

# AT THE HELM



## RETIREMENT OF CAPTAIN GARY OLIVEIRA

**C**aptain Gary Oliveira has retired after nearly 40 years in the tugboat industry. He is continuing to work with the company as a consultant, continuing his leadership in the Rhode Island and Massachusetts maritime community.

Gary was the Vice President and General Manager of McAllister Towing of Narragansett Bay LLC. He spent his entire life on the water. Growing up in New Hampshire, Gary regularly worked with his father and brothers as a commercial fisherman. In 1984, he became a relief engineer for Seaboats Co. after a friend at the company asked him to join. A few years later in 1987, Gary would start work at Providence Steamboat Company as a part time dispatcher, eventually fully coming onboard the tugs in 1989. By 2007 when McAllister acquired Providence Steamboat Co., Gary had served as a deckhand, mate, and captain. He took on the position of Port Captain that year and General Manager quickly thereafter.

Gary feels a sense of accomplishment every day from working on tugboats. It is what initially drew him to the work and has kept him coming back for the past 40 years; in all his years in the tugboat industry, that feeling has never gone away. He describes working on tugs as more of a lifestyle than a job, and one that has always suited him well.

In his extensive career, Gary has witnessed firsthand the dramatic changes the towing industry has undergone. He was entrusted to captain the first tractor tug at Providence Steamboat Company, and has since seen that type of



vessel take over. He was also involved in the installation of the Providence River Bridge in 2007.

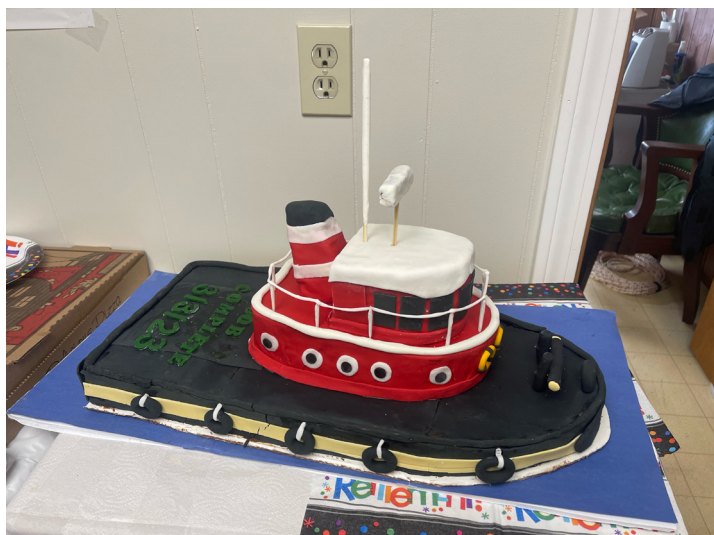
"I'm in one of the few ports that still gets away with a 3,000 horsepower conventional boat, but that's fading away," he says. "Everything we build is tractor tugs, so that's the future."

As General Manager of Narragansett Bay, Gary oversaw the area from Cape Cod to around New Haven, including the Providence fleet, which consists of 7 tugs and 2 crew boats. Of his tugs, he claims that his favorite is the BUCKLEY McALLISTER, a state of the art 5,000 horsepower tractor tug built for escort through Buzzards Bay and the Cape Cod Canal.

Gary sees wind energy playing a big part in the future of the Narragansett Bay and Buzzards Bay ports. The industry has been rapidly growing and he doesn't see it stopping any time soon. Offshore wind has posed a lot of new opportunities and obstacles for Gary and his ports in the last few years. "It's exciting, but very challenging," he says.

Roger Francis has now taken over the role of General Manager for Narragansett Bay, and consults with Gary often. Personally, Gary is not sure what retirement will bring him, but he doesn't feel worried about keeping busy. He knows the water will always be nearby.

"I live on an island and spent most of my life working on the water. Yeah, I'll always be on the water."





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# FREEING THE EVER FORWARD

On Sunday April 17, 2022, McAllister tugs helped free the EVER FORWARD container ship which had run aground in the Chesapeake Bay more than a month earlier. McAllister Towing of Baltimore, Inc. had successfully undocked the vessel and escorted it out of the Baltimore area in March 13, 2022. The ship then proceeded down Chesapeake Bay under a state pilot, heading for Norfolk, Virginia. After the tugs had been dismissed, the pilot reportedly missed a turn and ran aground in the shallows near Pasadena, Maryland.

