

U.S. Brig *Niagara* Focuses on Sail Training over Port Visitation



ERIE, PA – For the first time in sixteen years of operation, the U.S. Brig *Niagara* will shift focus in summer schedule planning from port visitation programs to onboard sail training programs. Now that *Niagara* is inspected by the US Coast Guard as a Sailing School Vessel, we are creating our sailing schedules around our 3-Week Seamanship Training Program. In contrast to past years, we will not be developing our training program around port event schedules. While port events can be lucrative, the emphasis will be on sail training for our trainees. If port event organizers wish to have the ship visit their port, the event will have to fall on the third weekend of any of our five training courses offered between May 31st and September 13th this year.

The ship will conduct dockside training, daysails, and overnight training sails out of Erie, PA for the first half of the 3-week program. Novice trainees will gradually build their skills in preparation for a longer 8-day voyage to another Lake Erie port and back. The 3-week program begins and ends in Erie, PA.

U.S. Brig *Niagara* has the most complicated sailing rig of any ship in the United States. New trainees feel somewhat overwhelmed when they first join the ship. Since many of them tend to be outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy challenges in their recreational activities, they come prepared for the traditional sail training experience. The task of learning all that is needed to properly stand watch, climb aloft, and to handle the sails on an overnight sail or longer seems daunting to them at first, but by the time we depart for the 8-day trip, they feel ready for it.

Trainee applications are now being accepted at the Erie Maritime Museum in Erie, PA for a limited number of berths. Application forms and detailed information are available on the Erie Maritime Museum website at www.brignigara.org for download and printing. For more information, port visitation and sailing schedules, general questions or applications by mail, contact:

Seamanship Training Program

Erie Maritime Museum
150 East Front Street
Erie, PA 16507
(814) 452-2744

Other Information and Ship's Specifications: The US Brig *Niagara* is owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and is operated with the assistance of the Flagship Niagara League, Inc., a private 501-c3 non-profit company. The U.S. Brig *Niagara* is inspected by the US Coast Guard as a Sailing School Vessel and operates as such in the summer months only. The ship is available for public viewing year-round at the Erie Maritime Museum unless she is underway on a training mission or visiting another port during the summer.

The vessel's hull is 123 feet long (198' overall length) and has overnight berthing for 18 professional crew and 22 trainees. There are several ways the public can sail on board: as a daysail student, as a 3-week live aboard trainee, or as a trainee intermittently throughout the summer (if the person is a local Erie Volunteer and attended the Winter Sail Training Program).