

# AT THE HELM



## DEAD SHIP RESCUED IN DELAWARE BAY

**O**n the morning of Wednesday, December 27, 2023, McAllister Towing of Philadelphia, Inc. received a call alerting them to the presence of a dead ship several miles offshore from Cape Henlopen, Delaware. The SHORTHORN EXPRESS, an empty cattle carrier, lost her engine immediately after the river pilot had boarded. The ship was now at anchor in the middle of the river pilot boarding area of the Delaware Bay shipping channel.

Although the SHORTHORN EXPRESS—not a particularly large vessel at 383 feet long and 53 feet wide—was not blocking shipping traffic, it was still dangerously located. Captain Joe Benton, Vice President and General Manager of McAllister Towing of Philadelphia, Inc., described it as being a “car stuck in the middle of the highway with traffic rushing past.” Thus, it was crucial that the ship was moved as quickly and safely as possible. McAllister was the only company available on the Delaware River that had a tug with the necessary towing capability and capacity to perform the rescue. A contract was quickly drawn up with Donjon-SMIT and two tugs were sent down to rescue the SHORTHORN EXPRESS.

After a nine-hour journey, the BEVERLY R. McALLISTER and the ROBERT E. McALLISTER arrived on site at 6:00 am on December 28, 2023. The BEVERLY R. McALLISTER with Captain Shawn Fergone and docking pilot Captain Kyle Stearns was assisted by the ROBERT E. McALLISTER with

Captain Christopher Doms and Mate Hannah Taylor. The tugs pulled alongside the SHORTHORN EXPRESS in heavy fog and a sea state of 6 to 7-foot-high waves. After waiting several hours for the fog to clear, the tug crews were able to begin connecting to the ship.



The BEVERLY R. McALLISTER has a double drum stern towing winch that was necessary to bring the SHORTHORN EXPRESS to port. The operation, overseen by docking pilot Captain Dan Weamer, needed particular care as the towing bits on the SHORTHORN EXPRESS were rated for 30 tons of pull, whereas the BEVERLY was capable of 61 tons of Bollard pull. As the tugs brought the SHORTHORN EXPRESS to the Port of Wilmington, DE the sea state remained moderate, and the BEVERLY had to be conscious of speed and pull on the vessel to keep proper tension in the towing line. During the tow, the ROBERT was positioned at the stern of the ship with a line in the transom to help steer and keep the ship in line.

After a 14-hour journey, the BEVERLY and ROBERT had safely brought the SHORTHORN EXPRESS to the Port of Wilmington, DE. Rescuing a dead ship is not a job that McAllister does often, and Captain Dan Weamer was proud of the results of the operation. “Every day on the job is different,” said Captain Weamer, “and we make each job successful by having as much information and communication as we can beforehand.”

McAllister was able to provide the tugs and crew capable of performing a rescue to ensure safety on the waterfront. The entire McAllister team rose to the occasion when called upon and was able to perform a very specific kind of job. “The credit goes to the team as a whole,” said Captain Kyle Stearns. “The fact that we were able to put together an experienced crew that could safely and successfully do the job is spectacular.”







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# RECORD NUMBER OF FERRY CARS AND PASSENGERS AND TERMINAL UPGRADE

**T**he Bridgeport & Port Jefferson Steamboat Company saw record numbers of passengers and cars use the ferry. The ferry, which has seen the number of travelers increase in the years since the end of COVID-19 Pandemic, broke all previous records in 2023. Last year, 1,156,254 total passengers and 504,332 car equivalent units—all vehicles including trucks and motorcycles are reported as “car equivalents”—traveled on the ferry. The Bridgeport & Port Jefferson Steamboat Company effectively relieves landside congestion on Long Island, the bridge crossings and along the I-95 corridor in New York and Connecticut.



**I**n addition to a new ferry, the Port Jefferson Terminal will be upgrading the ferry terminal building as well as moving to new administrative buildings. The current terminal building will be torn down and replaced with a new building with a smaller footprint. This building will house ticketing, a waiting area, and restrooms for customers. The smaller footprint will allow for more car staging and more efficient loading and unloading of cars from the ferry.

**T**he new administrative building will be located just across the street from the pier and is slated to be finished in Spring 2024. This building will house the human resources team, the tour office, engineering office, and general

**T**hese numbers were a welcome surprise given that there were times of the year when the ferry was operating with a reduced schedule. Vice President & General Manager Fred Hall has noted that since COVID-19 people “don’t care where they’re going, but they’re going.” The company has invested in a new ferry to join the fleet in Fall 2024 which will allow the schedule to operate with three ferries on weekends year-round and full time during peak season, with one ferry to spare. The new ferry will have an increased carrying capacity of 120 cars and according to Hall, “these new spaces will be utilized in the peak seasons.”



manager’s office. There will be a state-of-the-art conference room and educational training room for employee use. Another building is being renovated and will be the location for the reservations office and the Port Captain and staff in addition to housing a crew lounge and a fitness training room. These modernizations will help the Bridgeport & Port Jefferson Steamboat Company to continue provide quality ferry services to the community.