The US Coast Guard has since issued a report detailing the errors in the piloting of the EVER FORWARD.

The pilot was monitoring the voyage on his Portable Pilot Unit (PPU), but exited the active voyage to view a previous transit just before the grounding. Additionally, the pilot made a series of 5 phone calls, totaling 60 minutes of phone time. He began drafting an email just before the grounding occurred. Sadly, the result was that the vessel passed its charted turning point and grounded in an attempt to get back on course. The Coast Guard warns against the reliance on technology and the fixation on phones during navigation.

Luckily, the ship, which was loaded with over 4,900 containers, and about 1100 feet long and 160 feet wide, was stuck outside of the shipping channel. This position allowed one ship to move in and out at a time, meaning traffic was slowed but not completely stopped. Officials said there were no injuries, damage or pollution reported. The ERIC McALLISTER with Captain Jim Roof, Mate Alex Nielsen, and D/U Connor Boudart were immediately called to help dislodge the ship, but were unable to pull it free.

Donjon Smit was hired for salvage, and made one



more attempt to pull the boat out of the mud which was unsuccessful. McAllister negotiated a contract with Donjon Smit to help them in their efforts. The salvage company creatively strategized to dig out 84,000 cubic yards of mud and remove 500 containers from the ship. On April 17, 2022, with a full moon and rising tide, the final attempt was made to lift the EVER FORWARD.

The BRIDGET McALLISTER and the ERIC McALLISTER along with two tugs from Moran Towing went down to the site at 05:00 am. The ERIC McALLISTER, with Captain Byshe Highs and D/U Will Powell and the BRIDGET McALLISTER with Captain Robert Dempsey and D/U Ryan Porter. The two McAllister tugs were positioned on the starboard side, about 100 feet apart with the Moran tugs on the opposite side. Captain Robert Dempsey describes heading out on the BRIDGET that morning, thinking with certainty “We’re gonna move this thing. It’s coming out of there today.”

Although the EVER FORWARD’s monitors could not register any movement, after 12 minutes, Captain Dempsey noted the BRIDGET had moved 6 feet. Moran and McAllister alternated roles of pushing and pulling, keeping continuous pressure on the stern of the vessel. Eventually BRIDGET pulled the ship straight backwards into the deep water.

Captain Dempsey said he thinks this job highlights the versatility of work tugs do for ships. With vigilant crews, trustworthy equipment and having “constant situational awareness” he knows that McAllister is prepared to act in a wide array of situations.





# SPIRIT OF NORFOLK FIRE

**M**cAllister crews displayed heroism and quick thinking in a crisis last year in Norfolk, Virginia. Just after 12 pm on June 7, 2022, The SPIRIT OF NORFOLK cruise yacht caught fire with over a hundred people onboard, most of them preschool and elementary school students. Although it was unclear at the time, the fire is believed to have started in the engine room.

The ROSEMARY McALLISTER, run by Captain Larry Sullivan, was docked on Pier 3 just a few hundred yards away when he said he saw smoke billowing from the outtake valves of the boat. He and his crew quickly made their way over to see if that ship needed assistance. Only when they were more than halfway to the vessel, did they hear the mayday call over the radio.



"We were on them within half a minute," Captain Sullivan said. The crew's instinct and readiness to act when they saw the vessel in distress gave them valuable time to assist the ship and rescue the passengers

The SPIRIT OF NORFOLK had cut its engines, so the ROSEMARY helped reposition the boat out of the way of other vessels and pointed it into the wind, ensuring the smoke blew behind it.

Other vessels such as the G.M. McALLISTER, the CONDOR, the CHALLENGER, FORT BRAGG, and OHIO RIVER all assisted in the initial emergency. The ROSEMARY used its own fire monitors to spray water onto the boat in order to cool it down.

