."



Crew members are pictured with SIU Asst. VP Mike Russo (far right in photo above) and Patrolman Joe Zavala (standing in photo at left) after the vessel made it into port Jan. 24.



## Spotlight on Mariner Health

### Coronary Artery Disease Affects Millions of People Around Country

Coronary artery disease, also referred to as coronary heart disease, has affected millions of Americans. It is caused by the buildup of plaque (cholesterol deposits and other substances) in the arteries of the heart.

This process is called atherosclerosis. The increase of cholesterol deposits will inflame the inner walls of the blood vessels and make them sticky. Such a development can drastically increase the risk of blood clot adherence, ischemia (an inadequate blood supply to an organ or part of the body, especially the heart muscles), and heart attacks.

A person's arteries at birth start out as very smooth and elastic. As a person ages, plaque starts to form on the inner walls, which can make

them rigid and more narrow. This type of restriction does not allow the blood to easily flow through the blood vessels, and will begin to slow down blood to the heart-muscle wall. In turn, this starts to starve the heart muscle of oxygen and cause chest pain (angina). The heart obviously is a vital organ and must have continuous oxygen in order to function.

Remember that the buildup of plaque starts at a very young age and increases with age. Dietary factors, heredity, weight and other illnesses can contribute to the condition.

In the months ahead, we will cover ischemia, heart attacks, and possible treatments.

### Healthful Recipe

*Sweet & Sour Mahi Mahi*  
Servings: 25

#### Ingredients

- 9 pounds mahi mahi fish, 6oz fillets
- 3 tablespoons Mrs. Dash seasoning
- 2 cups red bell pepper, julienned
- 2 cups green bell pepper, julienned
- 1 cup red onion, sliced 1/4" thick
- 1 cup carrot, julienned
- 2 cups rice wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce, low sodium
- 1 1/2 cups ketchup
- 1 cup honey
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1 1/2 cups cold water

Season Mahi mahi fillets with Mrs. Dash seasoning.

Make the sweet and sour sauce by first sautéing the fresh vegetables together in a large stock pot or steam kettle until just tender.

Add vinegar, soy sauce, ketchup, and honey to the pot; bring to a low boil then

add the cornstarch slurry slowly to reach the desired thickness. Set aside and keep warm.

To cook the fish: Grill the fillets on a well-oiled flattop grill for about 2 minutes on each side. Cook halfway through. Place into 2" hotel pan evenly. Drizzle olive oil over the fish.

Cook in a 350F oven for about 8-10 minutes until internal temp of 145F is reached and the fish is flaky.

Pour the prepared sauce over the cooked fish evenly before serving. Garnish with fresh Thai basil/chopped parsley.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 81 calories; trace fat (1.1 percent calories from fat); 1g protein; 21g carbohydrate; 1g dietary fiber; 0mg cholesterol; 247mg sodium. Exchanges: 0 grain (starch); 1/2 vegetable; 1 other carbohydrates.

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



**MTD MEETING ABOARD O'BRIEN** – Climbing aboard the World War II-era Liberty ship *Jeremiah O'Brien* in San Francisco are (from left) QEE Thomas Flynn, SIU VP West Coast Nick Marrone and Bosun Glenn Christianson. The *O'Brien* hosted a meeting of the Maritime Trades Department's San Francisco Bay Area and Vicinity Port Maritime Council.



**THANKSGIVING IN HAWAII** – The SIU hall in Honolulu hosted a pre-Thanksgiving gathering for members and guests, some of whom are pictured above and in the photo at the immediate left.

## At Sea and Ashore With the SIU



**HONORED BY ISLA BELLA SHIPMATES** – Electrician John Walsh (left) recently received a retirement plaque from his shipmates aboard the Tote-operated *Isla Bella*, his final vessel in an SIU career dating to 1976. He is pictured with vessel master Capt. Ray Thompson. The plaque (photo below) features a golden reefer plug.



**ABOARD PELICAN STATE** – Pictured in Martinez, California, following a shipboard union meeting Dec. 19 are (from left) GVA Santiago Ruiz, Bosun Anecito Limboy, QEP Oscar Garcia, QE4 Frank Strong, Port Agent Nick Marrone II, AB Kenneth Cooper, AB Albad Colon and AB Richard Swirtz. The ship is operated by Intrepid Personnel and Provisioning.



**ABOARD PRIDE OF AMERICA** – Pictured from left to right are Paul Hall Center Phase II Apprentices Victor Rios Rodriguez, Jose Santos Montalvo, Nestor Costas Lugo, Christian Pagan Villanueva and Eduardo Centeno Rosario.



**WITH SEAFARERS IN SAN JUAN** – Port Agent Amancio Crespo is at left in these three photos, taken at the union hall. In photo above, at left, Paul Hall Center Apprentice Pauline Crespo (Amancio's sister) is ready to ship out for the second phase of the trainee program. Juan Guanill, center photo, proudly displays a certificate reflecting his recent completion of chief steward training in Piney Point, Maryland. In the remaining photo, SA Jonathan Perez holds paperwork for his first voyage.



**ABOARD MAERSK KINLOSS** – Pictured from left are Recertified Steward Juan Vallejo, AB Rommel Lopez, SA Melvin Ellis and Recertified Bosun Ferdinand Gongora.



**ABOARD USNS MAURY** – Chief Steward Ed Ong (left in photo at immediate left) went all out with a Christmas dessert table for fellow mariners on the USMMI-operated ship, and didn't let up with New Year's appetizers (other photo). The LOG has an inside source who reported weight gain aboard the vessel, and we can see why.

# At Sea and Ashore With the SIU



**WELCOME ASHORE IN JERSEY** – Picking up their first pension checks, respectively, at the union hall are AB Osman Raji (left in photo directly above, with Patrolman Ray Henderson) and AB James Coleman (left in photo above, with Port Agent Mark von Siegel).

**WELCOME ASHORE IN HOUSTON** – Longtime Seafarer Rogelio Ybarra (right, with Patrolman J.B. Niday) receives his first pension check at the union hall. He sailed in all three shipboard departments.



**WELCOME ASHORE IN JACKSONVILLE** – Seafarer Ede Sinette Jr. (left) gets his first pension check from SIU Asst. VP Archie Ware. Sinette spent his entire SIU career working for Crowley Towing and Transportation, most recently as a deckhand.

**FULL BOOK IN JACKSONVILLE** – QE4 Latiffe Brooks (right) picks up his full book at the union hall. At left is Patrolman Adam Bucalo.

**FULL BOOK IN OAKLAND** – AB Peter Mertz (left) receives his full B book and is sworn in by SIU VP West Coast Nick Marrone.



**A-BOOK IN JERSEY** – FOWT Myckal Sands (left) gets his A-book at the union hall. Congratulating him is Port Agent Mark von Siegel.



**Mouthwatering Menu on MV Buffalo** - AB Charlie English (far left in group photo) reported a "phenomenal Christmas feast" aboard American Steamship Company's *MV Buffalo*. He's pictured with (starting second from left) SA Nasr Almusab, Chief Cook Saleh and GUDE Ahmed Qasem. Photo credit to GUDE Walid Nasser. The menu included twice baked potatoes, deviled eggs, potato salad, macaroni salad, humus, eggplant dip, chef's green salad, a cheese tray with crackers, smoked salmon, asparagus, dinner rolls, sashimi, guacamole, tabbouleh, grilled and seasoned filet mignon, seasoned lobster with butter, chilled shrimp cocktail with sauce, Virginia baked ham with fruit sauce and sweet potatoes, plus lamb and chicken kebabs. But wait, there's more: Dessert offerings included mincemeat pie, apple pie, pumpkin pie, layered chocolate cake, cherry cake, lemon cake, red velvet cake, chef's own baklava, assorted Christmas cookies and candy, cheesecake and basbousa.



**ABOARD PERLA DEL CARIBE** – These snapshots from the Tote Services-operated vessel were taken in early December and on New Year's Day, respectively. The December pic (directly above) features Chief Cook Bryan Alvarez (left) and Recertified Steward Antonio Mendez displaying a main course. The photo below includes Chief Steward Ingrid Ortiz (left) and Alvarez.



**SHIPBOARD BIRTHDAY** – OS Damon Zschoche is pictured on the *USNS Seay* late last year, on his birthday. Thanks to Bosun John Wells for the photo.



Pictured above is Recertified Bosun Billy Dowzicky. In the photo at right (from left) are Seafarers Tim Heil, De Carlo Harris, William Howell, Robert Brown and Dowzicky with Port Agent Elizabeth Brown.



# Seafarers Activate Cape Wrath in Baltimore

When Seafarers aboard the *Cape Wrath* received word that the Baltimore-based vessel was being activated for a voyage to Charleston, South Carolina, they wasted no time prepping the Crowley-operated ship in early January.

One day before the vessel was scheduled to sail, the *Cape Wrath* was a scene of well-organized, high-tempo activity in all three departments.

"We're taking on stores and conducting safety drills and safety meetings" among other work, noted Recertified Bosun **Billy Dowzicky**. "The vessel is headed to the ship-

yard for routine maintenance that takes place every five years or so."

The bosun added that things were going well as Seafarers and members of the Seafarers-affiliated American Maritime Officers got the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) ship ready.

"So far, it's been great," he said. "It's a good crew and everything is going smoothly."

Recertified Steward **Robert Brown** pointed out, "The first few days of an activation are very challenging. There's a lot to cover, most of it related to safety policies (including fire and boat drills). Having an experienced ROS (reduced operating status) crew really helps to get the new people straight with what they have to do."

During a pre-departure safety meeting, vessel master Capt. Rick Caudle discussed the weather forecast, the scheduled route, habitability, upcoming safety drills and more. He reassured the entire crew that his door is always

open, and encouraged them to always keep safety at the forefront.

While it isn't known exactly how long the vessel will spend in the yard, it is expected to return to its home port in Charm City later this year.

According to the U.S. Maritime Administration, which oversees the RRF, that fleet "was created in 1976 as a sub-set of the National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF) program to support the rapid worldwide deployment of U.S. military forces. As a key element of Department of Defense (DOD) strategic sealift, the RRF primarily supports transport of Army and Marine Corps unit equipment, combat support equipment, and initial resupply during the critical surge period before commercial ships can be marshaled. The RRF provides nearly one-half of the government-owned surge sealift capability."

The agency also noted the outstanding reliability of RRF vessels, most of which carry SIU crews.



AB Erick Johnson



AB De Carlo Harris



AB Tim Heil



AB Ronnell Williams



Electrician Chuck Searfass



The *Cape Wrath* is part of America's Ready Reserve Force.



SA Michael Bean



Chief Cook Greg Blaylock



Recertified Steward Robert Brown

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2/17

## What's New for the 2017 Tax Filing Season

Following are some of the changes that took effect in 2016 and 2017, along with provisions that remain in effect from 2015. Please check [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) before filing your return.

**Due date of return** - File Form 1040 by April 18, 2017.  
**Exemptions** - The personal exemption and the dependency exemption increased to \$4,050 for 2016. For tax year 2016, the phase-out is reinstated at the higher threshold of \$259,400 for single individuals, \$285,350 for heads of household, \$311,300 for married filing joint, and \$155,650 for married filing separately.  
 For tax year 2017, the phase-out will increase to \$261,500 for single individuals, \$287,650 for heads of household, \$313,800 for married filing joint, and \$156,900 for married filing separately.

**Standard Deductions** - The standard deduction for married couples filing a joint return has remained \$12,600 for 2016. The standard deduction for single individuals and married couples filing separate returns has remained \$6,300 for 2016. The standard deduction for heads of household increased to \$9,300 for 2016. The additional standard deduction for people who have reached age 65 (or who are blind) is \$1,250 for married taxpayers or \$1,550 for unmarried taxpayers.

