

Spring 2008



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Horizon ship has all-female deck crew

By Kristen Consillio *The Honolulu Star Bulletin*

Horizon Lines Inc. made Hawaii maritime history this week when an 800-foot container ship arrived in port with women occupying its top three bridge posts.

The Horizon Navigator, carrying about 900 containers and a total of 25 crew members, arrived at Honolulu Harbor Wednesday from Los Angeles with Capt. Robin Espinosa, Chief Mate S.L. Sam Pirtle and Second Mate Julie Duchi at the helm.

It was the luck of the union's bidding process that brought the three female bridge officers together on the same bridge, as the U.S. Merchant Marine service remains dominated by men.

The International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots in Honolulu represents about 150 members, 10 percent of whom are women. Fewer than 1 percent were women 30 years ago, according to the union.

"It's a real anomaly; it's very unusual," said Espinosa, who is based in Charleston, S.C., and has been sailing for 25 years. "When I first started, I was pretty much the only gal around. I never worked on a ship with any other women for the first 10 years."

The first women were allowed to enter maritime academies in the 1970s to be licensed deck officers and engineers, which allows them to go anywhere in the world on any kind of ship, said Randy Swindell, the union's port representative.



CINDY ELLEN RUSSELL / CRUSSELL@STARBULLETIN.COM
Capt. Robin Espinosa (center), with Chief Mate S.L. Sam Pirtle, left, and Second Mate Julie Duchi, are in command and on deck of the container ship Horizon Navigator.



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COOPERATIVE
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At Maritime Institute of
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However, more women are moving up the ranks in all areas of ship operations, signaling a new era for female merchant mariners who have gained respect in the rigorous field.

Matson Navigation Co., the state's largest ocean carrier, made maritime history when in 1988 Lynn Korwatch became the first female captain of a large commercial vessel in the U.S. Merchant Marine, Matson's SS Maui, said spokesman Jeff Hull. Pasha Hawaii Transport Lines, Hawaii's third-largest ocean shipper, has never had a female captain or female bridge team, said general manager Reggie Maldonado.

Breaking into the industry, where superstitions about women on board being bad luck abounded just a few decades ago, was challenging for the female officers who worked harder to prove themselves. Throughout her career, Espinosa said, she has staunchly rejected being treated any differently from men on the ships. "I worked harder than most men because I wanted so desperately to be accepted," she said. "I'm not a big woman and I'm not real strong; some things physically I just couldn't do."

While there was some prejudice, the union's training programs placed the women on equal footing for jobs, said Espinosa, 49, who supervises overall operations and the ship's course and speed. "Sure, I got catcalls and whistles from guys," she said. "But it was a good thing for us that we did come through the union so we have the same qualifications as any guy has had."

Espinosa developed her love for the sailing as a child growing up in a family of sailors and was inspired by late marine conservationist Jacques-Yves Cousteau. She originally attended the Texas Maritime Academy to become a marine scientist, but was later recruited into the marine transportation program and drawn to going to sea to travel the world while making a significant amount of money.

Duchi, 46, a Honolulu resident who as second mate is in charge of navigation, also was raised in a sailing family and shared that dream. "At first I thought it was going on a sailboat and getting paid for it," she said. The job turned out to be much more challenging than she had imagined. While the crew uses GPS navigation, which allows her to simply push a button to direct the ship from one point to another, she says she still does celestial navigation purely for fun.

"It's been a great career. I really love it; it's a lot of fun and freedom," Duchi said. "But it's just not for everybody. You have to be willing to give up being at home." Among the greatest challenges is the time spent at sea, typically six to 10 weeks at a time.

Espinosa said the schedule is tough on her husband and 18-year-old daughter. "It's real tough. We're lucky because we're in port so often, so ... we're in good communications with our families," she said.

For Pirtle, 49, whose duties include getting cargo on and off the ship, the rigorous schedule has made it difficult to get back into the dating scene. She is usually gone anywhere from 35 to 70 days at a time. In addition, men are often intimidated by her career, which includes being the crew's medical officer. "I did like a year of Internet dating," she said. "I was honest about what I do for a living, but that just scared off everybody. It was like I was attracting men who wanted a woman to push them around."

While the pace of their lives is much faster than a typical career, the women say they would not change a thing. "The thing I always tell people is that my career is so much a part of me I couldn't even conceptualize anything besides going to sea," Pirtle said. ✨

John Heneghan; Advanced Maritime Jobs for Minorities

By Patricia Sullivan Washington Post Staff Writer

Editors Note: John Heneghan was the father of WMA member Maggie Heneghan

John Martin Heneghan, 79, who opened many doors in maritime employment and training for women and minorities, died of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease Sept. 3 at his Bethesda home.

