



OBMG Newsletter



2019

"MANY DROPS MAKE MIGHTY OCEANS"

Virginia's House of Hope

Annual Fundraiser Party

Virginia's House of Hope hosted their annual fundraising event at the majestic Harvard Club in NYC, on December 4th. Long time OBMG donor and supporter Mr. Antonio Litman, the charity's founder and chairman, in conjunction with Mr. Clay Maitland, created an unforgettable evening.



OBMG members invited and sponsored numerous SUNY Maritime Cadets and young people to attend the event.

The delicious food, open bar, and laughter between friends and colleagues created a joyous atmosphere that made for wonderful networking and the spread of holiday cheer.

The evening included performances from Singer/Pianist Duo, Miriam Waks & Alberto Pibiri as well as a special performance by the NYU Children's Choir.

VIRGINIA'S HOPES AND DREAMS

"I knew it was important to keep her dream alive — to fulfill the hopes of those who were most in need of help."

— L. Antonio Litman, Founder

Virginia's House of Hope strives to improve the quality of life for children. They accomplish this by helping disadvantaged families throughout New York City and surrounding regions. In cooperation with local public-school systems, they help those in need gain access to food, clothing and other necessities.

Since 2011 they have distributed shoes, toys and clothes to over 10,000 families in need in New York City.



At the Holiday Fundraiser, Virginia's House of Hope collected donations of toys from the event's attendees. This generous collection of toys was then distributed throughout the various public schools in New York City.

All proceeds are given to Maritime Academic Scholarships; Assisting students from the Tugboat Program in furthering their careers; and helping disadvantaged families in New York City.



OBMG Board and members were proud to support the cause, as they do every year, by purchasing a Silver Sponsorship.



The Marine Society for the City of New York



The Marine Society of New York is a charitable and educational organization whose membership is composed entirely of Captains or Officers of merchant vessels under the United States flag.

It was formed in colonial days, and formally chartered by King George III in 1770 to "...improve maritime knowledge and relieve indigent and distressed shipmasters, their widows and orphans..."

The Marine Society of New York has performed its charitable service quietly through the years and is the watchdog of the interests of American Merchant Shipping.

Aside from a donation on election, there are no yearly dues, and it is believed that all eligible seafarers in good repute should become members.

The OBMG is proud to have The Marine Society of the City of New York as a committed partner and as an Annually Pledged Commodore Donor.



249th Annual Dinner – April 2019

OBMG Board member Sun Yang, Maritime Administrator Admiral Buzby, OBMG Board Member Constansa Torrejon, OBMG Board President Captain Robert Cook

Bronx Green Middle School Career Day

The OBMG strongly believes that young minority students should be more exposed to non-traditional career paths, such as Maritime Shipping and Engineering careers.

One way of doing this is by visiting Elementary, Middle and High School classrooms and career fairs.

Recently, OBMG Board members Constansa Torrejon, Sun Yang and Kalin Cook spent a day at the Bronx Green Middle School, meeting with students at their "Plotting Your Future Course" career day. The students were very excited to learn about the maritime industry and had many thoughtful and surprisingly progressive questions.

The students also received a copy of a booklet, created by the OBMG, that highlights the long legacy of Mariners of Color, featuring Mariners from the 1700's.



Teach Fleet

Educating about shipping through LEGO models

Mr. Wilbert McKinley, a fellow OBMG member, has dedicated much of his personal time to educating youths around the country to the vast industry that is the US Merchant Marines.



The TEACH FLEET is a program operated by a 501(c)(3) non-profit public charity and educational organization called the Gospel Lightship International.

This past October, Teach Fleet was exhibited at the University of Delaware's Coast Day. During this exhibition the Teach Fleet Program displayed a few of their newer models, including a model of a Delaware Bay and River Pilot Boat.

The Teach Fleet has over 600 various models of vessels of prominence throughout history. By using Legos, the Teach Fleet initiative catches the minds and imagination of young people.



MARAD Deputy Administrator Richard Balzano, Mr. Wilbert McKinley, MARAD Chief Council Douglas Burnett with LEGO Model of TS Empire State VII, currently under contract for delivery to SUNY Maritime College in the near future.