You can use the 2016 Standard Deduction Worksheet or see page 142 from Publication 17 which can be found on [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) to figure your standard deduction.

**Itemized Deductions** - For tax year 2016, the phase-out is reinstated at the higher threshold of \$259,400 for single individuals, \$285,350 for heads of household, \$311,300 for married filing joint, and \$155,650 for married filing separately.

For tax year 2017, the phase-out will increase to \$261,500 for single individuals, \$287,650 for heads of household, \$313,800 for married filing joint, and \$156,900 for married filing separately.

High-income taxpayers are also subject to limits on exemptions and deductions in 2016. The income threshold for the Pease and PEP (personal exemption phase-out) limitations is \$311,300 of adjusted gross income (AGI) for joint filers and \$259,400 for singles. The Pease limitation reduces the value of charitable contributions, mortgage interest, state, local, and property taxes; and miscellaneous itemized deductions. For 2016, this limitation is the lesser of 3% of AGI above the threshold up to 80% of the amount of the itemized deductions otherwise allowable. The PEP limitation reduces the total personal exemption by 2% for every \$2,500 of income above the same income thresholds with no upper limitations. That means it's possible for some taxpayers to completely phase-out of their personal exemptions.

**Medical Care Itemized Deduction Threshold** - For 2016, the threshold for the itemized deduction for unreimbursed medical expenses remains at 10% of adjusted gross income for regular income tax purposes. In years 2013 - 2017, if either the taxpayer or the taxpayer's spouse has turned 65 before the end of the 2016 tax year, the threshold of 7.5% of adjusted gross income applies.

**Earned Income Credit (EIC)** - The EIC is a credit for certain people who work. The credit may give you a refund even if you do not owe any tax. The maximum amount of income you can earn and credit available increased for 2016:

- Credit of \$6,269 if you have three or more qualifying children and you earn less than \$47,955 (\$53,505 if married filing jointly)
- Credit of \$5,572 if you have two qualifying children and you earn less than \$44,648 (\$50,198 if married filing jointly)
- Credit of \$3,373 if you have one qualifying child and you earn less than \$39,296 (\$44,846 if married filing jointly), or
- Credit of \$506 if you do not have a qualifying child and you earn less than \$14,880 (\$20,430 if married filing jointly)

The maximum amount of investment income you can have and still get the credit has increased to \$3,400 in 2016.

For tax years beginning after 2015 - a TIN is not valid for EIC purposes unless it was used on or before the due date of the return.

**Social Security and Medicare Taxes** - The maximum amount of wages subject to the Social Security tax for 2016 is \$118,500.

There is no limit on the amount of wages subject to the Medicare tax. In 2016, hospital insurance tax in addition to the Medicare tax will be an additional 0.9% tax on wages that exceed the following threshold amounts: \$250,000 for married filing jointly and surviving spouses, \$125,000 for married filing separately and \$200,000 for all others. This additional assessment also applies to self-employed workers. For 2017, the maximum amount of wages subject to Social Security tax is \$127,200.

**Self-Employment Tax Rate and Deduction** - The FICA portion of the self-employment tax is 12.4% in 2016. The Medicare portion of the SE tax is 2.9% not including the 0.9% additional tax on the amounts above the applicable thresholds as noted above. As a result, the SE tax rate increased to 15.3%. The deduction is equal to one-half of self-employment tax.

**Capital Gains and Losses** - Continuing from 2012 you must report your capital gains and losses on Form 8949 and report the totals on Schedule D. If you sold a covered security in 2016, your broker will report the cost basis on your Form 1099-B. Refer to the IRS website at [www.irs.gov/form8949](http://www.irs.gov/form8949) for additional information and other new developments affecting this form and Schedule D.

**Qualified Dividend and Capital Gains Tax Rate** - In 2016, the tax rate on long-term gains and qualified dividends is 20% for income that exceeds the 39.6% tax bracket threshold amount of:

- \$466,950 for married filing jointly and surviving spouses
- \$441,000 for head of household
- \$233,475 for married filing separately
- \$415,050 for single

The rate goes down to 15% for lower tax brackets and then 0% for 10%-15% tax brackets. In 2016, capital gain income will be subject to an additional 3.8% Medicare tax for income that exceeds the threshold amounts listed above.

**Medicare Tax on Investment Income** - In 2016, a tax equal to 3.8% of the lesser of the individual's net investment income for the year or the amount the individual's modified adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds the threshold amount. The threshold amounts for the additional Medicare tax are as follows:

- \$250,000 for married filing jointly and surviving spouses

- \$125,000 for married filing separately
- \$200,000 for all others

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

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

**Adoption credit** - The maximum adoption credit has increased to \$13,460 per child with adjusted gross income phase out starting at \$201,920. For 2016, the credit is nonrefundable. Any unused credit can be carried forward for five years. In general, the adoption credit is based on the reasonable and necessary expenses related to a legal adoption, including adoption fees, court costs, attorney's fees and travel expenses. Income limits and other special rules apply. In addition to filling out Form 8839, Qualified Adoption Expenses, eligible taxpayers must include with their 2016 tax returns one or more adoption-related documents.

**Child Tax Credit** - The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 extends the enhanced child tax credit of \$1,000 maximum credit per child through the end of 2017.  
 For 2016 tax year, the child tax credit starts to be reduced when income reaches the following levels:

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

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

The child tax credit is generally nonrefundable credit that is limited to regular tax liability plus alternative minimum tax liability. However, a portion of the credit is refundable for certain taxpayers (see Form 8812 and IRS Pub. 972).

**New changes for 2016:** Taxpayers cannot claim the Child Tax Credit for any tax year if the individual or a qualifying child did not have an individual TIN issued on or before the due date of the return for that tax year. For tax years beginning after 2015 - the Child Tax Credit is not allowed for (1) two tax years after a final determination of reckless or intentional disregard of rules and regulations or (2) 10 tax years after a final determination of fraud. If the Child Tax Credit is denied due to failure to supply required information to the IRS, no Child Tax Credit is allowed for any later tax year unless the taxpayer supplies the needed information.

**Child and Dependent Care Credit** - For 2016, there is a credit of \$3,000 for cost to care for one child under age of 13 or up to \$6,000 for two or more children so that the parents can either go to work or be in process of looking for work. There must be earned income in order to take the credit (the credit amount has not changed).

**The American Opportunity Tax Credit** - For tax year 2016, the maximum credit amount can be up to \$2,500 and up to \$1,000 of that credit amount may be refundable. The credit applies to the first 4 years of post-secondary education in a degree or certificate program.

The credit is calculated by taking 100% of the first \$2,000 of qualified tuition and related educational expenses and 25% of the next \$2,000 of such expenses. The credit is gradually reduced if your Modified AGI is:

- \$80,000 to \$90,000 for Single, Head of Household, and Qualifying Widow(er)
- \$160,000 to \$180,000 for Married Filing Joint

The American opportunity credit was made permanent for tax years beginning after December 18, 2015.

**New changes for 2016:** Taxpayers cannot claim the American Opportunity Credit for any tax year if the individual or a student did not have a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) issued on or before the due date of the return for that tax year. For tax years beginning after 2015, the American Opportunity Credit is not allowed for (1) two tax years after a final determination of reckless or intentional disregard of rules and regulations or (2) 10 tax years after a final determination of fraud. If the American Opportunity Credit is denied due to failure to supply required information to the IRS, no American Opportunity Credit is allowed for any later tax year unless the taxpayer supplies the needed information. Taxpayers must report the Employer Identification Number (EIN) of the educational institution to which payments were made.

**Lifetime Learning Credit** - For tax year 2016, the maximum credit amount per tax return can be up to \$2,000. The credit is calculated by taking 20% of the educational expenses on the first \$10,000 of qualified educational expenses. The credit is gradually reduced if your Modified AGI exceeds \$55,000 (\$111,000 if married filing joint return) and is completely eliminated if your Modified AGI exceeds \$65,000 (\$131,000 if married filing joint return). The credit cannot be claimed if your filing status is "married filing separately".

There is no limit on the number of years for which the credit can be claimed for each student.

**Tuition and Fees Deductions** - For 2016, you may be able to deduct up to \$4,000 for taxpayers with AGI of \$65,000 or less (\$130,000 for joint filers) and the maximum amount of the deduction will be reduced for taxpayers with AGI above \$65,000 but less than or equal to \$80,000 (\$130,000 and \$160,000, respectively, for joint filers) for qualified educational expenses paid for yourself, spouse or dependent even if you do not itemize deductions on Schedule A.

Taxpayers cannot claim tuition and fees tax deduction in the same year they claim American Opportunity Credit or Lifetime Learning Credit. Taxpayers who choose to claim the tuition and fees deduction must fill out and attach Form 8917. The resulting deduction is reported on Form 1040 Line 34 or Form 1040A Line 19.

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

## Tax Tips for Members

### How to Prepare A Tax Return

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

■ Interest payment records for items such as a home mortgage or home equity loan

■ Records of payments for child care so an individual could work

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

**Step 3.** Fill in the return.

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

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

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

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

**Fast Refund:** Taxpayers are able to request direct deposit of their tax refunds by filling out lines 76b, 76c and 76d on their Form 1040. Line 76b is for the bank's routing number. Line 76c indicates the type of account, and line 76d is the taxpayer's account number at the bank. When tax returns are filed electronically, a refund will be received in about 3 weeks or in 2 weeks if it is deposited directly into a savings or checking account. For a charge, many professional tax return

### Standard Deduction

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

Filing Status	Standard Deduction
Single and Married filing separate	\$ 6,300
Married filing joint return or qualifying widow(er) with dependent children	\$12,600
Head of household	\$ 9,300

Continued on Page 14

preparers offer electronic filing in addition to their return preparation services. Beginning in 2009, individuals that prepare his or her own return can access most commonly used Federal tax forms from the IRS website and website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

### What Are Considered Deductions and Credits

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

**Standard Deduction:** The standard deduction, or dollar amount that reduces the amount that is taxed, remained the same for married couples filing jointly in 2016 at \$12,600. The standard deduction for single individuals and married couples filing separate returns also remained the same in 2016 at \$6,300. The standard deduction for heads of household increased to \$9,300 for 2016.

**Personal Interest Deductions:** For 2016, personal interest cannot be deducted. Personal interest includes interest on car loans, credit cards, personal loans and tax deficiencies.

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

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

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

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

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

employer, are likely to be considered tax-deductible.

**Deducting Work-Related Car Expenses:** Use of a personally owned automobile in work-related travel can result in deductible expenses. Two methods can be used to compute automobile expenses—either listing a standard mileage rate or determining actual cost. On the tax return, due April 18 of this year, the IRS is accepting a standard mileage rate. The rate for 2016 is 54 cents. Parking fees and tolls can be added when using the standard mileage rate. If using actual expenses, information must be available on all operating-related costs for the vehicle, including insurance, licenses, maintenance, repairs, depreciation, gas, oil, tolls and parking. The IRS recommends keeping a log book or diary listing all expenses related to travel, for both the standard mileage rate and actual cost method, to ensure accurate records. Only work related expenses not reimbursed by an employer can be claimed.

**Deducting Work-Related Meals When Traveling:** You can use a special standard meal allowance if you work in the transportation industry. You are in the transportation industry if your work:

■ Directly involves moving people or goods by airplane, barge, bus, ship, train, or truck, and

■ Regularly requires you to travel away from home and, during any single trip, usually involves travel to areas eligible for different standard meal allowance rates.