In 1974, Mr. Heneghan persuaded the administrator of the Maritime Administration to open the Merchant Marine Academy to women, making it the first federal service academy to go coeducational. He significantly increased the number of women and African Americans in shipyard jobs and delayed the contract for an aircraft carrier until an effective affirmative action program was in place.

Taking those actions required a spine of iron, an element that was forged from his work in the Mississippi Delta during the Freedom Summer of 1964. Mr. Heneghan, who was working in the Navy's Atlanta office as an equal employment opportunity contract compliance officer, volunteered to go to Mississippi with Navy colleague Gene Heller to track down and take complaints against companies that held federal contracts.

"It was sort of tense," said Heller, who lives in Denver. "Word quickly got out within the establishment that we were doing investigations and compliance reviews for the government. . . . We used our rearview mirror quite a bit."

One morning as the men were leaving their hotel, an unfriendly sheriff wearing a huge sidearm greeted them as he leaned against their car. Thereafter, the men adopted a precautionary routine of checking under the hood before starting the car.

When they found a black man willing to sign a formal complaint about an unjust termination, no white person would notarize the document. Luckily, Mr. Heneghan knew of "possibly the only black notary in Mississippi. We drove 50 miles to get that complaint notarized," Heller said.

They spent about 10 days in the Delta, and the knowledge acquired there served Mr. Heneghan later when he was director of the office of civil rights in the Department of Commerce's Maritime Administration. Many of the shipyards his office investigated were on the Gulf Coast.

Mr. Heneghan was born in the Bronx, N.Y. He enlisted in the Navy during World War II and served in the United States. He later graduated from Iona College in New Rochelle, N.Y., and became the research and training director for the cement workers' union in Chicago.

He received a master's degree in industrial relations from Loyola University in Chicago in 1957 and was an assistant professor at the school for the next six years. He retired from the Navy Reserve as a commander in 1978.

While working as a civilian for the Navy in Atlanta, he was a member of the initial task force in 1965 that helped set up the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

By 1966, Mr. Heneghan had become the deputy regional director of the EEOC in Atlanta. Two years later, he moved to the Maritime Administration in Washington. During the next 10 years, he increased the shipyard employment of women in blue-collar jobs from .2 percent to 5.4 percent and that of skilled black workers from 14.6 to 25.6 percent.

In 1970, as Newport News Shipbuilding prepared to start work on the aircraft carrier USS Eisenhower, Mr. Heneghan held up the contract award for a month because the company's employment practices were "as close as one could come in those days to separate but not yet equal," Heller said.

With Adm. Hyman Rickover urging faster action, Mr. Heneghan learned that the laying of the vessel's keel had already been scheduled, and two young celebrities were to preside: Julie Nixon Eisenhower, the president's daughter, and her husband, David. After negotiations that involved the White House, the shipyard changed its hiring practices.

Mr. Heneghan retired in 1981 as director of the enforcement coordination division of the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.

He was a member of and volunteer with the Montgomery County Human Relations Commission, So Others Might Eat, Meals on Wheels, the Irish American Club and Knights of Columbus. He was an avid board game player and in retirement played in two poker games every week. He also enjoyed music, history and Irish dancing.

Survivors include his wife of 55 years, Mary Teresa Coyle Heneghan of Bethesda; 12 children, John Coyle Heneghan, Tia Heneghan and Celia Hammond, all of Colorado Springs, Mary Ellen King and Mary Jo Heneghan, both of Gaithersburg, Philip Mongan Heneghan of Potomac, Margaret Heneghan of Homer, Alaska, Brigid McCarthy of Anchor Point, Alaska, Martin Corcoran Heneghan of Duvall, Wash., Cate Heneghan of Altadena, Calif., James Meehan Heneghan of Santa Fe, N.M., and Patrick Heneghan of Bethany Beach, Del.; a brother; 15 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

WMA Annual Gathering, November 2007



The annual WMA gathering took place last November in Seattle, and was great fun according to all those who attended. The brunch was scheduled for 2 hours, but we were having such a good time that before we knew it 4 hours had passed! We hope to see more of you next year. Check the web site, as we will post dates and times as soon as we know them.

First Annual Women on the Water (WOW) conference a Big Success!

