

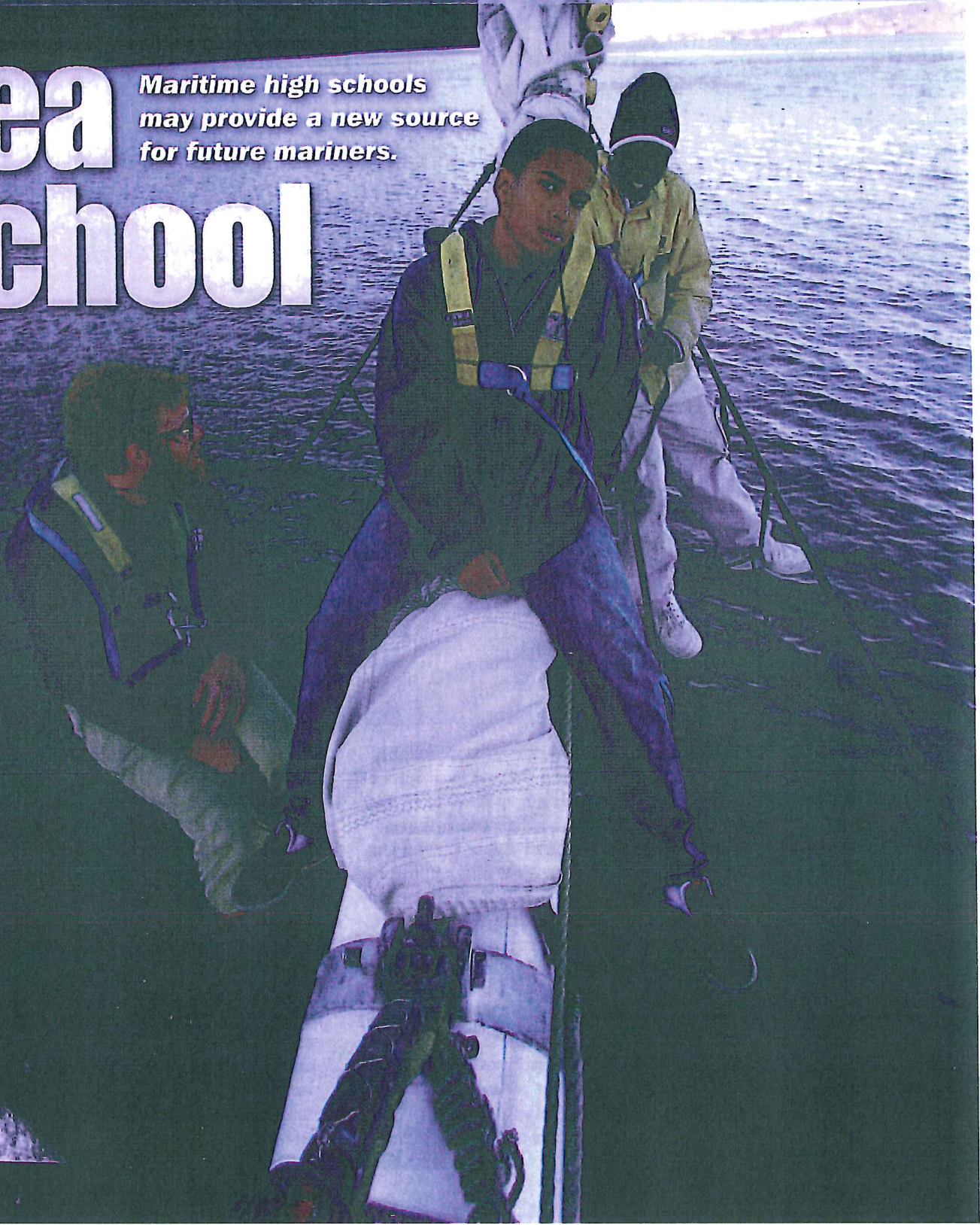
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IN BUSINESS ON THE COASTAL AND INLAND WATERS

JULY 2008

Sea School

Maritime high schools may provide a new source for future mariners.



School Days

Maritime-themed high schools may be a pipeline for future mariners.

Students at the New York Harbor School participate in sails aboard the school's schooner.

New York Harbor School

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Vessel companies have in-house training programs. State governments support maritime academies across the country, and there's the federal U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in New York. Maritime unions run training schools. Privately run maritime training programs offer continuing education or introductory courses into the licensed trades. And the Sea Scouts and Sea Cadets, the maritime equivalent of the Boy Scouts, introduce the maritime industry to young boys and girls.

All these programs do their part to help ease the national maritime employment shortage, preparing graduates to fill positions from deckhands to captains in an industry that is desperately seeking new ways to attract and retain workers.

But a little known part of the training picture

is the growing number of maritime- and marine-themed secondary schools that are just beginning to churn out young graduates eager to begin careers on the water. Since 2001, 18 maritime-themed elementary, middle and high schools have either opened or plan to open in major ports on the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coasts and the Great Lakes. The average enrollment is about 350 students, and this spring some of the schools graduated their first senior class.

Marine schools focus on oceanography, biology and marine sciences. Maritime schools teach skills needed to work as a mariner on a documented vessel, or do shore work in a marina, shipyard or port. Community colleges and industry-sponsored vocational schools also offer courses for high school graduates.

The emerging maritime-themed high schools are unusual in that many do not recruit students from traditional coastal communities where young people have been exposed to a maritime environment. Instead, their base is inner city youth, many of whom are at risk of not graduating from high school and have never been on a boat or spent much time around the water.