If this applies to you, you can claim a standard meal allowance of \$63 a day (\$68 for travel outside the continental United States) from January 1 through December 31, 2016. Using special rates for transportation workers eliminates the need for you to determine the standard meal allowance for every area where you stop for sleep or rest. If you choose to use the special rate for any trip, you must use the special rate (and not use the regular standard meals allowance rates) for all trips you take that year.

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

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

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

### Other Tax Information

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

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

### Which Records To Keep

Keep records of income (such as receipts), deductions (for example, canceled checks) and credits shown on the tax return, as well as any worksheets used to figure them, until the statute of limitations runs out for that return, usually 3 years from the date the return was due or filed, or 2 years from the

date the tax was paid, whichever is later. However, it is recommended that all records be kept for about 6 years. Some records should be kept even longer. For example, keep property records (your home, stocks) as long as they are needed to figure the basis of property.

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

**Death of a Taxpayer:** If a taxpayer died before filing a required return for 2016, the taxpayer's personal representative (and spouse, in the case of a joint return) must file and sign the return for that person. A personal representative can be an executor, administrator or anyone who is in charge of the taxpayer's property.

### Which Income To Report

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

■ Jones Act settlements for lost wages

■ Amounts received in place of wages from accident and health plans (including sick pay and disability pensions) if employer paid for the policy

■ Life insurance proceeds from a policy cashed in if the proceeds are more than the premium paid

- Canceled debts
- State income tax refunds
- Rents
- Repayments
- Royalties
- Unemployment benefits
- Profits from corporations, partnerships, estates and trusts
- Endowments
- Original Issue Discount
- Distributions from self-employed plans
- Bartering income (fair-market value of goods or services received in return for services)
- Tier 2 and supplemental annuities under the Railroad Retirement Act
- Lump-sum distributions
- Gains from the sale or exchange (including barter) of real estate, securities, coins, gold, silver, gems or other property (capital gains)
- Accumulation distributions from trusts
- Prizes and awards (contests, raffles, lottery and gambling winnings)
- Earned income from sources outside the United States
- Director's fees
- Fees received as an executor or administrator of an estate
- Embezzled or other illegal income
- Social Security benefits

### Why Seafarers Must Pay State Income Tax

Federal law prohibits employers from withholding state and local taxes from the wages of mariners working aboard U.S.-flag ships. Specifically, the law [46 USCA 11108(11)] provides that "no part of the wages due or accruing to a master, officer or any other seaman who is a member of the crew on a vessel engaged in the foreign, coastwise, intercoastal, interstate or non-contiguous trade shall be withheld pursuant to the provisions of the tax laws of any state, territory, possession or commonwealth, or a subdivision of any of them, but nothing in this section shall prohibit any such withholding of the wages of any seaman who is employed in the coastwise

trade between ports in the same state if such withholding is pursuant to a voluntary agreement between such seaman and his employer."

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

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

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

**Where Is My Refund**  
 If taxpayers have not received a refund check within 28 days from the original IRS mailing date, information can be accessed through the website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). To get the refund status, taxpayers will need to provide the information from their tax returns. You should know your Social Security Number (or IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number), Filing Status (Single, Married Filing Joint Return, Married Filing Separate Return, Head of Household, or Qualifying Widow(er)) and the refund amount. It is important to enter the refund amount exactly as it is shown on your return.

**Where To Get Information**  
**General Information:** 1-800-829-1040 may be called for general information between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. your local time.  
**Publications:** Call 1-800-829-3676 to order current and prior year forms, instructions and publications.  
**Walk-In Help:** IRS representatives are available in many IRS offices around the country to help with tax questions that cannot be answered easily by telephone. To find the location of an IRS office, look in the phone book under "United States Government, Internal Revenue Service."  
**Telephone Help:** The IRS is prepared to answer questions by phone. Through the agency's taxpayer information service, publications covering all aspects of tax-filing can be ordered. The federal Tele-Tax system has recorded tax information covering about 150 topics. 1-800-829-4477 is the IRS's automated Tele-Tax system. When calling from a touch tone phone, the number "9" will repeat the topic and the number "2" will cancel the topic. To listen to a directory of topics after the introductory message finishes, dial 123. You can also check the status of your refund. This telephone service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  
**Personal Computer:** Access the IRS's internet website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) to: download forms, instructions and publications; see answers to frequently asked tax questions; search publications on-line by topic or keyword; figure your withholding allowances using their W-4 calculator; check the status of your refund; send the IRS comments or requests for help via email; and sign up to receive local and national tax news by email.  
**Send IRS Written Questions:** Written questions regarding the tax returns can be sent directly to an IRS District Director (listed on the tax form). Include a Social Security number with the letter.

### Away At Tax Time

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

Amounts received from insurance because of loss of the use of a home due to fire or other casualty to the extent the amounts were more than the cost of normal expenses while living in the home

■ Certain amounts received as a scholarship

### Filing an Extension

Taxpayers can get an automatic 6-month extension if, no later than April 18, 2017, Form 4868 will be filed with the IRS. It is important to remember that a 6-month extension to file does not extend the time to pay the taxes. Form 4868, when sent in, must be accompanied by all tax monies due to the U.S. government.

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trade between ports in the same state if such withholding is pursuant to a voluntary agreement between such seaman and his employer."

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# Various Changes Greet Tax Filers During 2017 Season

Continued from Page 12

**Educator Expenses** – The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015 permanently extends the above-the-line deduction for eligible elementary and secondary school teachers of up to \$250 per year (\$500 if you and your spouse were both eligible educators) for expenses paid or incurred for books, certain supplies, computer and other equipment, and supplementary materials used in the classroom. The Act also modifies the deduction by indexing the \$250 ceiling amount to inflation beginning in 2016. For tax years beginning after 2015, eligible expenses also include expenses for professional development courses the educator takes related to the curriculum he teaches or to the student he teaches.

**State & Local Sales and Use Tax Deduction** – In 2016 the taxpayer can elect to deduct state and local general sales and use taxes instead of state and local income taxes as an itemized deduction.

## Individual Retirement Accounts

**Education IRAs (Coverdell Education Savings Account)** – Taxpayers can contribute up to \$2,000 each year to an Education IRA for a person under age 18. The contribution is not deductible. Earnings on the contribution will be distributed tax-free provided that they are used to pay the beneficiary's postsecondary education expenses.

**Traditional IRAs** – For 2016, the contribution limit to a traditional IRA is the lesser of \$5,500 or your compensation. For taxpayers age 50 or older as of year-end, an additional catch-up contribution of up to \$1,000 is allowed. Thus, the 2016 contribution limit for these taxpayers is the lesser of \$6,500 or your compensation. For the deduction, the Modified Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) phase-out range in 2016 is \$61,001-\$71,000 for single and head of household, \$98,001-\$118,000 for married couples filing jointly or qualifying widow(er), and less than \$10,000 for married individuals filing separate returns when a taxpayer is covered by an employer's retirement plan at any time during the year.

**Roth IRAs** – The maximum total yearly contribution that can be made by an individual to a Roth IRA is the lesser of \$5,500 (increased to \$6,500 for taxpayers age 50 or older at year end) or your compensation. Roth IRAs are subject to income limits. The maximum yearly contribution is phased out for single and head of household taxpayers with an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) between \$117,000 and \$132,000, for joint filers and qualifying widow(er) with an AGI between \$184,000 and \$194,000, and married filing separate filers with an AGI between \$0 and \$10,000. Although the contributions are not deductible, the distributions may be tax-free depending on when and why they are made.

**Special Charitable Contributions for Certain IRA Owners** – The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act of 2015 permanently extends the Qualified Charitable Distributions. It offers older owners of IRAs a different way to give to charity. An IRA owner age 70 and one-half or older can directly transfer, tax-free, up to \$100,000 per year to eligible charities. Known as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), this option is available for distributions from IRAs, regardless of whether the owners itemize their deductions. Distributions from employer-sponsored retirement plans, including SIMPLE IRAs and simplified employee pension (SEP) plans, are not eligible to be treated as a qualified charitable distribution.

To qualify, the funds must be contributed directly by the IRA trustee to an eligible charity. Amounts so transferred are not taxable and no deduction is available for the transfer.

Not all charities are eligible. For example, donor-advised funds and supporting organizations are not eligible recipients. Remember to check eligibility of the charity before requesting a QCD.

All QCDs from an IRA to eligible charities are counted in determining whether the owner has met the IRA's required minimum distribution. Where individuals have made nondeductible contributions to their traditional IRAs, a special rule treats QCD amounts as coming first from taxable funds, instead of proportionately from taxable and nontaxable funds, as would be the case with regular distributions.

**Foreign Financial Assets** – If you had foreign financial assets in 2016, you may have to file Form 8938 with your return. In addition, a separate FBAR document must be e-filed by April 18, 2017 if the aggregate value of the foreign accounts exceeds \$10,000 in any given month of the year.

**Divorced or Separated Parents** – A custodial parent who revoked their previous release of a claim to a child's exemption must include a

copy of the revocation with their return.

## Repayment of First-Time Homebuyer Credit

– If you have to repay the credit, you may be able to do so without attaching Form 5405. Repayment is reported directly on Form 1040, line 60b.

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

## Nonbusiness Energy Property Credit

– The nonbusiness energy property credit has been extended through December 31, 2016 with same \$500 lifetime cap.

## Residential Energy Efficient Property Credit

– This credit remains unchanged, and equals 30% of what a homeowner spends on qualifying property such as solar electric property, solar water heating property, fuel cell property, small wind energy property, and geothermal heat pump property. Generally, labor costs are included when calculating this credit. Also, no cap exists on the amount of credit available, except in the case of fuel cells. Unused portion of this credit is carried forward to next year's tax return. The credit is extended through 2021, but with a reduction of the percentage used starting in 2020.

**Standard mileage rates** – The standard mileage rate for 2016 is 54 cents per mile for business miles driven and was decreased to 19 cents per mile for medical or moving expenses. The rate for providing services for a charity is set by statute and equals 14 cents per mile.

**Deduction for corrosive drywall** – You may be able to claim a casualty loss deduction for amounts you paid to repair damage to your home and household appliances that resulted from corrosive drywall. Under this procedure, you treat the amounts paid for repairs as a casualty loss in the year of payment. The deduction is limited if you have a pending claim for reimbursement (or intend to pursue reimbursement) through property insurance, litigation, or other means.

**Personal Casualty & Theft Loss** – This loss remains unchanged from 2015. The loss is limited to the excess of the loss over \$100. The 10% of AGI limit still applies.

**Foreign Earned Income Exclusion** – For tax year 2016, the maximum foreign earned income exclusion amount is \$101,300. This amount is up \$500 from tax year 2015.

## The Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) Exemption

– AMT exemptions have been permanently extended and indexed for inflation. Exemption amounts help prevent some middle income earners from being subject to the AMT, and help keep any AMT adjustments less than they otherwise might have been.

For tax year 2016, the alternative minimum tax exemption increases to the following levels:

- \$83,800 for married couples filing a joint return and qualifying widows and widowers, up from \$83,400 in 2015.
- \$41,900 for married couples filing separately, up from \$41,700.
- \$53,900 for singles and heads of household, up from \$53,600.

**Health Care Coverage** – In 2016, individuals must have health care coverage, to qualify for a health care coverage exemption or make shared responsibility payment with their tax return.

**Coverage Exemptions:** An individual may be exempt from the requirement to maintain minimum essential coverage and thus will not have to make a shared responsibility payment if, for 2016, he:

- Has no affordable coverage options because the minimum amount he must pay for the annual premiums is more than 8.13% of his household income;
- Has a gap in coverage for less than three consecutive months or
- Qualifies for an exemption for one of several other reasons, including having a hardship that prevents him from obtaining coverage, or belonging to a group explicitly exempt from the requirement.

