



Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
150 E. Front St., Suite 100, Erie, PA 16507
Phone: 814-452-2744 Fax: 814-455-6760
www.flagsihpniagara.org

Introductory Letter for Day Sail Students

Attn: Prospective Day Sail Students

From: Walter Rybka, Senior Captain

Re: Participation in one day sailing program onboard the U.S. Brig NIAGARA

The U.S. Brig NIAGARA is owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and operated by the PA Historical and Museum Commission (a state agency) with the assistance of the Flagship Niagara League (a private non-profit corp.) The ship is inspected by the United States Coast Guard as a Sailing School Vessel, not a passenger vessel and does not meet the same safety standards as a passenger vessel on a comparable route. All sailing operations are intended to provide an educational program in maritime history and operation of a square rigged ship.

What the experience is: Introduction to Square Rig & Traditional Seamanship

Sailing onboard NIAGARA is an unusual opportunity to experience the long-vanished world of the wooden square rigged sailing ship. You are stepping into a pre-industrial society, to see first-hand, and to lay your hands on, an ancient set of traditions. The ship is a wind and muscle powered machine full of the sights, sounds, and smells of maritime history. The underway experience gives some insight into the problems faced and challenges met by our forbears. This is a relatively new ship (1988) but carries on a very old process.

Participants in the one day program receive frequent short talks explaining the various tasks and maneuvers performed by the crew who are comprised of the professionals and the longer service trainees. Hands-on participation is voluntary and limited to walking away with the halyards to hoist the topsails. Participation in safety drills is mandatory. This program is an introductory overview for the completely uninitiated.

What the experience is not:

This is not a luxury sight seeing cruise. NIAGARA is not a passenger ship, neither in mission nor in construction. USCG certification as a Sailing School Vessel is different than certification as a Passenger Vessel, and the ship does not meet the same safety standards required of a passenger vessel on a comparable route. The SSV certification requires all students be participants in a program of instruction, at least to the extent of obeying the orders of the crew and being able to shift about the deck as required to facilitate maneuvers. As a re-creation of an 1813 vessel with an educational mission, NIAGARA has some very steep ladders, low overheads below deck, numerous tripping hazards about the deck, few opportunities to sit down (and only on hardwood at that), and is subject to abrupt motion.

Requirements:

Participants in the one day program must be ambulatory and of average good health and comfortable with outdoor exposure for up to six hours. The ship does not meet the same safety standards or ADA requirements applicable to passenger vessels.

Minimum age is twelve. Participants 12 to 16 must be accompanied by an adult, and if in a group there must be one adult for every five minors. There is no maximum age but please be guided by the physical requirements listed above.

Conditions students must accept:

Students will frequently be told to shift location about the ship as required to stay out of the way of the crew performing the maneuvers. Participation in safety drills is mandatory. NIAGARA is equipped with an extensive first aid kit and has several crew members with current first aid/cpr certificates, and occasionally higher levels of training. The ship does not routinely carry an EMT, RN, or MD onboard. On a one day sailing program the ship will usually be between one and three hours away from access to an ambulance and EMT personnel.

What to bring, where to report.

- Check in is at the plaza gate (north end of the Erie Maritime Museum building), near the ship **one hour to thirty minutes prior to ship departure.** Parking is available near there, on the Northwest side of the building.
- Captain's introduction is on the plaza pier half hour before departure.
- Wear soft, traction giving shoes, no high heels
- Bring some warm clothing, a jacket and hat, and sunscreen
- Check the weather forecast before you come. If rain is forecasted, bring a rain coat- no umbrellas please.
- There are three marine toilets onboard, the instructions are simple but must be followed
- Lunch, snacks, fluids are provided.
- No alcoholic beverages are to be brought onboard.
- Smoking is limited to on deck only and at certain times will not be permitted at all.
- Please do not bring cell phones, radios, portable chairs, large picnic coolers
- Cameras and video recorders are permitted.
- All minors must have a signed parental release form.
- Motion sickness is not often a problem. The best preparation is to be well fed, hydrated, and rested prior to boarding. We recommend you consult your physician if concerned about motion sickness. Medications are permitted, although most are only effective if you start taking them well in advance of departure.

Day sail schedule information and trainee applications are available online at **www.flagshipniagara.org** and available for pick-up at Erie Maritime Museum, or they may be requested by fax (814-455-6760) or e-mail by contacting Julie Wagner at 814-452-2744 ext 222 or e-mail jwagner@flagshipniagara.org

Student Groups:

Maximum capacity onboard is 50 day-sail students. Student groups 12 to 16 years old must have one adult per five students. We typically carry 100 adult-size Personal Floatation Devices (PFD's) and 20 child-size PFD's. Please indicate on the application if you weigh less than 90 lbs. (Child-size PFD required).

