

Lady in Orange... Touch a Freighter

You've noticed her out there racing towards the lake freighters and other foreign vessels. She's hard to miss wearing that bright shade of orange. "She" is the Huron Belle, our lovely lady of lower Lake Huron, the Pilot Association's Pilot Boat. Here is your opportunity to meet her and have a mid-lake rendezvous with a freighter, as well.

You will begin your adventure at the Lake Pilots Association Inc. headquarters where you will meet the hearty souls who hang out there: the pilot boat crew as well as the boarding pilot. You will be escorted, like visiting royalty, to the Huron Belle moored at the mouth of the Black River by Boat-nerd Headquarters, and proceed out the Black River into the St. Clair River for the approximately 30 minute boat ride into lower Lake Huron.

Along the way, you will pass the Huron Light Ship moored at Pine Grove Park. Have your camera fired-up and ready. Next you will traverse the strong currents under the dramatic spans of the Blue Water Bridges. Don't worry, "our lady" cuts through these whirling waters as if they were butter.

Catch sight of the oldest light house in Michigan at the mouth of Lake Huron. Then fly like the wind to catch up to one of the giants of the lakes and to witness a pilot exchange first hand. You will be thrilled to experience the expertise navigational skills of the crew as they bring the pilot boat along side this enormous ship and keep it there. Reach out and touch a freighter as the boarding pilot learns about his assignment from the debarking pilot that has brought the ship to the Port Huron area. You will be amazed at the size of these great ships as you watch the disembarking pilot climb down its massive side on a small ladder.

What will amaze you even more will

be the stories the pilots have to share with you.

In their fascinating line of work, pilots meet crews of varying nationalities and are treated to different cuisines from around the globe. Pilots serve on vessels of many different types and sizes, as well as differences in maneuverability; and they must make adjustments for all. Even though pilots travel the same waterway over and over again, each assignment is unique and presents new challenges.

You will end this once-in-a-life-time experience on the trip back to Black River with the pilot that was plucked off of the ship. You will return with stories to tell and memories to savor after sharing the comradery, meeting the unassuming heroes that provide safe passage, and experiencing an afternoon of adventure aboard the Huron Belle.



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This fabulous trip is brought to you by Lake Pilots Association and Kramer Realty Inc., a proud member of the St. Clair County Community Foundation serving more than 65 non-profits. For more information call Captain Dan Gallagher at 810-300-4251, Captain Gerry Kramer at 810-434-8560 or Lake Pilot's dispatch at 810-982-1762.