

BY MAURICIO GARRIDO, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN SALVAGE ASSOCIATION

ASA: COMMITTED TO A BETTER FUTURE



Education is widely recognized as the cornerstone of human development because it provides the basis for communication and mutual understanding. Math, science and literature are in effect communication tools that allow us to exchange thoughts tuned into the same frequency. Despite the pivotal importance of maritime shipping to everyday life in the USA, it remains as a quasi-esoteric subject matter which is only accessible to a minority of student's fortunate enough to inherit a maritime connection.

In the United States we are blessed with several college-level maritime training institutions which churn out approximately 1,000 degreed maritime professionals each year. However, the recruitment and retention challenge is ever so daunting in light of massive

competition from "normal" colleges, where students experience long hair, big sports, frats, and all the fun an average American kid is expected to experience after high school. As the shipping industry continues to stress over a shortage of well educated personnel, it must recognize that it is time to invest in the coordinated launching of initiatives aimed at producing long term results. Such initiatives should be based on developing the desire for a career in the maritime field while showcasing it to kids during their formative years. In other words, the greater maritime community must shift gears and focus on reaching younger generations.

Our segment of industry faces a parallel challenge of attracting personnel into salvage, a problem that is compounded further if they don't even consider a maritime career. The American Salvage Association (ASA) is committed to doing its part in building a bridge to let young generations taste the maritime field.

Earlier this year, the ASA embarked in a mission to support the restructuring of the Baltimore based Maritime Industries Academy (MIA). MIA is a high school level institution whose mission is to give young men and women a preamble to the maritime world. Widespread industry support is gaining momentum and we are confident it will be a successful prototype worth emulating around

the nation. Our commitment to a better maritime future has been further evidenced by the establishment of the ASA Education Committee. This committee will spearhead efforts such as the MIA project and serve as the vehicle to bring young men and women closer to shipping with the vision that it will cascade down into the world of ship salvage. Simply put, future salvors must first understand what shipping is all about to then grasp the importance of salvage response and that its role in environmental and property protection is a crucial component of maritime trade. We believe our efforts will refresh our image while enhancing our relationship with shipowners, underwriters and the local authorities.

Education holds the key to a successful future in every walk of life; maritime casualty response is no exception. As such, the American Salvage Association is committed to support the growth and improvement of the maritime industry by sharing our knowledge and experience.

It is a long-term commitment which will demand tenacity and perseverance—I cannot think of a better group of people to take this on than a bunch of salvors. **ML**

www.americansalvage.org



A screengrab of Baltimore's Maritime Industries Academy's website

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