If the taxpayer, spouse or any of the dependents did not have minimum coverage for any month in 2016, a payment needs to be computed and reported on Form 1040, line 61.

For 2016, the annual payment amount is the greater of:

- 2.5% percent of the household income that is above the tax return filing threshold for taxpayer's filing status, or
- The family's flat dollar amount, which is \$695 per adult and \$347.50 per child, limited to a family maximum of \$2,085.

**Premium Tax Credit** – Individuals with low to moderate income who get health cover-

age through the Health Insurance Marketplace may be eligible for this refundable credit.

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

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

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

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

■ Cannot be claimed as a dependent by another person.

The PTC is based on a sliding scale. Those with lower incomes get a larger credit. The PTC for the year is the sum of the monthly credit amounts. The credit amount for each month is the lesser of:

■ The premiums for the month for one or more qualified health plans in which the taxpayer or any individual in his tax family enrolled; or

■ The monthly premium for the taxpayer's applicable second lowest cost silver plan less his monthly contribution amount.

**Health coverage tax credit (HCTC)** – The health care tax credit is a tax credit that pays a percentage of health insurance premiums for certain eligible taxpayers and their qualifying family members. The health coverage tax credit is a separate tax credit with different eligibility rules than the premium tax credit. You may have received monthly advance payments of the health coverage tax credit beginning in July 2016.

**Affordable Care Act** – Several very important provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that affect individuals and businesses first became effective in 2015. The Employer Shared Responsibility provision of the Affordable Care Act requires employers with 50 or more full-time equivalent employees to either offer minimum essential coverage that is "affordable" and that provides "minimum value" to their full-time employees and their dependents, or potentially make an employer shared responsibility payment to the IRS.

**Cadillac Tax** – In December of 2015, Congress passed and the President signed a two-year delay of the 40 percent excise tax on high-cost employer-sponsored health plans. This delay was part of a year-end governmental funding package and changes the effective date from 2018 to 2020. Originally the tax was non-deductible, but in 2015 Congress made the tax deductible for employers who pay it.

**Transit Benefits** – The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015 permanently extends transit benefits. These include van pool benefits, transit passes and qualified parking. Beginning in 2016, the inflation adjusted monthly exclusion amount will be \$255 (up from \$250 in 2015).

**Earned Income Credit and Additional Child Tax Credit** – IRS Refund Claim – Beginning with 2016 returns, the IRS has additional time to review refund claims based on the Earned Income Credit or the refundable portion of the additional Child Tax Credit in order to reduce fraud and improper payments. No credit or refund for an overpayment shall be made to a taxpayer before February 15th following the close of the tax year, if the taxpayer claimed the Earned Income Credit or additional Child Tax Credit. For 2016 returns claiming refunds due to the Earned Income Credit or the additional Child Tax Credit, no refund will be made before February 15, 2017.

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

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

**Olympic and Paralympic medals and USOC prize money** – If you receive Olympic and Paralympic medals and United States Olympic Committee prize money, the value of the medals and the amount of the prize money may be nontaxable.

**Extended Filing and Payment Deadline** – Section 7503 states that filing and payment

deadlines that fall on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday are timely satisfied if met on the next business day. April 15, 2017 is on Saturday, and the Emancipation Day holiday will be observed in the District of Columbia the following Monday. Therefore, most individuals will have until Tuesday, April 18, 2017 to file their 2016 Forms 1040.

**Tax Rates for 2016** – President Bush Era tax rates were made permanent in 2013 with a 39.6% bracket (for single individuals at \$415,050, head of household at \$441,000, married filing jointly at \$466,950 and married filing separately at \$233,475). Trust and estates will hit the 39.6% bracket at \$12,400. The rate for capital gains and qualified dividends is 20% if the income is in excess of the threshold amount:

- \$415,050 for single individuals
- \$441,000 for heads of household
- \$466,950 for married filing joint
- \$233,475 for married filing separately

## Exclusion of Cancellation of Indebtedness on Principal Residence

– Cancellation of indebtedness income is generally includable in income. However, the Tax Relief Act excludes from income cancellation of debt on a principal residence of up to \$2 million. The Mortgage Forgiveness Tax Relief Act of 2015 extends the provision through 2016.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## February & March Membership Meetings

Piney Point.....	Monday: February 6, March 6
Algonac.....	Friday: February 10, March 10
Baltimore.....	Thursday: February 9, March 9
Guam.....	Thursday: February 23, March 23
Honolulu.....	Friday: February 17, March 17
Houston.....	Monday: February 13, March 13
Jacksonville.....	Thursday: February 9, March 9
Joliet.....	Thursday: February 16, March 16
Mobile.....	Wednesday: February 15, March 15
New Orleans.....	Tuesday: February 14, March 14
Jersey City.....	Tuesday: February 7, March 7
Norfolk.....	Thursday: February 9, March 9
Oakland.....	Thursday: February 16, March 16
Philadelphia.....	Wednesday: February 8, March 8
Port Everglades.....	Thursday: February 16, March 16
San Juan.....	Thursday: February 9, March 9
St. Louis.....	Friday: February 17, March 17
Tacoma.....	Friday: February 24, March 24
Wilmington.....	*Tuesday: February 21, Monday: March 20

\*Wilmington change created by Washington's Birthday observance.

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

### USS RISING: A CAPITAL FUNDING CAMPAIGN

THE UNITED SEAMEN'S SERVICE  
CALLING THE WORLD



SUPPORT SEAFARERS MOVING OUR  
CARS, MACHINERY, CLOTHING  
FOOD, OIL, ELECTRONICS, MILITARY  
EQUIPMENT AND MORE!

CROWD FUNDING SITE: [www.youcaring.com/USSRising](http://www.youcaring.com/USSRising)

<p>"In Right to Work for Less states..."</p>	<p>"...there is more poverty, higher infant mortality &amp; work place fatalities."</p>
<p>"Supporting unions can make a difference in your life..."</p>	<p>"...a \$1558 per year difference."</p>

## Dispatchers' Report for Deep Sea

December 15, 2016 - January 15, 2017

Port	Total Registered			Total Shipped			Trip Reliefs	Registered on Beach		
	All Groups A	All Groups B	All Groups C	All Groups A	All Groups B	All Groups C		All Groups A	All Groups B	All Groups C
<b>Deck Department</b>										
Algonac	31	12	1	1	2	1	0	49	15	2
Anchorage	2	0	0	2	2	0	2	2	1	0
Baltimore	4	1	0	6	2	1	3	6	4	2
Fort Lauderdale	23	10	4	13	6	2	5	30	21	4
Guam	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	4	5	0
Harvey	14	0	2	7	0	1	4	23	3	6
Honolulu	6	2	1	7	6	1	5	18	10	1
Houston	49	3	8	47	7	9	28	99	10	14
Jacksonville	42	15	11	26	12	8	20	63	25	20
Jersey City	39	15	3	26	10	2	19	69	20	4
Joliet	7	3	2	4	0	1	2	6	6	2
Mobile	10	2	2	6	2	1	0	9	5	7
Norfolk	20	13	3	20	9	3	11	32	32	1
Oakland	18	6	2	14	3	2	5	26	7	1
Philadelphia	5	5	0	4	4	0	5	5	6	0
Piney Point	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	0
Puerto Rico	7	2	1	6	1	1	0	11	13	1
Tacoma	32	11	3	24	7	2	15	66	15	4
St. Louis	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	4	3
Wilmington	31	6	2	23	5	1	5	50	24	5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Engine Department</b>										
Algonac	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	1
Anchorage	1	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Baltimore	3	5	0	1	4	0	0	7	5	2
Fort Lauderdale	5	5	3	7	3	0	3	11	8	3
Guam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Harvey	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	2	3	1
Honolulu	5	1	0	6	5	0	0	16	9	0
Houston	23	5	1	12	8	1	8	31	9	4
Jacksonville	24	14	2	17	11	2	8	37	27	4
Jersey City	14	6	1	12	3	1	5	25	14	3
Joliet	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	1	0
Mobile	4	3	0	4	4	1	2	6	2	1
Norfolk	11	7	1	12	10	1	5	17	18	2
Oakland	11	2	1	8	2	0	4	18	6	2
Philadelphia	3	1	0	3	0	1	0	2	2	0
Piney Point	1	2	1	0	2	0	2	2	3	1
Puerto Rico	1	3	1	3	2	0	2	8	11	2
Tacoma	10	4	1	12	2	0	4	34	13	1
St. Louis	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0
Wilmington	13	5	2	9	9	1	5	17	13	2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Steward Department</b>										
Algonac	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	3	0
Anchorage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baltimore	2	1	0	4	1	0	3	3	0	0
Fort Lauderdale	12	3	1	5	3	1	4	18	4	1
Guam	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	0
Harvey	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	9	1	0
Honolulu	10	0	1	8	3	1	4	16	5	1
Houston	13	4	0	15	2	1	5	39	8	1
Jacksonville	15	4	0	10	4	1	3	30	8	1
Jersey City	8	2	0	1	2	0	0	21	7	1
Joliet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Mobile	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	4	3	1
Norfolk	11	10	0	10	7	0	8	17	17	0
Oakland	13	3	0	10	2	0	6	33	8	4
Philadelphia	5	1	1	1	0	0	1	5	2	1
Piney Point	1	5	0	2	1	0	1	7	4	0
Puerto Rico	4	4	0	3	1	0	1	6	8	0
Tacoma	15	4	0	7	1	1	6	27	4	0
St. Louis	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Wilmington	17	3	3	19	5	3	11	35	5	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Entry Department</b>										
Algonac	5	12	2	1	0	1	0	6	20	4
Anchorage	0	2	3	0	0	2	0	0	2	5
Baltimore	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	4
Fort Lauderdale	0	2	6	1	3	2	2	0	4	8
Guam	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Harvey	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	1	7
Honolulu	0	7	4	0	3	4	0	2	9	11
Houston	5	6	6	2	10	1	3	10	11	10
Jacksonville	1	9	19	2	7	14	1	3	28	39
Jersey City	1	16	0	1	3	3	1	5	36	6
Joliet	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1
Mobile	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Norfolk	0	12	10	0	8	8	0	1	27	25
Oakland	0	7	3	1	6	9	3	4	14	10
Philadelphia	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0
Piney Point	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	3	0
Puerto Rico	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	8	0	2
Tacoma	9	7	9	2	7	5	2	10	20	11
St. Louis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Wilmington	0	16	15	3	7	11	5	3	28	35
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>299</b>

## Seafarers International Union Directory

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



### HEADQUARTERS

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

### ALGONAC

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

### ANCHORAGE

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

### BALTIMORE

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

### GUAM

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

### HONOLULU

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

### HOUSTON

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

### JACKSONVILLE

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

### JERSEY CITY

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

### JOLIET

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

### MOBILE

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

### NEW ORLEANS

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

### NORFOLK

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

### OAKLAND

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

### PHILADELPHIA

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

### PINEY POINT

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

### PORT EVERGLADES

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

### SANTURCE

1057 Fernandez Juncos Ave., Stop 16  
 Santurce, PR 00907  
 (787) 721-4033

### ST. LOUIS/ALTON

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

### TACOMA

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

### WILMINGTON

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



## Inquiring Seafarer

This month's question was answered by SIU members Dec. 12 in Houston, just before the dedication of the new hiring hall.

### Question: What do you think of the new hall?



**Carlos Avila**  
*AB*

I'm new in this environment and it's very nice. It looks very good, and the space – there's more room along with the parking lot. Also, the officials here are very knowledgeable.



**John Cain**  
*Shoregang Bosun*

It's fantastic, beautiful and unbelievable. I love everything about it. I'm proud they let us do it. It's a nice hall for the future here in Houston. We really did quite well.