Homeport Erie Fees: (Includes museum admission) **Your registration is not confirmed until payment and waiver are received**

For PA Residents: \$60

For Out of State Residents: \$70

For FNL Members: \$50

Cancellations and Refunds:

If the sail is canceled by management due to weather or maintenance problems, liability will be limited to full refund for day sail students that show up only. A voucher can be issued to people that did not show up due to weather or other circumstances. This voucher is only good for that year's sail unless late in the season. (Weather criterion for cancellation is actual or high probability of winds over 25 kts or severe thunderstorms). No refund will be given if at least three hours were spent underway.

Full refunds will be given for student cancellations up to one week in advance of sail.

Half of the fee will be refunded for cancellations less than a week and up to three days in advance. No refund will be given for cancellations less than three days in advance.

NIAGARA Day Sail Program – Registration Form

Note: If sailing with multiple persons in your party, each person must complete an application and waiver.

Personal Information:

Sail Date: _____

Day Sail Students Name (Please Print) _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Phone Number: () - _____ Evening Phone Number: () - _____

Email Address: _____

Name of Emergency Contact Person (**not sailing with you**): _____

Phone Number of Emergency Contact Person (**not sailing with you**): () - _____

Name of Parent or Guardian who is sailing on board with minor(s) (*if applicable*): _____

Name of Minor(s) who is/are sailing on board with you (*if applicable*): _____

Do you weigh less than 90 pounds? _____

Are you able to walk without the assistance of a cane, crutches, walker, etc.? _____

Should you become ill or incapacitated while onboard, do you have any medical illness or medications the ship's medical officer should be aware of? _____

By so signing, applicant (and Parent/Guardian of applicant) indicates this entire document, including the introductory letter by Capt. Walter Rybka has been read, understood, and accepted.

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date
(Parent/ Guardian Name and Signature if applicant is 12 to 18 years old)		

Payment Information:

Payment will not be accepted without receipt of signed acceptance of this agreement (above). Payment in U.S. dollars may be made by check (payable to Flagship Niagara League) or by Credit Card.

\$50- League Member \$60 PA Resident \$70 Out of State Resident

Check or Money Order payable to Flagship Niagara League, Inc. Cash

Visa Master Card American Express Discover Security Code (on back of card) _____

_____ Card Expires __ / __ / __
Card Number

Signature for Credit Card Transaction Authorization: _____

Julie Wagner
Flagship Niagara League
150 East Front Street, Suite 100
Erie, PA 16507
Phone: (814) 452-2744 ext 222
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U. S. BRIG NIAGARA

WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY STUDENTS, TRAINEES, VOLUNTEERS, STAFF, OR GUESTS

In consideration of being permitted to participate in activities sponsored by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, ("PHMC"), the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, ("PA"), or the Flagship Niagara League, ("FNL"), and/or in consideration of being accepted as a member of the FNL and with the intent to be legally bound, I release and discharge the FNL, the PHMC, PA, the municipalities in which activities are conducted, organizers, sponsors, and all of their officers, directors, trustees, agents, servants, representatives, employees, successors, affiliates, assignees and volunteers in any way connected with the activity, from all claims, demands, actions, causes of action, damages, judgments and executions which I, my heirs, executors, administrators, representatives or assigns might have, now or in the future, for any harm, injury, damage or occurrence, whether foreseen or unforeseen, which might arise from or be related in any way to my participation in any activities on/or relating to the U.S. Brig Niagara, ("Niagara"), and/or sponsored by the PHMC, the FNL or PA ("sponsored activities") except injuries which may be covered by workers compensation insurance, and I specifically assume all risks in connection with any such activities.

Sponsored activities shall include: any and all activities on or near the Niagara whether while docked at any port or while sailing; or any and all activities at any site controlled by the PHMC or the FNL where the Niagara may be temporarily docked, or any and all activities at any location whether in PA, or outside of PA, or outside the U. S. where the activity is sponsored by the PHMC, the FNL or PA; or traveling to or returning from an activity.

If I or my successors assert my claim in contravention of the agreement, I or my successors shall indemnify and hold harmless the PHMC, the FNL, and PA against loss or any claims, demands or causes of actions that might be brought by me or on my behalf regarding damages or injuries sustained by me while involved with a sponsored activity and shall be liable for expenses (including legal fees) incurred by the other party in defending whether or not as a result of ordinary negligence, unless the other party is finally adjudged liable on such a claim for willful and wanton negligence. This agreement may not be modified orally, and a waiver of any provision shall not be construed as a modification of any other provision or as consent to any other provision or as consent to any subsequent waiver or modification.

I also agree that the PHMC, the FNL or PA may subsequently use for publication and/or promotional purposes my name and/or pictures of me participating in any sponsored activities without obligation to me.

PARENT/GUARDIAN of Minor: As a parent or guardian of the below named minor, I give permission for the minor to participate in sponsored activities, and I agree individually and on behalf of the minor, to the above terms.

PLEASE PRINT

Name (Day Sail Student)

Signature of Day Sail Student Date
(If under age 18 Parent or Guardian signature required)

Address

Print name of minor

City

State

Zip

(_____) _____
Phone number

Email

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY PLEASE CONTACT:

NAME

(_____) _____
PHONE