

THE PROPELLER CLUB OF THE UNITED STATES

3927 OLD LEE HIGHWAY, SUITE 101A

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030

ADOPT-A-SHIP PLAN

The ADOPT-A-SHIP PLAN dates from the same period as the Merchant Marine Act of 1936. First introduced through The Propeller Club of the United States, it was turned over to The Women's Organization for the American Merchant Marine in 1937. The Propeller Club again sponsors and administers the Plan, as it has since 1958. The Plan provides the opportunity for a school classroom (5th -8th grade) to adopt a ship of the American Merchant Marine and exchange correspondence with it.



The purpose of the Plan is to teach YOUNG AMERICA, the citizens of tomorrow, the need for an educated American Merchant Marine for domestic and foreign shipping. The term Merchant Marine embraces not only the fleet of ocean and coastal vessels, but also those on navigable rivers, lakes, bays and sounds, as well as harbor craft.

In addition to patriotic applications, the Plan fosters interests in geography, history, transportation, foreign and domestic trade, science, math, and English. It affords children an outlet for natural interest in the sea and teaches them something of the staunch character of the men and women of the American Merchant Marine.

Our first step in the ADOPT-A-SHIP PLAN is to contact the Adopt-A-Ship companies active in the American Merchant Marine to obtain the company list of ships, which will participate in the Plan. The captain of each ship assumes the responsibility for answering the correspondence from a school classroom personally or through his or her officers or other crewmembers.

The captain decides whether or not other personnel take part in the Plan. When a student's letter pertains to a particular department, it is generally answered by those in charge of the department. However, all correspondence from the ship is usually supervised and signed by the captain and sent to the pupil in care of the teacher who is responsible for the school project.

Teachers and pupils must notify The Propeller Club of their interest in adopting a ship. An application for participation must originate with a teacher. No individual pupil is allowed to adopt a ship. Classes eligible to participate in this Plan range from the fifth through eighth grade school level. When a teacher

writes to The Propeller Club for a ship adoption, the following information **MUST** be included for our records:

- Full name of teacher
- Name and address of school
- Classroom grade number
- Number of pupils in the class
- Subjects to be associated with the correspondence in classroom study

Correspondence from the school will begin in September, immediately after a ship is assigned. The teachers and students involved are encouraged to develop the program to suit their educational needs.

The first letter from the teacher to the ship's Captain should request information regarding the ship's itinerary and the best means of communication. The first letter from the class usually contains questions pertaining to size of the ship, number of crew, trade routes, cargo carried, imports and exports, etc. With correspondence fully launched, student's questions arise automatically and with great enthusiasm. Geography, social sciences, and other subjects take on a freshness not easily attained by textbook studies alone. One designated student may, if the teacher wishes, write the letter to the adopted ship, incorporating all-class questions. However, it is also possible (and typically the norm) for each student to write his or her own questions to the Captain. In any case, correspondence has to be supervised by the teacher. Duplicate questions must be eliminated. All correspondence should be enclosed in **ONE PACKAGE** with a covering letter from the teacher and forwarded to the ship every four to six weeks. The period of correspondence will run from early September to May 15.

IMPORTANT: If the teacher is unable to continue correspondence due to illness, retirement or transfer, all materials should be turned over to the relieving teacher. The Propeller Club should promptly be notified if the relieving teacher does not wish to continue the program so that the ship can be re-assigned.

When a teacher desires to continue adoption of a particular ship through the following school year, notice should be sent to The Propeller Club of the United States **ADOPT-A-SHIP PLAN**, 3927 Old Lee Highway, Suite 101A, Fairfax, Virginia 22030 before May 30, to avoid assignment to another school. We urge teachers to report at regular intervals as to the progress of the Plan and what seems to generate the greatest educational value.

Similar programs are also conducted in other countries, like England and Norway for instance. In these countries, however, all merchant marine ships are enrolled in the program through official government sponsorship.

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