**Kervin Guevara**  
*AB*

It looks awesome. It's bigger and well-organized. I like it. The parking is a lot better and the screen for jobs.... There's a bus stop right in front if you don't have a vehicle. It's close to my house, too.



**Azad Davani**  
*QMED*

I love it. It's nice. I just came back about two weeks ago, and I think it's beautiful. It's neat and clean and there's a lot of room. I'm very happy with it.



**Andy Lopez**  
*OMU (Retired)*

It's great – a real nice place. It's a lot better than downtown. I grew up in this neighborhood. This location is better and we have better parking. It was hard trying to park by the old hall.

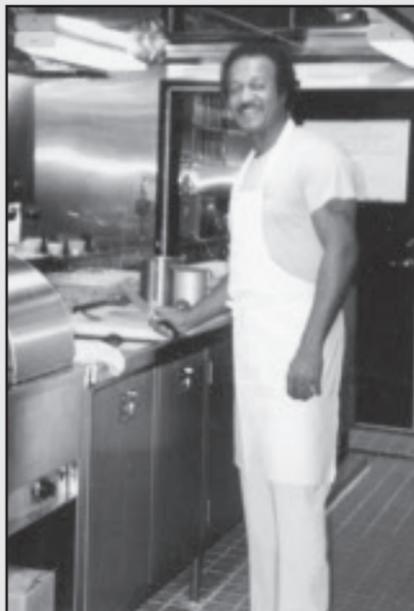


**Verleshia Robinson**  
*Chief Steward*

It's beautiful and very organized. It's an increase in space, and the parking space is a tremendous increase. It feels very secure. Less traffic is the biggest difference, and the area has a better feel. I believe members are more comfortable here.

## Pics From The Past

Charlotte Cannon-Richardson submitted these snapshots of her late husband, Chief Steward Bert Richardson, who passed away last year. Brother Richardson became a union member in the late 1960s, originally sailing as a member of the Marine Cooks and Stewards (MC&S), which later merged into the SIU. Bert Richardson was part of the first group of African American MC&S members to become chief stewards. The Mississippi native sailed until 1998. SIU Assistant Vice President Nick Celona notes that Bert Richardson also played a vital role in helping launch and sustain the union's San Francisco/Oakland area Thanksgiving celebration, a popular event for the past 26 years. "Bert was an outstanding union member and an even better individual," Celona stated.



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

# Welcome Ashore

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



## DEEP SEA

### AARON ANDERSON

Brother Aaron Anderson, 65, began sailing with the SIU in 2003 in Houston. He originally shipped on the *Green Dale*. Brother Anderson enhanced his skills often at the SIU-affiliated school in Piney Point, Maryland. He was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia, and sailed in the engine department. Brother Anderson's last vessel was the *Cape Trinity*. He lives in Bacliff, Texas.



### EUFRACIO ARZU

Brother Eufracio Arzu, 78, signed on with the SIU in 2001 during the SIU/NMU merger. He upgraded in 2001 and 2006 at the maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. Brother Arzu was a member of both the engine and steward departments. His last trip was aboard the *Meteor*. Brother Arzu now calls Houston home.

### DANIEL CAMPBELL

Brother Daniel Campbell, 66, started sailing with the Seafarers in 1981. He was initially employed on the *Trans Colorado*. Brother Campbell was born in New Jersey and worked in the engine department. He attended classes on three occasions at the Paul Hall Center in Piney Point, Maryland. Brother Campbell's most recent trip was aboard the *El Morro*. He is a resident of Jacksonville, Florida.



### DAVID CARTER

Brother David Carter, 70, joined the SIU in 2001 when the NMU merged into the Seafarers International Union. On two occasions, he took advantage of educational opportunities available at the Piney Point school. Brother Carter sailed in the engine department; his final ship was the *Philadelphia Express*. He makes his home in Neptune Beach, Florida.



### ROBERT CULLIFER

Brother Robert Cullifer, 70, donned the union colors in 2003 in Norfolk, Virginia. His first ship was the *USNS Dahl*; his most recent, the *Patriot*. Brother Cullifer is a native of Norfolk. He upgraded several times at the Piney Point school. Brother Cullifer worked in the deck department and now resides in Surf City, North Carolina.

### EDWARD FRENCH

Brother Edward French, 65, joined the union in 1990. He first shipped aboard the *USNS Assurance*. Brother French attended classes in 1992 at the union-affiliated school in Piney Point, Maryland. He worked in both the steward and deck departments. Brother French concluded his career on the *Performance*. He settled in Roanoke, Virginia.

### BILLY HILL

Brother Billy Hill, 59, became a Seafarer in 1976 in Houston. The deck department member initially sailed with Trans-eastern Shipping. On numerous occasions, Brother Hill upgraded at the Paul Hall Center. He last shipped aboard the *Maersk California*. Brother Hill calls Livingston, Texas, home.



### GARETH HUNT

Brother Gareth Hunt, 69, began his seafaring career in 2003. He initially sailed aboard the *TSgt. John Chapman*. Brother Hunt was born in Washington and worked in the deck department. His final ship was the *Pride of America*. He makes his home in Port Angeles, Washington.



### ROSS LYLE

Brother Ross Lyle, 61, started sailing with the SIU in 1978. He first shipped aboard the *Erna Elizabeth*. Brother Lyle attended classes on numerous occasions at the Paul Hall Center. He sailed in the deck department. Brother Lyle's final trip to sea was on the *Cape Victory*. He lives in Livingston, Texas.



### YUSEF MAISONET

Brother Yusef Maisonet, 65, became a union member in 1992. He started his career working aboard the *Diamond State*. Brother Maisonet sailed in the deck department. In 2002, he took advantage of educational opportunities available at the Piney Point school. Brother Maisonet's most recent trip was on the *Bonny*. He is a resident of Mobile, Alabama.



### DANIEL MITCHELL

Brother Daniel Mitchell, 69, signed on with the SIU in 1979. His first ship was the *Point Julie*;

his last, the *USNS Algol*. Brother Mitchell, a native of California, was a member of the engine department. He attended classes often at the maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. Brother Mitchell resides in Lomita, California.

### WILFREDO PALACIOS

Brother Wilfredo Palacios, 67, donned the SIU colors in 2001 during the SIU/NMU merger. He worked in all three departments. Brother Palacios was born in Honduras. His most recent ship was the *Maersk Missouri*. Brother Palacios upgraded in 2003 at the Paul Hall Center. He makes his home in Houston.



### RONNIE RICHARDSON

Brother Ronnie Richardson, 65, began shipping with the union in 1979. He enhanced his skills on three occasions at the maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. Brother Richardson originally worked aboard the *Santa Maria*. He sailed in the steward department. Before his retirement, Brother Richardson sailed on the *Blue Ridge*. He lives in San Francisco.



### KYLE SCHULTZ

Brother Kyle Schultz, 56, joined the SIU ranks in 1978. He originally worked aboard the *Great Land*. Brother Schultz attended classes at the Paul Hall Center on two occasions. He finished his career on the *Ocean Crescent*. The New York native was a member of the deck department. Brother Schultz calls Sequin, Texas, home.



### WILLIAM SULLIVAN

Brother William Sullivan, 65, started sailing with the SIU in 1974. He first shipped aboard a Hudson Waterways vessel. Brother Sullivan upgraded in 1991 and 1992 at the union-affiliated school in Piney Point, Maryland. He worked in the engine department. Brother Sullivan's final trip to sea was on the *Dodge Island*. He resides in Ocean City, New Jersey.

### BRUCE WILLIAMS

Brother Bruce Williams, 65, became a union member in 1969. He started his career working aboard the *Steel Fabricator*. Brother Williams sailed in both the engine and steward departments. On two



occasions, he took advantage of educational opportunities available at the Paul Hall Center. Brother Williams's most recent trip was on the *USNS Antares*. He lives in Jacksonville, Florida.

### GUILLERMO ZAPATA

Brother Guillermo Zapata, 65, began shipping with the union in 1999. He originally worked with Tugz Company. Brother Zapata upgraded frequently at the maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. He sailed in the deck department. Prior to his retirement, Brother Zapata shipped aboard the *Overseas Texas City*. He is a resident of Plantation, Florida.



## INLAND

### ALLAN BIGNER

Brother Allan Bigner, 62, joined the SIU in 1970. He initially sailed on the *Bradford Island*. Brother Bigner worked in the engine department. He upgraded in 1970 and 1972 at the Piney Point school. Brother Bigner's final trip was aboard the *Mississippi Queen*. He calls Tickfaw, Louisiana, home.



### RODNEY MCCASLIN

Brother Rodney McCaslin, 58, started sailing with the union in 1986. He initially shipped with Moran Towing of Texas. Brother McCaslin was an engine department member. He upgraded numerous times at the Piney Point school. Brother McCaslin most recently worked on the *Integrity*. He makes his home in Winslow, Maine.



### MARIO MORANTE

Brother Mario Morante, 59, signed on with the SIU in 1995 in Jacksonville, Florida. He mostly shipped with Crowley Towing & Transportation of Jacksonville. Brother Morante worked in the deck department. In 2000 and 2002, he attended classes at the Seafarers-affiliated school in Piney Point, Maryland. Brother Morante is a resident of Orange Park, Florida.

### ROGER STANUS

Brother Roger Stanus, 62, began his SIU career in 1985. He was originally employed with Z Norfolk Baltimore. Brother Stanus



enhance his skills often at the Paul Hall Center. He last sailed on the *Resolve*. Brother Stanus was a member of the deck department. He lives in Box Elder, South Dakota.

### BRUCE WILLIAMS

Brother Bruce Williams, 63, started shipping with the SIU in 1993. He was primarily employed with G&H Towing. Brother Williams sailed in the engine department. He is a resident of Fall Creek, Oregon.



### JOSEPH ZOLADEK

Brother Joseph Zoladek, 66, joined the SIU in 1972 in Philadelphia. He initially worked with Gellenthin Barge Lines. Brother Zoladek was born in Germany. He was last employed with Penn Maritime Inc. Brother Zoladek makes his home in Pennsylvania.

## GREAT LAKES

### DANIEL BENSONI

Brother Daniel Bensoni, 65, started sailing with the union in 1973. He first shipped with Great Lakes Associates. Brother Bensoni was a deck department member; he upgraded in 1983 in Piney Point, Maryland. Prior to his retirement, he worked aboard the *Charles E. Wilson*. Brother Bensoni calls Saginaw, Minnesota, home.



### ROBERT GOLLA

Brother Robert Golla, 65, began his seafaring career in 1999. He initially shipped aboard the *Indiana Harbor*. Brother Golla sailed as a member of the steward department. His most recent trip was on the *Alpena*. Brother Golla settled in Duluth, Minnesota.



### GARY LAPCZYNSKI

Brother Gary Lapczynski, 62, donned the SIU colors in 1972. He was initially employed aboard the *Steel T. Crapo*. Brother Lapczynski sailed in the steward department, most recently on the *Burns Harbor*. In 2007 and 2015, he upgraded at the Piney Point school. Brother Lapczynski is a resident of Alpena, Michigan.



# Final Departures



## DEEP SEA

### JOHN BURGER

Pensioner John Burger, 70, passed away September 29. He became an SIU member in 1988. Brother Burger initially worked on the *Pfc DeWayne T. Williams*. He sailed in the deck department. Brother Burger's final ship was the *Nedlloyd Holland*. He became a pensioner in 2011 and settled in Hilham, Tennessee.



### RICHARD MULLEN

Pensioner Richard Mullen, 86, died August 27. Brother Mullen started his seafaring career in 1967. His first ship was the *Transhatteras*. Brother Mullen was born in California and sailed in the engine department. He last shipped aboard the *Independence*. Brother Mullen began receiving his pension in 1996 and was a resident of Susanville, California.