The WOW conference that was held last October in Traverse City, Michigan was by all accounts a great success. There were about 50 people from all segments of the maritime industry in attendance, and everyone appeared to be enjoying themselves and learning a lot. Despite weather problems that prevented most of the cadets from Texas Maritime Academy and Kings Point from attending, there was a very good turnout. All day long there were candid and enthusiastic discussions between the more experienced generation and the young women who are just starting their careers. It was so inspiring to see the smart, and confident members of the next generation who are going to be the next leaders in our industry. MARAD intends to make this an annual event, so mark your calendars for the next one on November 6-8, 2008! (See flyer below for details)



Save the Date


Women on the Water
2nd Annual Conference
November 6-8, 2008


Hosted by
Texas Maritime Academy
Texas A&M University at Galveston
Galveston, TX

Please join the Texas Maritime Academy in partnership with the Maritime Administration at the 2nd annual "Women on the Water" Conference. This conference will provide an open forum for discussions highlighting current issues affecting women in the maritime industry. This will be a great opportunity to network, build relationships, share experiences and learn about the industry.


Conference and Registration Details to Follow

If you have questions/comments or would like additional information on the conference, please send an email of th your contact information (posting address, email, phone number) to WomenontheWater@dot.gov





Texas Maritime Academy
Texas A&M University at Galveston



U.S. Department of Transportation
Maritime Administration

Profile: Heather Seamans by Joan Sizemore



“I recall being seven years old looking down into the Grand Canyon from the Desert View Watch tower seeing boats going down the river thinking that someday I would do that” Heather Seamans told me. Little did she know then that she not only would go down that river, but that she would make a career of doing just that.

The river is of course the Colorado River and the boats are primarily rubber rafts. Named by the Spaniards for its muddy red color (in Spanish *color rojo*, which became modified by gringo speakers) it has its clear stream beginnings in the Rocky Mountains. Joined by the Green River in Utah, it

continues all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. On its way, the river carves out many desert canyons, but the Grand Canyon is the best known and grandest of all. From Lee’s Ferry where the boats put in, the river flows 226 bucking and twisting miles before there is anywhere you can pull the boat out. This is not a trip for the faint-hearted.

I met Heather at Lee’s Ferry last fall where with a group of friends and family I hired Arizona Wilderness River Adventures to guide us down the Colorado. Now at age 37, Heather has been working commercially for them since she graduated from college in Colorado. She got started in the summer of her senior year working in Page, Arizona doing float trips from Glen Canyon Dam to Lee’s Ferry. No rapids. What she didn’t know at the time she was hired was that the company also did trips down the Grand Canyon. When the Grand Canyon or “down river” operation needed extra hands, they would pick deserving, hard-working guides from the float trip operation. “I didn’t get a trip until my second season as a float- trip guide, but after my first trip I fell in love with it and decided that I wanted to work to become a licensed guide and run boats in the Grand Canyon” she told me.

Heather is a real outdoors girl. In the summer when she is not working, she likes to take time with her dogs hiking, camping, or going out on the Lake Powell. She also has her own Harley Sportster that she likes to ride when the weather is fine. In the winter, after the river season closes commercially she likes to tour in the back country on her cross-country skis. While she was going to college she worked at Winter Park Resort in Colorado as a ski instructor. She now supervises the kids snowboard school there at Winter Park. Last April Heather got married to another river guide, and Christian also works the ski season with her. They don’t plan on having children, figuring that their dogs were demanding enough.

“I love the solitude and the beauty of the canyon, the thrill of the whitewater, and camping under the stars” she tells me when I ask her what is about the job that keeps her coming back every year. “But what I enjoy most is meeting and spending time getting to know new people and their experiences. We meet people from everywhere and every walk of life!” What she likes the least, she tells me, is dealing with the elements the canyon can throw at you. The unbearable heat, wind and rain and having to cook in it!

“The elements don’t bother me all the time, but when you get an overdose of any one thing it is hard to

have a positive attitude” she confesses.

Heather tells me that training for her company was on-the-job training. In the river business the trainee is called a “Swamper”. The first things you learn as a swamper are the duties in camp like setting up the toilet, the kitchen and cooking. You are expected to read and learn about the natural and human history of the canyon, as well as picking up river stories from other guides that is shared with the passengers. As you learn the river mile by mile the guides will let you drive or row their boat as they see fit. As a swamper you will get your own boat when the senior guides feel you are ready mentally, physically, emotionally, and are able to keep passengers safe...and of course keep them entertained! Heather holds a Wilderness First Responder and a Food Handler’s card. She also has a Park Service guides’ license (no longer required) which qualifies her as a trip leader and a motor and rowing guide.

Georgie White was the first women to guide commercial passengers downriver though the Grand Canyon. In 1945 she and a friend hiked into the canyon’s lower gorge and swam downriver for four days. This was the beginning of her own love affair with the river so she started her own company and in 1952 she became the first woman to handle oars all the way down the Grand Canyon. Heather says that even when she began in 1996 it was definitely still a boys’ club. Her company had no female guides, in fact the two female swampers they did have were the guide’s girlfriends. “The boys never flat out were mean to us, but we had to be tougher and had to prove ourselves more than the male swampers,” she admits. Heather

said that her guess is that now about 30 percent of the guides are female and feels that she is treated as an equal with the male guides. She is expected to perform any duties that they are expected to perform regardless of the fact that in most cases women are smaller and not as strong. “I have had to learn to read the river and use its power to my advantage. Most women cannot muscle the boat around like some of the boys can,” she declares.

