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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The Rev. Mark Nestlehutt
SCI, President and Executive Director



Cold, wet, tired, and hungry...

This could easily be an apt description of a mariner at the end of their watch on a particularly challenging day, but what I am describing is how many of the participants felt after day one of SCI's 2023 Mountain Challenge. In late September, approximately 150 competitors from throughout the U.S. and around the globe gathered in Vermont for our bi-annual Mountain Challenge to raise awareness of the sacrifices mariners make, while raising funds to support SCI's mission to improve the well-being of mariners both far and near.

No one enjoys being cold, much less cold and wet. And fatigue and stress exacerbate the challenge of staying alert and safe while working under such conditions. Yet, day after day, year after year, since 1834, SCI Chaplains listen to the stories of those who serve at sea or on the rivers, often in challenging environments, and endeavor to make these mariners' lives better by providing a friendly ear, counseling, hospitality, and transportation. The individuals who comprise this crucial workforce transport the goods that we depend upon to sustain us in our daily lives. Most of what you can point to in your home spent some time traveling on a ship or barge.

This issue of *The Lookout* arrives as many of us are enjoying the holiday season. We have just celebrated Thanksgiving and Christmas will soon be upon us, followed by the New Year. These holidays often bring family and friends together. Yet, many mariners will spend the season on a vessel at sea, off the coast, or on the river, separated from their families. Please join me in giving thanks for all that U.S. domestic

mariners and international seafarers do to improve and enhance our lives, and for the families they leave behind to do this important work.

In these pages, you will read about the work of SCI's Center for Mariner Advocacy as we partner with industry and outside agencies to improve mariner wellness. There is a report on SCI's response to the tragic and lethal ship fire in Port Newark from earlier this year. SCI's longtime partnership with other global seafarer welfare agencies through our association with ICMA (International Christian Maritime Association) is explored, and we revisit the historic role that sports has played for seafarers while in port. Lastly, we feature maritime executive John Wobensmith, CEO of Genco Shipping & Trading, in our *At the Helm* feature.

My hope is that you will learn and discover new things about the work and mission of the Seamen's Church Institute and that, perhaps, you will have a renewed and strengthened appreciation for the work of seafarers and mariners and the role they play in our lives and in global commerce. Thank you for the support you provide SCI that enables us to carry out our mission to improve the personal, professional, and spiritual well-being of mariners 24/7/365. We could not undertake this mission without you.

Happy holidays!

seamenschurch.org

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Cover Image: SCI Chaplain Michelle McWilliams, LSW, ship visiting in Port Elizabeth, NJ.

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Mariner Wellness

in the Inland Marine Industry



SCI Chaplains regularly interact with mariners in the inland marine industry. Through these interactions, it became clear that mariner wellness was an issue impacting many of these mariners. In order to help address this issue, SCI hosted a roundtable in Paducah, KY in July of 2021. Over twenty people attended, representing a broad cross-section of the inland marine industry, medical professionals, and government regulators.

Those in attendance heard from researchers about studies highlighting the importance and complexity of the mariner wellness issue. Many of the company representatives in the room discussed various initiatives they had attempted in order to help address mariners' physical wellness concerns. These included prepared menus that ensured calories were appropriate and the meals nutritious, purchase of exercise equipment, financial incentives based on healthier lifestyle choices, etc. While some of the programs had some marginal benefits, for the most part, the representatives did not feel that the initiatives had significantly improved mariner wellness.

At the conclusion of the one day meeting, the group decided the issues surrounding mariner wellness warranted additional

work and decided to create a steering committee to look at ways to better address them.

Phil Schifflin, SCI's Director of the Center for Mariner Advocacy was asked to help facilitate the establishment of the steering committee and its work going forward. Phil reached out to several leaders in the industry and ultimately identified three individuals passionate about the mariner wellness issue who were willing to serve on the steering committee. Phil also reached out to a medical professional who was very familiar with the inland marine industry. The steering committee was established with these four individuals.

The committee has been meeting regularly, usually once a month, for over a year now and have identified several areas of concern regarding mariner wellness. The consensus agrees that there are a wide range of both physical and mental wellness issues that are worthy of additional efforts. The group also discussed how poor mental health likely contributed to poor physical health and that the reciprocal was likely true, too. Recognizing that they could not simultaneously attempt to address all the identified challenges, the committee needed to hone in on the best place to focus their immediate attention.