Passengers were evacuated onto a sightseeing cruise called VICTORY ROVER, which came over to assist. Thankfully, all passengers were safely evacuated with



no injuries reported. Navy tugs were scrambled after the initial mayday call and took over once the boat was successfully docked on the Navy Pier.

The SPIRIT OF NORFOLK burned for 5 days and is considered a total loss. The vessel did not have a fire detection or suppression system, but met all safety regulations at the time of the fire.

In high stakes situations like this one, Captain Sullivan said the most important thing is to keep a level head and not get nervous. He and his crew were given the highest honors a civilian can receive from the Coast Guard for their response that day.

Captain Sullivan said that looking back on the situation, he doesn't think he and his crew could have done anything better. He said their training and drills had well prepared them for this situation. "You fight like you train and train like you fight," he said.



The crew of the ROSEMARY was awarded the Commandant's Superior Achievement Award, the highest civilian commendation, from the United States Coast Guard for their heroic actions during the fire outbreak aboard the Spirit of Norfolk.



# WELCOME ABOARD MIKE MILLAR

**M**cAllister welcomes Mike Millar aboard as the new designated person ashore (DPA) and health, safety, quality and environmental (HSQE) manager. Mike brings a lot of expertise to the role, with a work history in the US Coast Guard and the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS).

Mike is based in Pensacola, Florida with his wife and father-in-law. He grew up sailing with his dad, a WWII navy veteran, off the coast of Florida. When it came time to go to college, Mike decided to go to the Coast Guard Academy to continue learning about the sea. Later, he went back to school for degrees in business administration while working for the Coast Guard.

After 17 years serving in the Coast Guard, Mike was offered early retirement as part of a reduction in force program. His last day of work at the Coast Guard was a Friday, and he started at ABS the following week. Mike spent 26 years at ABS, learning about every aspect of the industry through auditing companies, tugboats, ships, shoreside facilities, steel mills and computer manufacturing plants. He has seen firsthand the vast number of ways that companies handle operations.



As a DPA, Mike makes sure that McAllister vessels are operated safely and efficiently. Mike has been learning and absorbing the specifics of how McAllister Towing operates. Mike lives by the motto of “protect, defend and support” which he has taken with him from his field operations working in the Coast Guard through his time working in a corporate setting. He said his role in the company “to support every other team in McAllister.” He said that this means making sure McAllister’s assets are in good operating condition, so that people feel comfortable and can be maximally effective and efficient at their job.

Mike said he already feels at home at McAllister and that every person he has met has been genuine and hard working. He’s excited for what the coming years have in store for him and the company.





# THE GASPEE

**M**cAllister is excited to introduce the GASPEE, the first Jones Act crew transfer vessel (CTV) in McAllister's new wind farm operations. McAllister originally purchased the vessel on spec with no guaranteed customer. However, with the increase in focus on renewable energy in the US, McAllister took the opportunity to utilize the GASPEE in its offshore wind operations.

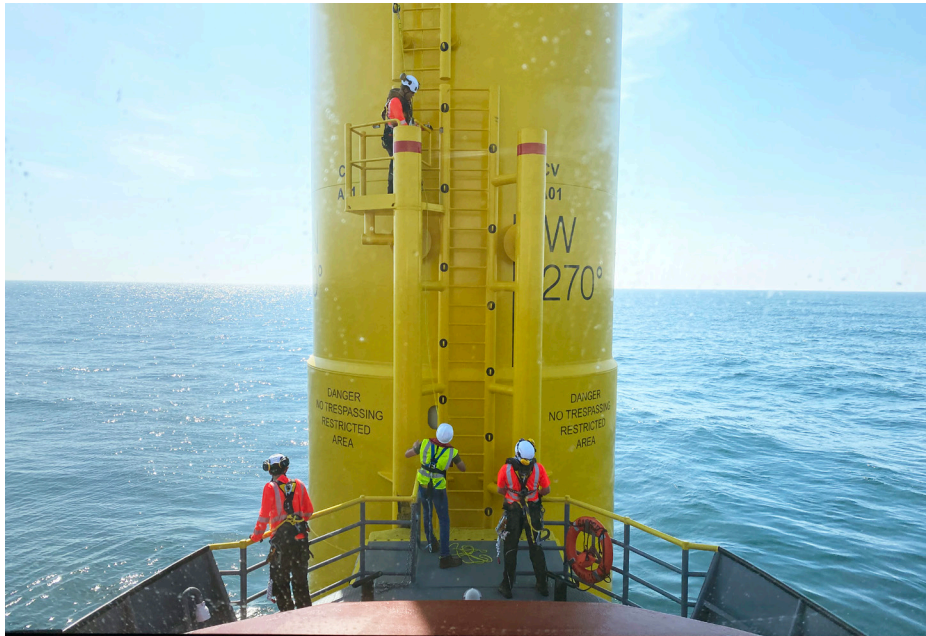
The vessel is outfitted with a CTV style bow fender, which to McAllister's knowledge, makes it the first and only vessel with a CTV style bow on the East Coast ready for the offshore wind farm industry. She is currently authorized to take 16 people up to 50 nautical miles offshore.