Heather tells me that to be a river guide you have to be not only physically ready for the job, but mentally and emotionally as



well. She believes, as I do too, that self-confidence is the key to success. Or as the writer Stewart E. White once said “Do not attempt to do a thing unless you are sure of yourself; but do not relinquish it simply because someone else is not sure of you”

We had the most amazing 18 days of my life this last October rafting down the Grand Canyon. Sleeping every night under the stars and listening to the Canyon Wren’s song in the morning was so wonderful. Thank you to Heather, and Christian, and all the other guides of Wilderness River Adventures for their efforts which made our trip comfortable and safe, and so very special. I understand the call of their river too, and I’ll be back. ✨

Send us stories of your adventures on and off the ship- we’ll publish them here!

Scholarships Available for Women in Maritime Careers

Did you know that there are scholarships available for women who are seeking careers in the maritime industry? The source of this money is The Brier Foundation, created by Pinky Brier. Pinky was a pioneer in the aviation industry and through perseverance and hard work, she made a name for herself and achieved financial success. It was always her desire to help other women who wanted to work in transportation, and in 2004 she set up a foundation to provide scholarships to women in the fields of maritime and aviation. The foundation is managed by her niece, Sandy Pinkert. The foundation is rare in that it recognizes that maritime education is not always college accredited. Although a portion of the money goes to maritime academy students, the Brier Foundation also funds hawsepipers, This is especially timely considering all the new U.S. Coast Guard requirements for training. For more information, visit the Brier foundation web site at www.thebrierfoundation.org, e-mail pinkyflies@thebrierfoundation.org, or call 1-866-746-5913 (1-866-pinkyflies)

BRIER FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS FOR WOMEN IN MARITIME TRANSPORTATION.

REQUIREMENTS:

Undergraduate - a Junior or Senior enrolled in a Maritime Academy in a program leading to a career at sea.

GPA of at least 3.25

Graduate - enrolled in a Maritime graduate program in the field of navigation, bridge officer, or naval engineering leading to a career at sea.

GPA of at least 3.25

Non-Academy Merchant Mariner - enrolled in a maritime school for a Merchant Marine License or Merchant Mariner Document

REQUIRED IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS:

Transcript if applicable

Proof of USCG accepted qualifying sea service - if applicable

Essays

Letters of recommendation - 3 professional and 2 personal (not immediate family)

Copy of licenses or certificates currently held - example: maritime document

Join the WMA - Women's Maritime Association

Send to: Women's Maritime Association
PMB 743
1916 Pike Place #12
Seattle, WA 98101

WMA dues are \$35.00 annually. Please pay at the beginning of the year, or if joining later, prorate dues at \$2.90 per month and add \$35.00 for the next full year. For Canadian and other foreign memberships, please pay in U.S. funds and add an additional \$4.00 annually for postage.

Yes, I want to join WMA. Enclosed is _____.

I am renewing my membership. Enclosed is _____.

Please fill out the following information being sure to indicate if you'd like to be listed in the next WMA directory. The directory is sent **only** to individual members.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

PHONE _____ YEARS IN MARITIME INDUSTRY _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

EMPLOYER/SCHOOL: _____

We want your photos!

WMA is looking for photographs of women working on their vessels to use on the opening page of our web site: www.womensmaritimeassoc.com.

Please e-mail any digital photographs to info@womensmaritimeassoc.com, or send snail mail to: WMA
PMB 743
1916 Pike Place #12
Seattle, WA 98101

The Women's Maritime Association is an informational and support network of seafaring women and men. Established in 1980, WMA is based in Seattle, with members from all over the United States and several other countries. Our membership includes women who work on ferries, tugs, fishing vessels, tankers, deep sea merchant ships, yachts and delivery vessels, as well as women who are seeking employment in the maritime and fishing industries, or who are students in maritime training programs.

WMA's purpose is to promote communication among women and men in maritime industries. Our newsletter provides a forum for exchanging information on employment, health and safety, training, and the achievements of our members. As a network, WMA provides mentoring and leadership, historical references, humor and camaraderie.

Check out our MSN group for our own Job Board, General Message Board, Picture Album, Calendar and More!

Our Web site has a new look!

Check it out-

www.womensmaritimeassoc.com

Return to:

Women's Maritime Association

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