After some deliberation, the steering committee decided to focus their initial efforts on mental health issues. They came to this decision due to the fact the past efforts had been focused primarily on physical wellness; as such, they decided to focus on an area that had not had much attention in the past.

Some early discussions focused around the Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and the mental health care that these programs provided. The representatives noted that what the various EAP programs offered in the way of mental health care varied based on both quality of care and responsiveness of the care. The group would like to identify those EAPs that are best positioned to help mariners address mental health concerns. In the interim, the group recommends companies review what services their EAPs are

Being Ready for the Future of Seafarer Welfare

In the ever-evolving world of maritime ministry and seafarer welfare, staying informed and legally aware is crucial for chaplains and those dedicated to supporting the wellbeing of seafarers. Phil Schifflin Jr., Esq., Director of SCI's Center for Mariner Advocacy, recently addressed chaplains and other seafarer welfare workers at the North American Maritime Ministry Association Conference in Seattle, WA. His recommendations shed light on the current legal landscape as it pertains to the future of seafarer welfare.

1. Cultivate Relationships with Port Leadership

One of the first pieces of advice Schifflin emphasized was the importance of establishing relationships with the Coast Guard sector commanders and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers in your port before issues arise. These connections can be invaluable when dealing with various challenges that seafarers may encounter during their time in port, helping ensure a smoother resolution of issues and crises.

2. Understand the Current State of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006

The Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), is broad and complex, and serves as a cornerstone in protecting the rights and well-being of seafarers worldwide. Schifflin stressed the need for chaplains and welfare workers to be familiar with it. This understanding will prepare chaplains and support workers to better advocate on behalf of seafarers helping to ensure that they receive the protection and support they are entitled to under this international treaty.

providing, and if they are not satisfied, look to replace their EAP with one that will better meet their mariners' needs.

Ultimately, the group designated four areas of concern regarding mental health that needed their initial attention: 1) Improved mental health screening tools to better identify mariners in need of assistance; 2) Better guidance to Inland Marine HR professionals on how to manage mental health concerns with their mariners; 3) Work to address licensing challenges for mental healthcare professionals that serve

3. Current Guidelines and Updates to SASH Laws

Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) are issues of utmost concern within the maritime industry. Schifflin urged the audience to become familiar with current SASH guidance, understand how to respond to incidents, and know the procedures for reporting such cases when visiting ships. Being prepared to provide support and guidance to seafarers facing these sensitive issues is crucial for their safety and well-being.



To delve deeper into these essential topics, Schifflin's comprehensive presentation can be viewed in its entirety in this video: seamenschurch.org/cma-namma



mariners; 4) Guidance on how best to manage the "return to work" process after a mariner has recovered from a mental health crisis.

The steering group is establishing workgroups to more extensively address each of these four issues. The first work group is presently being established to work on improving mental health screening tools. If you are interested in participating in any of the four proposed work groups, please get in contact with Phil at pschifflin@seamenschurch.org.

FIRE, FIRE, FIRE! Abandon Ship.



Left: The Rev. Richard D. Sloan (center) meets seafarers on a ship visit.

Right Top: Members of the crew pose on the doc in front of the GCdA, the day before they are to leave for home. Right Bottom: The GCdA ship fire in Port Newark, July 6, 2023.

ship. The fire was on one of the decks with cars loaded for transport to Africa. The crew used fire extinguishers and onboard fire hoses to fight the fire. However, the fire's spread eventually exceeded those tools, at which time hatches to the various compartments were closed and dogged so carbon dioxide could be used. But that effort, too, was unsuccessful.

By 6:40 am on Thursday, July 6, it was no longer safe for the crew to remain on the ship, so the abandon ship alarm sounded; the crew returned to their muster stations, and the captain verbally ordered "abandon ship." The seafarers left the ship with little more than the clothes they were wearing, and for many crewmembers, that meant the greasy overalls worn when they were on duty. They were headed to safety, but as the fire was on at least three decks that included their accommodations (where the crew lived), they all knew they had lost all of their possessions.

The Seamen's Church Institute was alerted by the Port Authority and responded to the emergency. The crew had been taken to a nearby Port Authority building, where Chaplains James Kollin and Michelle McWilliams arrived early that morning. Stress counseling was the immediate need. The feeling of loss was overwhelming. They had no idea what was to happen to them. Their official work documents, photographs, clothes, computers, and any cash they'd been paid (seafarers often have most of their pay sent home, but the balance is paid in US \$100 bills), were gone. Fourteen had visas, but the other fourteen did not.