The Organization of Black Maritime Graduates



Summer Sea Term

With growing inflation and nation-wide increases in college tuition, SUNY Maritime faces a unique financial challenge. Each cadet must obtain the finances to pay for an extra semester every year (SST), as they work to receive their required sea time. This burden becomes even more cumbersome for many of the cadets from out of the region or even out of the country.

2020 SST Financial Requirements

- Senior SST Out of Region: **\$13553**
- Senior SST In Region: **\$11968**
- Under Class SST Out of Region: **\$11698**
- Under Class SST In of Region: **\$10113**

Purpose

OBMG has a lasting commitment to provide assistance and encouragement to minority undergraduates who are full time students and are pursuing a career in the Maritime and Engineering professions.

Scholarships

The scholarships are awarded to offset some of the large and growing Summer Sea Term (SST) expenses.

The scholarships are awarded every year on the last Thursday in February at a dinner hosted by the SUNY Maritime Cultural Club. The event is free to attend, there is live music and great food. The evening always features inspiring Guest Speakers and Honors Notable People of Color or someone who has fostered the advancement of the underrepresented in the maritime industry.

Application Eligibility

Minority students and cadets attending SUNY Maritime College who:

- Demonstrate Leadership
- Have Financial Need
- Demonstrate Academic Achievement

Each year the OBMG awards the *Carl F. Burnett Academic Achievement Award*. This award is presented to the applicant with the Highest GPA over 3.0.

Carl f. Burnett 1928-1998

Carl F. Burnett, class of '50 was the first African American graduate of SUNY Maritime College and a staunch member and supporter of the OBMG

A Lasting Commitment

For over 25 years the OBMG has been awarding scholarships to underserved students and cadets at SUNY Maritime College.



Many Drops Make Mighty Oceans

OBMG is recognized by SUNY Maritime College as a top tier \$100,000+ supporter of students and cadets.

In 2019 the OBMG awarded 14 scholarships.

Between 2014 and 2019 the OBMG awarded 62 scholarships.

Membership

Your membership is vitally important to the OBMG.

Members of the OBMG are the keel and ballast of the organization.

Members provide guidance and support, not only for cadets and students, but for each other.

Members often proudly represent the OBMG and their respective industries at various networking events and functions. The OBMG's strength is a result of each of its member's lasting commitment.



Donations

The OBMG is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible and go entirely to the scholarships as the Board and membership dues absorb all administrative costs.

Every donation has a direct impact on the future of deserving students.

DONATING IS EASY at:
OBMG.ORG

Persons of Interest



Captain Kevin L. Barrow '95

In May 2019, Captain Kevin Barrow was elected for a two-year term as the Secretary/Treasurer to the Bay and River Delaware Pilots Association.

Captain Barrow has been a Pilot since 2001.

Kevin is a member of the OBMG as well as a former OBMG Board Member.



Captain Steve Werse '79

Recently retired MM&P International Secretary-Treasurer Captain Steven Werse was inducted into SUNY Maritime College Heritage Hall.

He was also honored at The Captain Richard Phillips Lane Kirkland Maritime Trust 1st Annual Dinner.

Captain Werse is a long-time member and advocate of the OBMG.



Marissa Danzy '10

She graduated from SUNY Maritime with Marine Engineering-Mechanical Option and 3rd Asst. Engineer license. She also obtained an MBA from Syracuse University. She has over a decade of non-profit, facilities and operations management.

Marissa is also an OBMG member.

Seafarer Outreach - Linda Kreter



Reaching out to mariners and their family members with podcasts (audio), videos, and written materials discussing safety, retention, recruitment, and key seafarer issues from top to bottom. They will be adding (not competing with) the support already offered in the maritime community.

Offering multimedia, multilingual and active global outreach. They are especially pleased with the videos in Mandarin and Filipino, showing global inclusion and a fresh approach. They have collaborated with the American P&I Club on heat-related illness.

www.SeafarerOutreach.com see "Services" for a dropdown list of audio, video, and text examples



Seafarer Outreach Channel You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeWOX6o4_2lg1rGWnw5KKqw

The OBMG is proud to be a partner and an advocate in promoting this vital program.

Linda is a proud OBMG member.