## AMANDA AHLEMEYER ROBINSON NAMED “TOP WOMAN IN MARITIME”

**M**cAllister is proud to announce that Amanda Ahlemeyer Robinson, Operations Manager of McAllister Towing of Virginia, was recognized by Marine Log as a Top Woman in Maritime for 2023. Amanda was among 20 women listed to highlight the work being done to increase diversity and inclusion within the maritime industries. The women selected for this honor were chosen after being nominated by the publication's readers.

**A**manda joined McAllister Towing of Virginia following her graduation from Old Dominion University. The path to climbing and excelling within the maritime community was not an easy one but she embraced the challenge and took the initiative to learn all she could from different angles of the business. Amanda shared with Marine Log that she is most proud of the relationships she has forged to further her maritime career. Developing relationships and utilizing maritime social networks have been critical in enabling her to grow from entry level positions to her current role as McAllister Towing of Virginia's first female operations manager. Vice President and General Manager of McAllister Towing of Virginia, Capt. J. Elliott Westall said, "No one in this industry starts out, 'ready to be in charge', and I've always had an attitude where, 'those who want... Get!' I saw that passion in Amanda when she joined the team as a receptionist 16 years ago." As a leader in the company, Capt. Westall believes, "It's the responsibility of a leader to give everyone, regardless of their career paths, or experience, every opportunity to succeed and excel. Amanda accepted every challenge and always sought out more responsibilities and expanded her roles within the company. She wasn't

intimidated in the least as her responsibilities expanded from entry level to Personnel Manager, and now Operations Manager." McAllister prides itself on encouraging the professional growth of team members in the company. Said McAllister's President Buck McAllister, "It is important

to us that we support our team members reach their personal and professional goals. We want McAllister to be an environment where our team knows we are rooting for their success."

**F**rom the shores of Hampton Roads area of Virginia, Amanda developed a passion for giving back to the local community which raised her. She is an advocate of educating local communities about the many and varied opportunities available on the waterfront. She said, "Even if you don't know about the maritime industry there is a niche for you."

Amanda believes it is important to make sure that people are aware of the vastness of the industry, which feeds the global population and helps economies to thrive by transporting valued commodities and deploying clean energy technologies. There are many opportunities for people from diverse skill sets and education levels to be involved. "Now more than ever, it is crucial to bring awareness to the numerous opportunities available in the business," said Amanda.

**A**manda is active in the maritime community and proud to share her successes with others seeking to join an essential industry. In 2020, Amanda graduated from the Virginia Maritime Association's Maritime Leadership Certification Program. Currently, she serves on the board of directors for the Virginia Maritime Association, the Norfolk Propeller Club, and is an active member of WISTA. She was also featured as the "Member in the Spotlight" for the January 2024 International Propeller Club Newsletter. Capt. Westall is thrilled to see Amanda be nationally recognized for her hard work, "We are proud of Amanda's accomplishments and drive to succeed in and around the waterfront. I am eager to see her continue to grow with this company. I don't see this as training an operations manager, I see this as training my relief."



# INTEGRATED HR PLATFORM

**M**cAllister is switching over to an online, integrated HR management system by Oracle. The transition to this platform is an exciting development for the efficiency and management of employee information by the HR Team. The new platform is highly secure and allows the HR Team to manage employment information digitally and has an Employee Self-Service Portal.

**T**hrough the Oracle Employee Self-Service Portal, employees can take ownership of updating and changing their personal information; updating their employment profile with their licenses and credentials; and participating in the performance management process. Benefit eligible employees will be able to enroll in McAllister's employer-sponsored benefit options, such health insurance, and monitor and manage their paid time off in real time through the portal.

**A**s HR's one-stop-shop, Oracle is also our new applicant tracking system, allowing us to post job openings, recruit and hire in one place. Once hired, the new McAllister employees will be welcomed to the company through a paperless onboarding process entirely through the new system. The HR Team's new management system is integrated with ADP WorkForce Now, our payroll system, and all other third-party solutions which will expedite the troubleshooting process in future.

**T**he new Oracle Employee Self-Service Portal is already proving to increase efficiency. "The current system has catapulted us into the modern HRIS era," said HR team member Farah Jean. The priority for 2024 is Absence Management and Web Clock (Time Clock features).