The Rev. Richard D. Sloan
SCI Chaplain Associate, Port of New York & New Jersey

At 9:04 pm on Wednesday, July 5, those words rang out on the 12th deck of the M/V Grande Costa d'Avorio, while berthed near the Seamen's Church Institute's International Seafarers' Center at Port Newark. The 28 crewmembers from the Philippines, Italy, and Romania, immediately went to their muster stations, where they began fire suppression efforts.

There are five types of alarms on a commercial ship, whether it's a cruise ship, container ship, bulk carrier, roll-on roll-off (commonly called a car ship), tanker, or any combination. Every seafarer is alert to the sound of one of these alarms: general emergency, fire, man overboard, abandon ship, and CO2. Three of these alarms sounded on the Grande within eleven hours. The ship was a combination car and container



Their worries were palpable. What would happen to them? Would they be blamed for the fire? Was there a deficiency in how they fought the fire? How would an investigation be conducted? Who would have to remain at Port Newark? Would they be paid for the balance of their contracted service with Garibaldi Shipping? How would they get home? On top of these questions, the death of two firefighters weighed heavily on all of them. Uncertainty and guilt are powerful emotions. The ship's Chief Mate, from Romania, seemed to be having a very difficult time. He was responsible for the safe operation of the ship. James counseled him as best he could in such a situation, reassuring him that the crew was safe, no one was injured, and the ship was still afloat. James asked if he had talked with his family. Yes, the mate said, they were greatly relieved for the crew and mourned the firefighters. Even if James and Michelle didn't have answers, having chaplains there to talk with the seafarers lowered the crews' stress level. And talking was certainly the best medicine for the Chief Mate.

After the ship's agent arrived with one shirt and pair of pants for each crewmember, James and Michelle took the dirty work clothes to SCI to be washed. It was much appreciated. The agent also arranged for the crew to be housed at the nearby Doubletree Hotel. But the crew needed additional clothes, toiletries, and other essentials. SCI could assist with that.



At the direction of SCI President and Executive Director, the Rev. Mark Nestlehutt, ISC Director Tim Wong utilized the "Seafarers' SOS Fund"—created during the pandemic to assist seafarers in times of emergency—to purchase most of the things requested by the crew such as shirts, flip-flops, shorts, toiletries, and more. These items were delivered on the following Tuesday, and they had a bit of a celebration when Tim and James made the delivery at their hotel.

Crewmembers not needed for the Coast Guard investigation would eventually fly home to await the next ship assignment. Those whose presence was needed remained at the hotel. And SCI will remain engaged with them throughout.

Customized Training Content:

CME works with ARTCo to create Extensive Video Training Library



Jonathan Burson
Manager, E-Learning

In the evolving maritime education landscape, adaptability and innovation are key to ensuring that mariners receive the highest quality training to navigate the complexities of their roles effectively. SCI's Center for Maritime Education has risen to this challenge, taking a comprehensive step forward through a unique training-content partnership with American River Transportation Company, or ARTCo, a division of Archer-Daniels-Midland Company.

CME's collaboration with ARTCo exemplifies its ability to tailor educational content to meet the specific needs of its clients. ARTCo initially sought off-the-shelf learning solutions but discovered, after working with CME e-Learning that customized content was more in line with achieving their training goals. Says Burson, "We're in a great position to best assist with the project. Our flexibility allows clients like ARTCo to inject company-specific policies and requirements into their training materials while ensuring that content aligns seamlessly with their objectives." With over 11,000 mariners and 30 companies currently

"Working closely with ARTCo, we recognized their serious commitment to safety in their culture... And that's very much aligned with what we do and have already done."

using the e-Learning database, carving out the time beyond operating CME's learning management system (LMS) to create high-quality training is challenging. "Many only see the final 1- or 2-minute project," explains Burson, "Few realize the amount of work that goes into creating it. It's an involved process: scouting scenes, script writing, getting the video, editing, and

aftereffects." With the significant scope of this project, Burson and CME recruited industry-experienced Mike Martin Media out of St. Louis to handle the video creation. "And they've been outstanding in helping us build this out for ARTCo," continued Burson. This project is divided into three phases and is looking to wrap by the end of 2023.