### ALAN NELSON

Brother Alan Nelson, 65, passed away October 5. Brother Nelson originally shipped aboard the *Newark*, in 1968. He sailed in the engine department. Brother Nelson's most recent vessel was the *USNS Stockham*. He made his home in Baltimore.



### SPIRIDON PERDIKIS

Pensioner Spiridon Perdikis, 84, died October 29. Born in Greece, Brother Perdikis joined the union in 1959. He initially worked with Enterprise Steamship Company. Brother Perdikis shipped as a member of the engine department. Prior to his retirement in 2002, he sailed aboard the *Overseas Chicago*. Brother Perdikis called Port St. Lucie, Florida, home.



### LEWELLYN STEVENS

Pensioner Lewellyn Stevens, 78, passed away October 5. Brother Stevens signed on with the union in 1957, originally working on a Waterman Steam-

ship vessel. He shipped in the deck department. Brother Stevens last sailed in the inland division with Dravo Basic Materials Company. He began collecting his retirement pay in 2009. Brother Stevens resided in Frisco City, Alabama.

### JOHN TRENT

Pensioner John Trent, 75, died October 14. Brother Trent was a native of Newport, Arkansas. A member of the engine department, he first sailed on the *Trans Hartford* in 1964. Brother Trent last worked aboard the *Overseas New Orleans*. He started receiving his pension in 2006. Brother Trent was a resident of Davie, Florida.



## INLAND

### JOSEPH BETHEL

Pensioner Joseph Bethel, 76, passed away September 19. Brother Bethel was born in Pennsylvania. He started shipping with the SIU in 1965, and first sailed on a Taylor Marine Towing Company vessel. Brother Bethel's last boat was operated by Moran Towing of Philadelphia. He worked in the deck department. Brother Bethel became a pensioner in 2002 and lived in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania.



### WALLACE CUMBEST

Pensioner Wallace Cumbest, 66, died October 31. He began sailing with the union in 1977. Brother Cumbest primarily shipped with Crowley Towing and Transportation of Jacksonville. He was a native of Ray City, Georgia, and worked in the deck department. Brother Cumbest retired in 2007 and made his home in Old Town, Florida.



### CHARLES MULL

Pensioner Charles Mull, 80, passed away October 17. Born in Ashville, North Carolina, he donned the SIU colors in 1962. Brother Mull initially worked in the deep sea division with Seatrain Lines Inc. He was a deck department



member. Brother Mull began receiving his pension in 2002 and called Elkton, Florida, home.

### JIMMY PAYNE

Pensioner Jimmy Payne, 75, died October 14. Brother Payne started sailing with the SIU in 1971. He mainly worked aboard G&H Towing Company vessels. Brother Payne sailed as a member of the engine department. He retired in 2002 and resided in Kemah, Texas.



### BOBBY SIMMONS

Pensioner Bobby Simmons, 73, passed away October 12. He became a union member in 1967. Brother Simmons initially worked in the deep sea division with Sea Transport Inc. He was born in Newton, Texas, and sailed in both the deck and steward departments. Brother Simmons last shipped aboard a Crowley Towing and Transportation of Jacksonville vessel. He went on pension in 1999 and lived in Clearwater, Florida.



### DONNIE WILLIAMS

Pensioner Donnie Williams, 75, died September 13. Brother Williams signed on with the SIU in 1966, originally working with Virginia Pilots. He was a deck department member. Brother Williams was last employed aboard a Northeast Towing Company vessel. He started collecting his retirement pay in 2003. Brother Williams was a resident of Frisco, North Carolina.



## GREAT LAKES

### JOHN CHURCH

Pensioner John Church, 74, passed away October 19. The North Carolina native began his SIU career in 1969. Brother Church was a member of the deck department. His first ship was the *Bob-Lo Island*; his last, the *St. Clair*. Brother Church went on pension in 2007 and settled in Lenoir,



North Carolina.

### HERBERT KERLEY

Pensioner Herbert Kerley, 86, died October 2. A native of Crossville, Tennessee, he donned the SIU colors in 1963. Brother Kerley mainly sailed with American Steamship Company. He worked in the engine department. Brother Kerley wrapped up his sailing career in 1986. He continued to make his home in Tennessee.



## NATIONAL MARITIME UNION

### JOSEPH BRIDGES

Pensioner Joseph Bridges, 90, passed away August 19. Brother Bridges was born in Florida and started receiving his pension in 1993. He lived in Rome, Georgia.

### HARRY CHAN

Pensioner Harry Chan, 94, died October 5. Born in China, Brother Chan became a pensioner in 1968. He settled in Brooklyn, New York.

### MAHFOUD FAYED

Pensioner Mahfoud Fayed, 65, passed away September 28. Brother Fayed was a native of Yemen. He began collecting his retirement pay in 2006. Brother Fayed resided in Dearborn, Michigan.

### THEODORE GREEN

Pensioner Theodore Green, 95, died September 20. Brother Green was born in Bishopville, South Carolina. He went on pension in 1986. Brother Green made his home in Rosenberg, Texas.

### RAMON HERNANDEZ

Pensioner Ramon Hernandez, 89, passed away September 15. Brother Hernandez started receiving compensation for his retirement in 1969. He was a resident of Edison Township, New Jersey.

### JAMES HOPSON

Pensioner James Hopson, 92, died September 21. Brother Hopson was born in Alabama. He became a pensioner in 1971. Brother Hopson called Dixon Mills, Alabama, home.

### TERIA MCNEAL

Pensioner Teria McNeal, 89, passed away October 8. Brother McNeal was born in Hilly, Loui-

siana. He went on pension in 1973 and lived in Seattle.

### SWITHIN MCWILLIAMS

Pensioner Swithin McWilliams, 94, died September 12. Born in Trinidad, Brother McWilliams started receiving his pension in 1987. He resided in Staten Island, New York.

### DAVID MOORE

Pensioner David Moore, 85, passed away September 27. He was a native of Mississippi. Brother Moore began collecting his pension in 1988. He lived in Collins, Mississippi.

### ANGEL RIVERA

Pensioner Angel Rivera, 87, died October 22. Brother Rivera was born in Puerto Rico. He went on pension in 1966 and continued to make his home in Puerto Rico.

### JOSEPH RIVERA

Pensioner Joseph Rivera, 78, passed away September 30. Born in Bronx, New York, Brother Rivera started receiving his pension in 1995. He was a resident of Beaumont, Texas.

### MERLE REYNOLDS

Pensioner Merle Reynolds, 94, died October 6. Brother Reynolds was born in Oklahoma. He retired in 1988 and resided in Prague, Oklahoma.

### PAUL STURGILL

Pensioner Paul Sturgill, 92, passed away August 10. The Kentucky native became a pensioner in 1969. Brother Sturgill called Sandy Hook, Kentucky, home.

### MITCHELL WILAMOSKI

Pensioner Mitchell Wilamoski, 98, died October 15. Brother Wilamoski was born in Erie, Pennsylvania. He started collecting his pension in 1967 and was a resident of St. Petersburg, Florida.

Name	Age	DOD
Caramo, German	82	Oct. 18
Ennis, John	93	May 24
Jackson, Charles	95	Oct. 17
McDuffie, Marilee	92	Sept. 23
Smith, Irbin	88	Sept. 25



# 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.

**MAERSK ATLANTA** (Maersk Line, Limited), October 22 – Chairman **Thomas P. Flanagan**, Secretary **Glenn Williams**, Educational Director **Enrique Velez**. Chairman reminded crew departing vessel to leave room clean and supplied with fresh linen. He thanked everyone for a safe and productive trip. Mariners were reminded to check and update credentials as needed. Crew discussed the importance of voting as it will impact all their futures. Secretary asked everyone to put all dirty linen outside their rooms and give captain back coveralls (old and new). Educational director urged members to enhance their skills at the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Piney Point, Maryland, to excel in their positions. Treasurer reported \$827 in ship's fund. No beefs or disputed OT reported. It was noted that dishwasher and grill need to be fixed.

**MAERSK IDAHO** (Maersk Line, Limited), October 15 – Chairman **Ronald Mena**, Secretary **Zein Z. Achmad**, Educational Director **Tesfaye Gebregziabher**, Deck Delegate **Atm Reza**. Bosun thanked fellow crew members for a smooth voyage. Secretary reminded everyone that paper cups should be used while in port and paper plates used for night snacks. Educational director advised members to keep all necessary paperwork up-to-date. Treasurer reported \$2,450 in ship's fund. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Request was made for new chairs, mattresses and refrigerators for crew rooms. Suggestion was made to increase vacation pay.

**CHARLESTON EXPRESS** (Crowley), November 27 – Chairman **George F. Price**, Secretary **Ronald Tarantino**, Educational Director **Ronald Westerfield**, Deck Delegate **Saidu Sesay**, Engine Delegate **Ken-**

**neth Powell**, Steward Delegate **Edyson Chaniago**. Chairman advised Seafarers to keep all documents current. Secretary urged members to make sure beneficiary information on file with Seafarers Plans is up-to-date. Educational director advised mariners to enhance skills at maritime training center in Piney Point, Maryland. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Crew members made suggestions regarding vacation and pension benefits for upcoming contract negotiations. Next ports: Charleston, South Carolina and Houston.

**MAERSK DETROIT** (Maersk Line, Limited), November 8 – Chairman **Thomas W. Grosskurth**, Secretary **Michael Kozak**, Educational Director **Dennis R. Baker**, Deck Delegate **John Mbelwa**, Steward Delegate **Jose Burgos**. Chairman reviewed requirements for STCW Basic Training when renewing merchant mariner credential after January 1, 2017. Educational director talked about improvements to dental benefits. He asked crew to report worn extension cords and plugs that need repairing. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Recommendation was made to increase pension benefits. Mariners were reminded to close washer and dryer doors. A vote of thanks was given to the steward department.

**MAERSK OHIO** (Maersk Line, Limited), November 26 – Chairman **James L. Joyce**, Secretary **Charles Brooks**, Educational Director **Antoine L. Rainey**, Deck Delegate **Fontaine Barber**, Steward Delegate **Edward Smigielski**. Bosun urged mariners to continue working together safely. Deck department was reminded to wear cold-weather gear. Educational director discussed importance of upgrading skills at the Paul Hall Center in Piney Point, Maryland. No beefs or disputed OT

## With Union Members on M/V Corsica

SIU, MEBA and MM&P members are pictured aboard the Chesapeake Crewing-operated M/V Corsica while the ship heads back to the U.S. from the Middle East. Back row, from left: Chief Steward Marc Newbold, Bosun William Britton, 2nd Mate Jon Lotz, 3AE Evan Knoch, QMED Van Dixon, Capt. Bruce Matthews, (middle row, from left) 3AE Tyler Brady, 3rd Mate Tucker Weisleder, 2AE Helbert Esquivel, CE Al Tine Jr., CM Rudy Normann, (front, from left) Apprentice Morgan Hayes, GVA Peter Durangparang, AB William Davis and AB Orin King.



reported. Crew suggested increasing vacation days. Request was made for a new coffee machine.

**MAERSK KINLOSS** (Maersk Line, Limited), December 16 – Chairman **Rufino J. Giray**, Secretary **Juan Vallejo**, Educational Director **Albert Riollano**, Deck Delegate **Maruf Syarifudin**, Steward Delegate **Richard Oliva**. Chairman urged mariners to keep documents up-to-date and focus on safety. He thanked steward department for good food. Crew thanked SIU President Michael Sacco and Executive Vice President Augie Tellez for their hard work on Capitol Hill. Secretary asked members leaving ship to clean rooms and separate garbage. Educational director recommended training at the Piney Point school. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Recommendation was made to increase

food budget and pension benefits.