Crossed the Bar 2019/2020

Captain Philip Thomas '08



(1998 - 2019)

In 2019, the maritime community mourned the loss of Captain Philip Thomas and his three children, who perished in September during Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas.

Captain Thomas was a 2007 OBMG Scholarship recipient. After graduation, at the impressive young age of 20, he became a Harbor Pilot in Freeport, Grand Bahama. Eventually joining with other senior Bahama Harbor Pilots, he helped create an independent professional group, the Bahamas Maritime Pilots Association.

His friendly and approachable nature impacted all who knew him.

L. Antonio Litman



(1964 - 2020)

Antonio spent the last 28 years as Office Manager and Assistant to International Registries co-founder, Clay Maitland.

He founded Virginia's House of Hope (VHOH) in honor of Clay's mother. VHOH has aided over 10,000 families in New York City and the surrounding area.

They also provide scholarships to young people from underprivileged backgrounds who wish to pursue a career in the maritime industry, through their Tugboat Program.

Antonio was a close OBMG colleague and friend. His generosity and vivacious spirit touched a great many lives and made the world a better place for so many people.

Captain Allan Michael



(1956 - 2020)

Captain Allan Michael was the very first Black Captain of the New York Circle-Line Sightseeing cruise line. He was a Captain there for 37 years.

He was also a student of Aesthetic Realism, which helped him overcome some of the racial disparity challenges that he faced.

After retiring he became an avid art photographer. allanmichaelphotography.com

The OBMG was honored to have Allan as a Board member. His passion, quiet courage, kind heart and inimitable spirit are a model to be emulated and will be sorely missed.

OBMG Annual Mentoring BBQ

Once again, as we have since 2014, the OBMG hosted the Annual Mentoring BBQ for SUNY Maritime Cultural Club members. The event is held at Captain & Mrs. Cook's home in New Jersey. SUNY Maritime Alumni as well as industry professionals from Engineers, Pilots, Port Captains, Mates to Financial Advisors were in attendance as Mentors.

The afternoon gave the students and cadets an opportunity to converse one on one with the Mentors about the professions that they are soon going to be entering. After some good food, backyard games and many side conversations, everyone gathered for a session of presentations by each of the Mentors. The Mentors spoke about their profession as well as shared advice on how to handle the challenges of the various courses of study. Each of the Mentors then fielded questions from the students and cadets.

The Cultural Club members are invariably reluctant to end the afternoon. They always leave well fed with their minds full of new information and a deeper sense of the support the OBMG provides.



Resiliency Project HR1242 Honoring 400 Years since enslaved Africans arrived in the Colonies

In commemoration of the *400 Years of African American History Commission Act*, Don Victor Mooney, President of the H.R.1242 Resilience Project, invited the OBMG to be a Resiliency Honoree, recognizing our long history of contributions to the African American community.



On January 8, 2018, the H.R.1242 bill was signed, which establishes the *400 Years of African American History Commission Act*. Activities have been carried out throughout the United States to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in the English colonies at Point Comfort, Virginia, in 1619 and highlight the resiliency and contributions of African Americans to the United States. The slaves and free men that worked on the Brooklyn waterfront, farmlands, estates, storage centers, etc. in Brooklyn, along with the abolitionists and Native Americans that took bold steps to help the enslaved, were remembered and honored by the H.R.1242 Resiliency Project on August 17, 2019 at a ceremony held at Pebble Beach, Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Board members Sun Yang and Kalin Cook attended, along with OBMG member Kyron Cooper, as representatives for the OBMG. In commemoration of the event, the OBMG was presented with a Proclamation as well as kente cloths.

Mr. Mooney also thanked the OBMG for our long standing support of his Challenge Voyages, <https://goreechallenge.com/>, by presenting us with a commemorative section of one of the boats that he rowed across the Atlantic from Goree Island, Senegal to Brooklyn, NY.



Ship Operations Cooperative Program



SOCP is a non-profit organization of maritime industry professionals to promote beneficial innovations in ship and other maritime operations through the identification, development, and application of new methods, tools, and technologies.

SOCP's overall objective is to improve the safety, productivity, efficiency, security, and environmental performance of U.S. vessel operations.

