



The Connection

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Maritime UUPers deployed in Katrina recovery effort

Five UUP members from SUNY Maritime are on board the college's training ship anchored near New Orleans, playing key roles in aiding the recovery from Hurricane Katrina. The five UUPers are part of a 76-person crew on board the Empire State VI, SUNY Maritime's 17,000 ton, 565 foot training ship for what's expected to be a two-month assignment. Their mission: to provide housing and support for ConocoPhillips workers who are repairing the company's oil refinery in Bell Chasse, LA.

"Our mission is about getting everything up and running," explains Thomas Spina, a UUP member serving as security officer on the ship. Spina said despite having just returned from a two-month training tour, he didn't hesitate when asked to serve on the relief mission. "You don't think about it. This is our job," he said. It meant leaving his family, including his wife, 7-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son behind. "There's a tremendous amount of sacrifice. But we'll make do with what we have to do."

Ann Barry, another UUPer at Maritime who serves as navigator on board, also accepted her sudden deployment without hesitation. "When asked, I jumped at it," she said, even though it means being away from her family and friends. She has no doubt as to the value



Maritime Chapter members Andrew McCarthy, Matthew Mahanna, Ann Barry and Thomas Spina on Sept. 9 as the Empire State VI prepares to set sail for New Orleans to help with Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

Photo by Bruce Gilbert

of their mission. "We're helping one of the biggest refineries in the nation get back in service, which will help to lower gas prices," she explained.

In addition to feeding and housing 350 ConocoPhillips workers, the crew was asked to take in about 300 National Guardsmembers who had been stationed at a school in New Orleans.

Spina summed up their job this way: "To make sure all 650 have what they need; to see that order is kept and needs are met."

The other UUPers serving on the mission are Chief Engineer Matthew O'Donnell, Chief Mate Matthew Mahanna and First Assistant Engineer William McCaney. Andrew McCarthy will join the crew soon to replace Spina.

"Academic Bill of Rights" suddenly appears on SUNY's radar screen

Just months after hearing a report that there was no need for the "Academic Bill of Rights" on SUNY campuses, a SUNY Board of Trustees committee announced the panel would nonetheless be taking up the issue of the "Academic Bill of Rights."

UUP President William Scheuerman immediately denounced the move, saying, "I find it astonishing that SUNY's Board of Trustees has moved to even consider a proposal that would jeopardize our academic freedom. This is a solution in search of a problem."

Father John Cremins, chairman of the SUNY board's Academic Standards

Committee, said the issue will be discussed at a committee meeting on Oct. 24.

Upcoming dates and deadlines

Legislative Advocacy meetings:

9/28/05—Farmingdale Regional Meeting, 12:30-2:30 p.m., UUP office conference room, Ward Hall

9/30/05—Albany Regional Meeting, noon-2 p.m. Campus Center Rm. 375

10/5/05—Buffalo Regional Meeting, noon-2p.m., UBNorth Campus, Student Union Rm. 330

UUP meetings:

Oct. 14-15: NYS conference of AAUP, NYSUT headquarters

Oct. 28: UUP Executive Board meeting, Albany

Oct. 28-29: UUP Leadership workshop, Lake George

Help hurricane victims

UUP is participating in NYSUT's hurricane relief efforts. Union leaders encourage members to send contributions with checks or money orders payable to "NYSUT Katrina Relief Fund," and mail them to:

NYSUT

Att: Accounting Department
800 Troy Schenectady Road
Latham, N.Y. 12110