**MAERSK PITTSBURGH** (Maersk Line, Limited), December 24 – Chairman **Konstantinos Prokovas**, Secretary **Darryl K. Goggins**, Educational Director **Jan Morawski**, Deck Delegate **James Armer**, Engine Delegate **Roger Nesbeth**, Steward Delegate **Stanford Drakes**. Chairman thanked crew for a safe trip. Secretary reminded crew members getting off vessel to leave fresh linen for next mariner. Educational director discussed importance of upgrading skills at the Paul Hall Center in Piney Point, Maryland. Seafarers were given instructions to request their sea time. Discussion was held regarding information available on SIU website. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Vote of thanks was given to the deck and engine departments. Crew discussed donations to

families of *El Faro* crew members. Suggestion was made to increase pension benefits.

**OVERSEAS ANACORTES** (OSG), December 10 – Chairman **Felsher Beasley**, Secretary **Brad A. Fester**, Educational Director **Cary G. Pratts**, Deck Delegate **David N. Bernstein**, Engine Delegate **Julio Zapata**. Chairman stressed the importance of taking care of your body and staying healthy. Educational director recommended training at the Piney Point school and keeping all necessary seafaring documents up-to-date. Treasurer reported \$300 in ship's fund. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members would like better quality mattresses and pillows. Crew recognized Bosun Beasley for upcoming retirement (look for photos in a future edition of the LOG). Next port: Port Everglades, Florida.

## Matson Consumer Crew Honors Memory of the Late 'Capt. Jay'

Recertified Steward **Brian Burchette** submitted this recent photo from the *Matson Consumer*, taken during a memorial service for vessel master Capt. Jay Thomas, who passed away last year. Burchette noted that "Captain Jay" spent the last five years aboard the vessel, first

as chief mate and eventually as captain.

Burchette also said that in speaking with others who sailed with Jay, "All remember him as a sailor who cared about the ship and the crew. When you spend eight months a year on board a ship, you get to know (for better or worse) your

shipmates, and your ship becomes your home away from home. When you find others that have a passion for their job and their ship, it truly is a rewarding experience."

Although only a few of the mariners on board the vessel late last year sailed

with the captain, the entire crew turned out for the memorial (except for those on watch). Everyone signed a life ring for the captain's family "just to let them know that his work here meant something to others, and he will be remembered and missed."



Among those pictured in the photo above are the crew members who sailed with Captain Jay: Burchette (center-right, holding the life ring), Recertified Bosun Paul Cadran (standing second from right) and Chief Cook June Reyes (standing at far left).

# SHBP Makes Scholarship Funds Available to Members, Dependents

The Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan (SHBP) annually makes scholarships available to qualified individuals who are looking to further their education beyond high school.

Eight awards totaling \$132,000 are available for the 2017 program. Three scholarships will be designated for Seafarers while five will be targeted for spouses and dependents. One of the endowments reserved for Seafarers totals \$20,000 and is intended to help defray the costs associated with attending a four-year, college-level course of study. The remaining two are in the amount of \$6,000 each and are designed as two-year awards for study at a postsecondary vocational school or community college. Each of the five scholarships for spouses and dependents is for \$20,000.

Now is an ideal time to begin the application process. The first step is to obtain a scholarship program booklet. This package contains eligibility information, procedures for applying for the scholarships and an application form. Union members and their dependents now have three avenues through which they may obtain this booklet.

First, as has been the case in the past, prospective applicants may request these booklets via mail by completing and mailing the form provided below. Secondly, they may obtain the booklets by visiting any SIU hall. Finally, applicants may obtain the booklet online by visiting [www.seafarers.org](http://www.seafarers.org), going to the Member Benefits tab, navigating to the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan menu and selecting Scholarship Booklet 2017 (PDF).

Once the scholarship booklet has been received, applicants should check the eligibility criteria. They should also begin collecting and assembling the remainder of the paperwork needed to submit with the full application, which must be received by April 15, 2017.

Items that need to be incorporated in the final application package include transcripts and certificates of graduation. Since some institutions respond slowly in handling transcript needs, requests should be made as early as possible.

Letters of recommendation – solicited from individuals who know the applicant's character, personality and career goals – should be

included as part of the application package. A high-quality photograph and a certified copy of the applicant's birth certificate are also required and should accompany the package.

A scholarship selection committee, consisting of a panel of professional educators, will examine the high school grades of all applicants as well as evaluate scores from their Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) and American College Tests (ACT). Accordingly,

arrangements should be made by applicants who have not done so to take these tests no later than February 2017. Doing so will virtually assure that the results reach the evaluation committee in time for review.

Seafarers and dependents who previously applied for the scholarship program and were not selected are encouraged to apply again this year, provided they still meet the eligibility requirements.

*Please send me the 2017 SHBP Scholarship Program Booklet which contains eligibility information, procedures for applying and a copy of the application form.*

Name .....

Street Address .....

City, State, Zip Code.....

Telephone Number ( ) .....

This application is for:  Self  Dependent

Mail this completed form to: Scholarship Program  
Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan  
5201 Auth Way,  
Camp Springs, MD 20746

2/17

## HEALTH BENEFITS FOR PENSIONERS

If you are considering retirement, you should be aware that the health benefits that the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan (SHBP) provides to eligible pensioners and their families are different from those that are offered to active employees and their families.

If you are eligible for health benefits as an active employee at the time you retire, you will continue to receive those benefits until your eligibility runs out. For more detailed information about pensioners' benefits, you may view the SHBP Guide for Retirees under the Member Benefits tab at [www.seafarers.org](http://www.seafarers.org); or you may contact the Plan at 1-800-252-4674 to request a printed copy of this guide.

This notice contains important information about the eligibility rules for pensioner's health benefits, and the right to purchase COBRA continuation coverage when you retire. Please read this notice carefully.

### Eligibility Requirements

In order for a pensioner to be eligible for pensioner health benefits from the SHBP, they must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- 5,475 days of covered employment under the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan if retiring on a Normal Pension or Early Normal Pension
- 4,380 days of covered employment under the

Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan if retiring on a Disability Pension, and

■ At least 60 days of covered employment in each of the 2 six-month eligibility periods immediately preceding the date in which you become eligible for and apply for pension benefits, or

■ 125 days of covered employment in the calendar year immediately preceding the year in which you become eligible for and apply for pension benefits.

Covered employment under the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan does not include "Extra Service Credit" or "Supplemental Service" earned under the Seafarers Pension Plan. These days do not count for eligibility under the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan. In addition, days for which a participant may receive more than one day's credit for one day worked and/or credit received for Vacation days are not counted towards eligibility under the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan.

*Under the Seafarers Pension Plan Rules, a participant may qualify for a Normal Pension Benefit, an Early Normal Pension Benefit, or a Disability Pension Benefit, but not satisfy the covered employment requirements under the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan for pensioner health benefits.*

### COBRA Rights

You have the right to purchase COBRA con-

tinuation coverage if you were eligible for SHBP benefits at the time you retire, but you do not meet the eligibility requirements for pensioner's health benefits. If you qualify for COBRA, the Plan will send you a COBRA election notice that will explain these rights in more detail.

Even if you are eligible for pensioner's health benefits you will also be eligible for COBRA continuation coverage when your eligibility for active benefits ends. You may purchase COBRA benefits if you want your dependents to continue to have outpatient and prescription benefits if you are at the Core-Plus benefit level. COBRA allows you to continue to receive the same health benefits that you received prior to retirement for a certain period of time set by law (usually 18 months, but sometimes longer). Once the COBRA period ends, if you met the requirements for pensioner's health benefits, you will begin receiving those benefits.

### Premium for Pensioners and Dependents not Eligible for Medicare

If you are not eligible for Medicare at the time you retire, you are required to pay a monthly premium to receive Pensioner health coverage. The amount of this premium is \$100 for individual coverage, or \$200 for family coverage (for two or

more individuals who are not eligible for Medicare). If you are eligible for Medicare but your spouse is not, you must pay a \$100 premium for your spouse's coverage, or \$200 for your spouse and dependent children. If you give the Plan written permission to make this deduction, the Seafarers Pension Plan will deduct this premium from your pension benefit, so that you do not have to send monthly payments. Please note, if you decide to opt out of the Pensioner health coverage, you cannot opt back in at a later time.

### Premium benefit for Pensioners Eligible for Medicare

If you are eligible for any form of pension with SHBP medical benefits, and you are Medicare-eligible, you must enroll in Medicare Parts A and B to remain eligible for health benefits from SHBP. Once you do so, the Plan will pay you an additional benefit of \$50 a month to help pay your Medicare premium. Your spouse must also enroll in Medicare Parts A and B when he or she becomes Medicare-eligible. Provided that you are also enrolled in Medicare, the Plan will pay another \$50 benefit to help with your spouse's Medicare premium. However, if your spouse dies before you, their \$50 benefit will end upon their death.

## Know Your Rights

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SEAFARERS POLITICAL ACTIVITY DONATION — SPAD.**

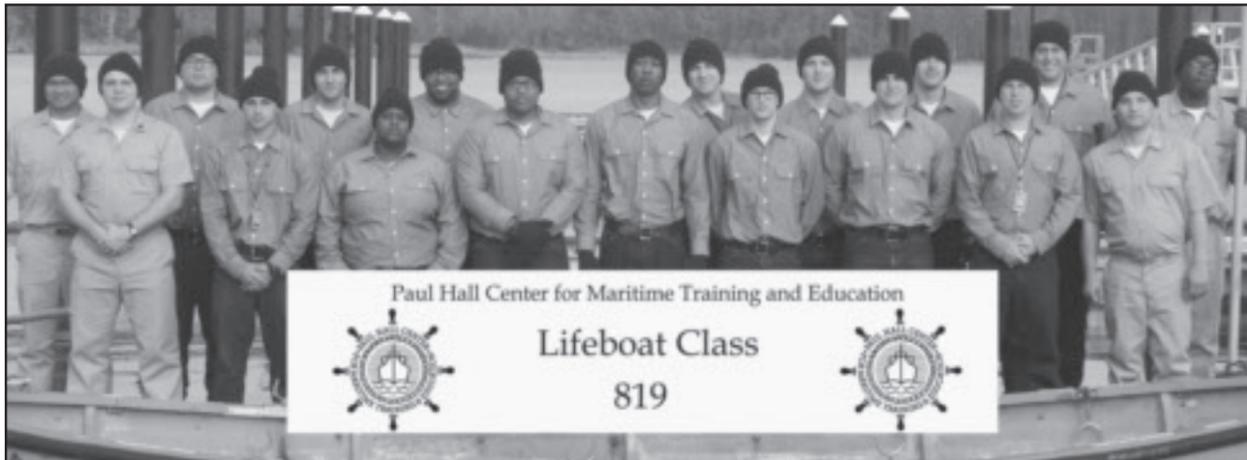
SPAD is a separate segregated fund. Its proceeds are used to further its objects and purposes including, but not limited to, furthering the political, social and economic interests of maritime workers, the preservation and furthering of the American merchant marine with improved employment opportunities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

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

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



# Paul Hall Center Classes



**Welding** – Four upgraders (above, in alphabetical order) graduated from this course Dec. 16: Ryan Brande, Bobby Conner II, Kyle Miller and James Sieger. Class instructor Chris Raley is at the far right.