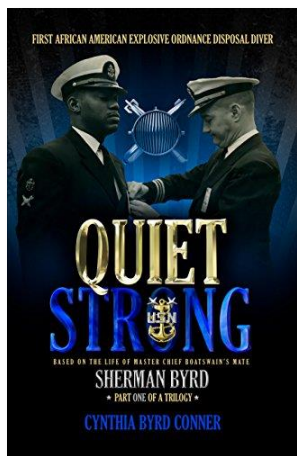


Connecticut Maritime Association

The Connecticut Maritime Association is a non-profit organization built by its members for its members. It is an Association made of individuals representing every aspect of shipping and international trade.

The CMA Shipping Conference is the largest shipping event in North America. It is an unmissable event - giving delegates the opportunity to view cutting edge exhibits and network with over 2,500 attendees from 49 countries.

Captain Robert Cook and Linda Kreter, Wise Health spoke on panel discussions at both the SOCP and CMA Shipping Conferences in Connecticut on April 4, 2019. Robert Kalin Cook and Braxton Lumford also attended.



"Quiet Strong"

BY Cynthia Byrd Conner

Cynthia Byrd Conner embarked on "The Master Chief Sherman Byrd Legacy Book Tour 2019". She shared MC Byrd's story with NROTC cadets across the country. The book covers the time frame from when MC Byrd entered the Navy in 1947 until his death in 1971. Some of the topics discussed with the cadets are diversity, inclusivity, the Officer-Enlisted relationship, the Chief Petty Officer's Anchor: honor, courage and commitment.

Ms. Byrd Conner embarks on her 2020 book tour to the Army ROTC, starting with Georgia Tech on February 5, 2020.

MC Sherman Byrd was posthumously honored by the OBMG at the 2012 Black History Month Dinner. Ms. Conner was inspired to write the book after her presentation about her father was so enthusiastically received.

Ms. Conner is an OBMG member. In gratitude for the advocacy and guidance the OBMG provides her, she is annually donating a percentage of the sales of her book, "Quiet Strong" to the OBMG.





ORGANIZATION OF BLACK MARITIME GRADUATES

Building Bright Futures Through Scholarships and Mentoring

Dear Friends:

The Organization of Black Maritime College Graduates (OBMG) is asking for your financial support for under-represented cadets and students enrolled at SUNY Maritime College. When the OBMG was formed in 1994, we knew the need was great. Over the past 25 years that need has only increased...and so has our support! With the help of our generous members and donors.

The OBMG's goal is to provide opportunities for young maritime and engineering professionals to succeed through mentoring, guidance and support, before and after graduation.

Since our inception, we have awarded over 200 scholarships to qualifying cadets and non-regimental students. The money we provide assists with their tuition, summer sea term, books, uniforms, and so much more. As always, we strive to increase the number of scholarships we are able to award as the need is great and is growing.

OBMG Scholarships are awarded every year at the Cultural Club's Black History Month Dinner held on the last Thursday in February at SUNY Maritime College. The evening is free, always entertaining and most importantly, inspiring!

In 2019, with your support, we raised close to \$50,000.00, all of which goes toward funding the scholarships that we award. Your continued generous support will make next year just as productive....or more!!

We are proud to have 100% of your donated dollars go towards scholarships, with the OBMG Board and membership dues absorbing the administrative costs needed for day-to-day operations.

Our members and supporters represent a broad spectrum of ethnicities, professions and affiliations. The OBMG members are giving of their time and energy to work for this endeavor because at one time many of them were able to continue *their* education with the help of the scholarships *they* were awarded.

Without question, education is the key to progress and prosperity. The level of educational attainment either opens the doors of opportunity or closes them. With the commitment of people such as you, doors of opportunity will continue to open for so many deserving young people.

Donations can be made on our website, www.OBMG.org. **Donate and become a member!**

Thank you in advance for your support and donations.

Sincerely,

The OBMG Board

OBMG Top Tier Donors

Admiral \$10,000 +
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Captain \$1,000 +
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Captain John DeCruz
Captain & Mrs. Richter
Mr. Hassan Barksdale
Mr. & Mrs. Hairston
Mrs. Cynthia Conner

Many Drops Make Mighty Oceans

*The OBMG is a charitable incorporated organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
All of your donations and dues sent to the OBMG are fully tax deductible as allowed by law.*

www.OBMG.org

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