Advocates say these schools can help solve two difficult problems: reduce the soaring rate of high school dropouts in inner cities by encouraging students to explore maritime careers and someday provide a new source of manpower for the maritime industry.

PROMOTING MARITIME EDUCATION

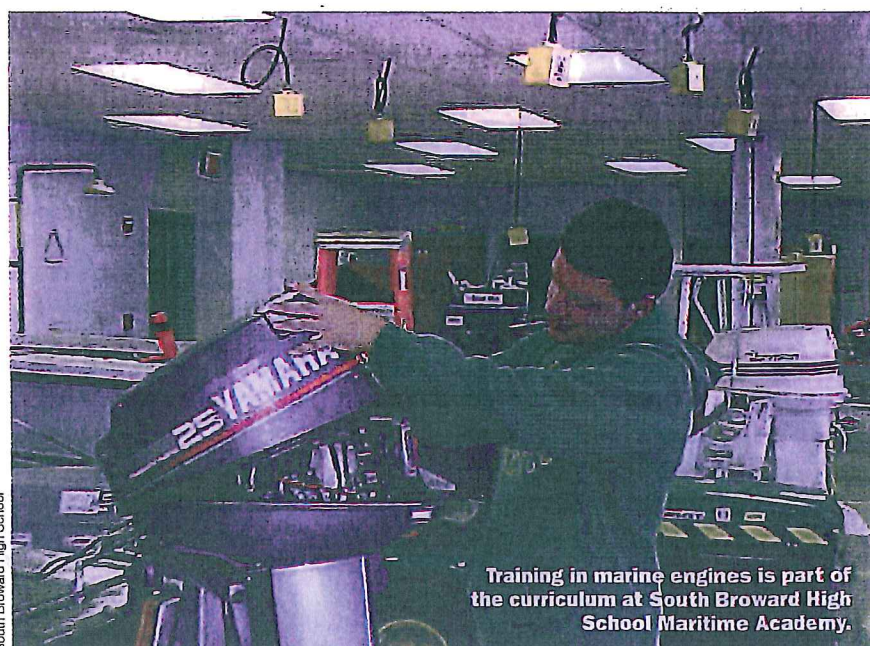
The future of maritime high schools was the focus of a two-day seminar held in Baltimore in April. Sponsored by the **Ship Operations Cooperative Program**, "Maritime and Intermodal Education for Primary and Secondary Schools in America" brought together about 200 representatives from government, industry and education that are interested in promoting maritime education.

"These schools are the best kept secret in America, which is a shame," said Capt. Arthur H. Sulzer, U.S. Navy (Ret.), who organized the conference. Sulzer, a maritime college graduate and licensed master mariner, is currently completing a graduate dissertation on maritime education and underprivileged youth.

"If you offer these kids a reason to stay in school, then they will graduate, and the maritime industry offers some excellent opportunities," said Sulzer, who runs **Art H. Sulzer Associates**, a Philadelphia-based company that rents barges, workboats and crane barges for maritime construction. "Every city that has a connection to water could support a maritime school or offer maritime programs in their public schools. There is certainly room for growth and no shortage of interested students."

Some of the established programs include:

- **South Broward High School**



South Broward High School

Training in marine engines is part of the curriculum at South Broward High School Maritime Academy.

Maritime Academy and Maritime and Marine Science Magnet Program: Offers training in marine engines and service and education in ocean sciences. The Maritime Academy is a new program that allows incoming ninth and existing 10th graders to increase their hands-on training on vessels resulting in employment in the local boating industry, merchant marines, Coast Guard and NOAA Corps Officer training. As a result of the SOCP seminar, the Maritime Magnet Program is offering a new course next year — Maritime Operations. Students will be able to access the curriculum online through maritime academies and attend seminars through video conferencing. The course will be available to maritime high schools around the country.

- **Palm Beach Maritime Academy**, West Palm Beach, Fla.: Started in 1999, it is a primary school (K-8) with 400 students. Operated by the **Palm Beach Maritime Museum** under contract with the local school district, its focus is on maritime studies, science and technology.

- **The Maritime Academy of Toledo, Ohio:** Introduces rural and urban students in northwest Ohio to the navigable waterways of the Great Lakes and its confluent rivers. Currently in its second year with 90 students. "Relatively few people in Northwest Ohio are aware of the vocational and career growth opportunities and the financial rewards of maritime or marine industry

careers," said founder Renee Marazon. The school incorporates maritime, nautical and marine themes into the state of Ohio school curriculum.

- **New York Harbor School:** Started in 2003 in Brooklyn, N.Y., it is part of the New York City Department of Education and includes ninth through 12th graders. The school partners with the **South Street Seaport Museum** in Manhattan and with the **State University of New York Maritime College** in the Bronx. The majority of students are Hispanic and African-American. Operating in a neighborhood marked by poor schools and truancy, the school has an excellent attendance, graduation and college acceptance rate. All students participate in several sails aboard the *Lettie G. Howard*, a 110-year-old schooner. Seamanship, navigation skills, marine communication, and boatbuilding skills are covered in the school's marine technology class.

- **Maritime Academy Charter High School**, Philadelphia: Opened in 2003 with 125 students, it now educates over 700 in grades five through 12. The first class graduated this spring and will go on to college or maritime trade schools. The core high school curriculum is enhanced with classes in ecology, maritime transportation and astronomy. Internships take students on the Delaware River, and speakers from the ports of Philadelphia discuss current trends.

- **Bayfront Center for Maritime Studies**, Erie, Pa.: Founded in 1998,