### Important Notice

*Students who have registered for classes at the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, but later discover - for whatever reason - that they can't attend, should inform the admissions department immediately so arrangements can be made to have other students take their places.*

**Apprentice Water Survival Class #819** – Eighteen apprentices completed this course Dec. 30. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Phillip Borders, St.Claire Browne Jr., Demar De Bruce, Ashley Burke, Christian Canci, Michael Dusek, James Geiger, Dustin Harrison, Tyriq Mills, Durell Mitchell, Rainiel Natividad, Dillon Nelson, Matthew Palmer, Spencer Rathman, Nicholas Sperry, Nicholas Tran, Bryan Velazquez and Brian Wendler.



**Marine Refrigeration** – The following Seafarers (above, in alphabetical order) completed the enhancement of their skills in this course when they graduated Dec. 16: Christopher Eason, Mohammed Elazzouzi, Derek Ivory, Ann Mensch, Danielle Smith, Brett Van Pelt and Pavis Whitley. Their instructors, Jay Henderson and William Dodd, are at the far left and far right, respectively.



**Tank Ship Familiarization LG** – Eleven upgraders (above, in alphabetical order) graduated from this course Dec. 9: Linnell Coleman Jr., Brian Corbett, Brian Dillon, Michael Hodges, Peter Hokenson, Nat Lamb, Detrell Lambey, Douglas McLaughlin, Arthur Patterson, Pedro Venerando Ramos and Penny Taylor.



**Pumpman** – Graduating from the course Dec. 16 (above, in alphabetical order) were: upgraders Arkady Bichevsky, Oscar Agustin Cordero, Kabir Garcia Santiago, Todd Lander, Nicholas Panagakos, Michael Robinson, Lateef Ojumu Sanusi, Steven Supplee, Bernard Wade II and Charlie Wescott. Class instructors Keith Adamson and Vance Sanderson are at the far left and far right, respectively. (Note: Not all are pictured.)



**ARPA** – The following Seafarers (above, in alphabetical order) graduated from this course Dec. 9: Ali Mohsen Alhamyari, J.K. Mansfield Borden, Joseph Bowen, Peter Malone, Saleh Mohamed Mothana, Harry Phillip and Sean Wilson. Their instructor, Susan Fagan, is at the far left.



**Medical Care Provider** – Eight upgraders completed this course Dec. 9. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Benjamin Anderson III, John Daunoras, Ahmed Fadel Mohamed, Rodney Passapera, Mykola Smirnov, Justin Mario Violanti, James Williamson and Joshua Zelinsky.



**ECDIS** – Graduating from this course Dec. 9 (above, in alphabetical order) were upgraders: Terrence Bader, Luke Belford, Caliph Johnson II, and Dexter Madrona Turija. Instructor Patrick Schoenberger is at the far left.



**Crane Familiarization** – Four individuals completed their requirements in this course Dec. 9. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Ibrahim Awadalla Abdelkarim, Ato Aikins, Oliver Manibog Balico and Goducel Pascua. Stan Beck, their instructor, is in the back row at the far right.

**Government Vessels** – Nineteen upgraders finished their requirements in this course Dec. 9. Graduating (photo at right, in alphabetical order) were: Vince Adolph, Wadea Saleh Alnasafi, Richard Barnes, Alexander Cancino Bermudez, Melvin Cooper, Gregory Crowder, Roberto Alcance Firme, Logan Gatton, Christian Haber, Enchantress Charmaine Johnson, Ronald Pattiasina, Michael Antonio Ribeiro, Aresha Rivers, Verleshia Robinson, Jerry Semper Jr., Scott Snodgrass, Olive Stewart-Paul, Ruel Antigro Torres and Ronell Williams. Their instructor Tom Truitt, is at the far right. (Note: Not all are pictured.)



# Paul Hall Center Classes



**Basic Training (Basic Firefighting)** – The following upgraders (above, in alphabetical order) graduated from this course Dec. 16: Marcelo Alicea Jr., Jane Altieri, Gregory Kakra Attawora, Shelby Curtis, Kimberly Dawson, Joseph Franta, Logan Gatton, Sabbah Yahya Ghaleb, Christian Haber, Jeffrey Hamer, Grady Ingram III, Eric Johnson, Mackenzie Latta, Charles Mitchell, Bryan Moreira, Thomas Nelson Jr., Samuel Parkinson, Ronald Pattiasina, Michael Ribeiro, Paul Smetana, Eddie Taylor, Benjamin Thuringer and Joshua Zelinsky. Instructors John Thomas and Wayne Johnson Jr. are at the far left and far right, respectively. (Note: Not all are pictured.)

**Basic Training Revitalization** – Eleven upgraders completed this course Dec. 9. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Tammy Bingisser, Wilshire Cortez, Cirilo Villapaz Jumamil, Christopher King, James Luttrell Jr., Gary Newbegin Jr., Francisco Aragona Ocado, Michael Presser, Robert Resurreccion, Frank Sambula and Kareim Wright. Mike Roberts, their instructor, is at the far left.



**Basic Training Revitalization** – Graduating from this course Dec. 16 (above, in alphabetical order) were: Joseph Bowen, Peter Hokenson, Enchantress Johnson, Douglas McLaughlin and Clive Steward. Their instructor, Mike Roberts, is at the far right.

**Basic Training (Basic Firefighting)** – The following upgraders (photo at left, in alphabetical order) graduated from this course Dec. 2: Robert Coddington, Ibrahim Abdelrauf Elsayed, Roberto Alcance Firme, Detrell Lambey, Pedro Venerando Ramos, Lateef Ojomu Sanusi, Penny Taylor and Norma West. Class instructor Wayne Johnson Jr. is at the far right.



**Combined Basic & Advanced Firefighting** – Six individuals completed their requirements in this course Dec. 2. Graduating (above, in alphabetical order) were: Chris Badouin, Brian Luba, William Matthews, Ahmed Fadel Mohamed, Mykola Smirnov and Jason Young. John Thomas, their instructor, is at the far left.

**Certified Chief Cook** – Steward Department upgrader Israel Lingat Coronel (above) completed his requirements and graduated from Module 6 of this course Dec. 16.

**Chief Steward** – Three upgraders recently completed the enhancement of their skills in this course. Graduating Dec. 16 (above, from the left) were Charles Davis, Juan Guanill and Christopher King.



**Advanced Galley Ops** – A pair of steward department mariners improved their skills by graduating from this course Dec. 30. They are Prasert Yowaka Mastrototaro (above, left) and Brian Magill.

**Certified Chief Cook** - Steward department upgraders Monserrate Blas Jr. (above, left) and Masha Maria Blas are not related, but still have more in common than just surnames. Both enhanced their skills recently when they graduated from this course Dec. 12.

# SEAFARERS LOG

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

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



Seafarers and other volunteers load toys into a truck.



GUDE Sakr Kassem, AB Mark Villa, Administrative Assistant Brenda Flesner, Port Agent Joe Vincenzo, Santa's Castle VP Anita Vargo, SA Rupert Henry, (standing in truck) Santa's Castle President Amy Luekenga, Safety Director Ben Anderson and AB Francis Miller

## Santa's Castle Holiday Tradition Sails on in Port of Tacoma

The latest chapter in the union's rich tradition of supporting America's military members eloquently was penned during the 2016 Christmas holiday season at the Port of Tacoma, Washington.

And some chapter it was, as Seafarers continued their philanthropic practice of backing the annual Santa's Castle Project. Santa's Castle is a nonprofit charity organization that's dedicated to providing Christmas gifts to military families, primarily those in the rank of E-4 and below, who are experiencing financial hardship. Seafarers last year made donations to the project that approached the \$10,000 mark.

In addition to making cash contributions, mariners donated a virtual boatload of toys and other gifts to the all-volunteer endeavor including: 25 bicycles; two motorized Mini Coopers; Hot Wheels; dozens of dolls; musical instruments; remote-controlled cars and helicopters; books; board games and much more. According to SIU Port Agent Joe Vincenzo, who coordinates the union's participation in the undertaking, Tacoma Seafarers to date have given upwards of \$75,000 to Santa's Castle and to the men and women of our armed forces, particularly those stationed at nearby Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

"Joe and his team are amazing in terms of helping us in our efforts," said Santa's Castle Purchasing Vice President Anita Vargo, who has been with the project for the past six of its 21-year existence. "They consistently make donations that are in the \$10,000 to \$12,000 range.

"If it were not for them and their generosity, I really don't know where the project would be," she continued. "Last year we were really falling short of our goals in terms of having an adequate supply of toys avail-

able to donate to the military families here. It was their (Tacoma Seafarers) donations that put us over the top and saved the day.

"We always look forward to receiving the backing and support of the Seafarers," Vargo concluded. "They truly are an amazing group of men and women."

SA **Rupert Henry** is one of the mariners to whom Vargo was referring. A naturalized American citizen, Henry was born in Jamaica. He donned the SIU colors in 2006 and calls Tacoma his home port.

"I think Santa's Castle is a very good thing because it helps soldiers who receive low wages because of their ranks provide for their kids during the holidays," he said. "Although I was not blessed with any kids of my own, I still enjoy giving. It's a pleasure for me to give whenever I can afford it.

"I made up my mind to spend at least \$600 toward this project each year," Henry continued. "So far, I've given six bicycles to the project each year since its inception. The only time I have not supported the project is when I am working overseas during the holidays."

Noting the critical jobs handled by military personnel, Henry continued, "Members of our armed forces help to protect us from all kinds of evil in the world, and the cost of freedom is not cheap. I appreciate what they do for all of us. Like them, I'm a part of this nation, and as an American Merchant Marine, I'll do anything for it including fighting and dying if necessary.

"Whatever I can do to support the armed forces and its cause, I'll gladly do it," Henry concluded.

Reflecting on the role Seafarers played in the 2016 iteration of Santa's Castle, Vincenzo said he was proud of the fashion in which his brothers and sisters stepped

up to the challenge. "Our toy drive and holiday luncheon is the best time of year for us here in Tacoma," he said. "This year, not unlike other years, we planned and portioned our luncheon menu and converted our business-as-usual hiring hall into a festive venue where we got to thank the armed forces and give back to our community and in particular to the men and women of Joint Base Lewis-McChord and their families. You can never say thank you enough, especially to our war fighters and peace keepers."

Vincenzo concluded by noting that he had many people to thank for making the most recent Santa's Castle experience the huge success that it was.

"I want to thank Crowley and in particular Director of Labor Relations Lee Eglund and Captain Scott Craig for again partnering with us and for making the trip down to join in the festivities," he said. "They also brought along three more bicycles."

Vincenzo then singled out members for recognition including SA Henry QMED Electrician **Kevin McCagh**, who donated two motorized Mini Coopers.

"I [also] want to thank Shore Gang Bosun **Ken Clinton** in particular for making cash donations and for bringing in a total of six bicycles. Recently retired shore gang crew members AB **Dana Cella** and **Jimmy McParland** also deserve credit," he said.

In addition to the foregoing members, Vincenzo said a host of others also made donations, and volunteered their time in a number of other important areas including shopping for toys and assisting during the luncheon. "To each and every one of them, I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart," he said.



Port Agent Joe Vincenzo, Crowley Captain Scott Craig, Santa's Castle VP Anita Vargo, Santa's Castle President Amy Luekenga and Lee Eglund, Crowley director of Labor Relations



SA Rupert Henry poses with the six bikes he donated.



Port Agent Joe Vincenzo, GUDE Sakr Kassem, "Michelle", Administrative Assistant Brenda Flesner, QMED Earl Olson, GUDE Faisal Almrasi, AB Benjamin Picar, Safety Director Ben Anderson, AB John Villa, QMED-EI Jose Bonita, AB Mark Villa, AB Mark Hallberg, SA Rupert Henry, AB Francis Miller, AB Robert Couvillon, (Kneeling) AB Mitchell French, SREC Shawn Fujiwara, GUDE Armando Amante.



Mrs. Aletha Villa and newborn son Cedric, family of AB John Villa