McALLISTER, as they towed the largest piece of conduit from Rhode Island to the south shore of Long Island.

The GASPEE worked for the second half of 2023 out of New Bedford, Massachusetts on the Vineyard Wind project, located 15 miles south of Martha's Vineyard. The vessel has been involved in a broad range of personnel and cargo transfer supporting the project.

McAllister is proud to be on the forefront of renewable energy. We hope vessels like the GASPEE as well as our terminals and tugboats will act as major assets in the future development of offshore wind.



In 2020, the GASPEE was put to work in the pilot Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind (CVOW) project. She provided services as a crew transfer vessel as well as a supply boat for the construction site.

More recently, the vessel worked as a guard boat off the coast of Long Island for the South Fork Wind project. She accompanied McAllister tugs, the ROWAN, BUCKLEY, and the MATTHEW





# NEW FERRY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

**M**cAllister Towing is moving forward with plans to invest in a fourth ferry at The Bridgeport & Port Jefferson Steamboat Company to increase service for our passengers. The new ferry will be named the LONG ISLAND. With the help of naval architect John Gilbert, we have designed a sister vessel to the PT BARNUM and the GRAND REPUBLIC, two boats designed by Gilbert's father. Gilbert works with various state D.O.T.s designing passenger vessels, making his firm perfect

While her similar design will make her a sister vessel to our two newer ferries, Port Engineer Harold (Jake) Jacobsen explained that this ferry will also be unique in its design. "We made a ton of changes from the initial design," he said. Some of those changes include an elevator that is more integrated into the boat, a family restroom, and a pet lounge, making the new ferry more accessible for passengers.



Although these changes may seem minor, Jacobsen said that over the past 20 years he has learned how impactful these modifications can be. "Our experience shows that little things make a big difference to our passengers," he said. The bar and concessions area is also being reformatted into a walk-through layout to improve customer experience. Jacobsen described building such a multi-purpose boat as distinct from other projects he works on. "It's a very unique facet of ship building...It's really neat. It's really challenging and it's a lot of fun," he said.

With every aspect of the ferry, from the name to the design, Jacobsen said that one of their main objectives is longevity.

for implementing up to date Tier 4 EPA requirements. While the new ferry will include various engineering updates, it will maintain specs consistent across the fleet including updated versions of the same reduction gears, John Deere generators, and 12 ME 23 B engines.

The PARK CITY, PT BARNUM and the GRAND REPUBLIC were built in 1986, 1998, and 2003 respectively, so our new ferry joins an enduring fleet. We are very excited for our passengers to be able to use it and we wish it many safe voyages ahead.

Eastern Shipbuilding, a family-owned shipyard in Panama City, Florida, built the previous two ferries as well as a variety of tugboats for McAllister. Their large shipyard is perfect for boats of this size and scale. As construction methods and regulations have advanced, the D'Isernia family has made updates to their building and expanded their yards. We have worked together to stay ahead of the curve, minimizing delays from lead times caused by the pandemic. We are looking forward to her delivery in September 2024.

Presently, McAllister Towing oversees three car-ferries running across the Long Island Sound. The PARK CITY, PT BARNUM and the GRAND REPUBLIC make up the present fleet, maintaining a continuous schedule throughout the year. The ferry transports around 1 million passengers and about 450,000 cars per year.