Creating video training is not new to CME. It has already developed its own online content—the *Rules of the Road* training modules released last year. So, now, venturing into partnerships with maritime operators to create customized online training seems like a natural step forward. "Working closely with ARTCo, we recognized their serious commitment to safety in their culture," said Burson. "And that's very much aligned with what we do and have already done." Beyond content, CME offers the capacity to also set up accounts, create

a curriculum based on the client's training matrix, and ensure a seamless integration into the organization's existing online infrastructure. Additionally, CME provides off-the-shelf course content for clients with their own LMS that can be readily integrated and tailored to meet specific company needs.

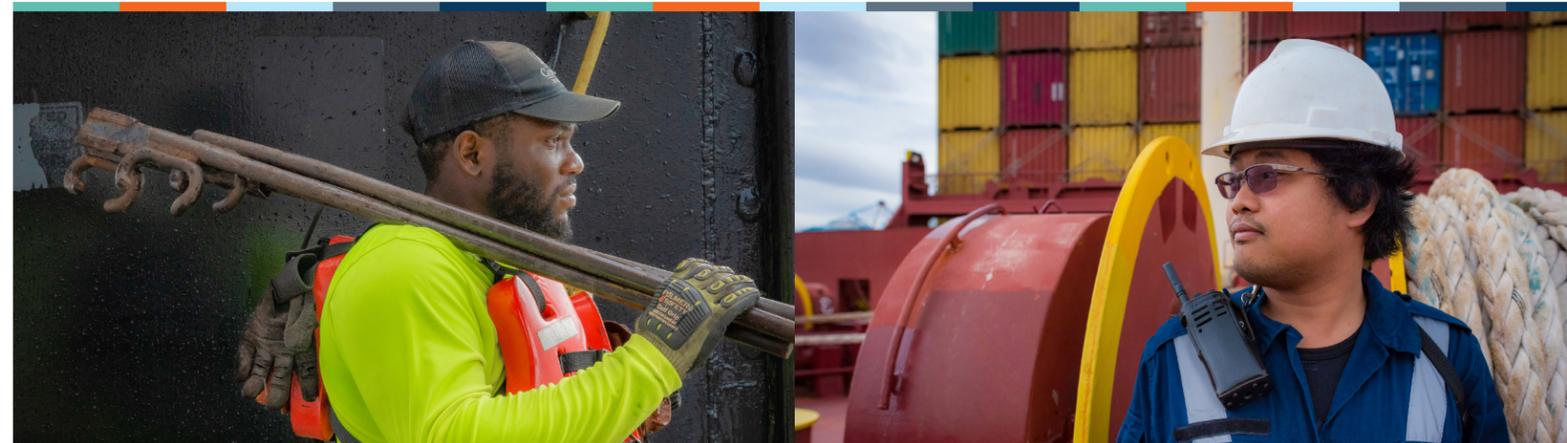
CME's unwavering focus is on ensuring mariner safety, which entails collaborating with clients to provide the most efficient and optimal means of imparting up-to-date training and industry best practices. Initiatives like the partnership between CME and ARTCo exemplify our dedication to realizing this objective, as we actively fulfill our mission through personalized, cooperative efforts. Recognizing that companies clearly understand their training requirements, CME, as their trusted partner, is committed to delivering tailor-made training solutions that precisely meet those needs.

In mid-2023, CME e-Learning was entrusted with helping to build a substantial library of online learning courses for towboat crews. "The content of these video modules," notes CME e-Learning Manager Jonathan Burson, "predominantly focuses on essential procedures and operations related to deck work. So, think basic activities such as operating specific winches, wire rope handling, deck rigging, and many other aspects critical to the maritime industry. This approach reinforces learning and ensures that deckhands and mates are well-prepared for the various challenges they may encounter when on duty." When completed, the library will feature over 60 video courses.

Towboat Video Learning Modules



Together with Mike Martin Media based in St. Louis, CME is creating a video library of basic towboat training modules for ARTCo. Here's a collection of stills from the program on "Operating a Winch."



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Support Mariners & Seafarers with a Donation to SCI's Annual Fund

Imagine living 24/7 at your place of work. No clocking off, no "Friday feeling," no leaving the workplace and looking forward to spending time with friends and family. This is the reality and intensity of being aboard a vessel, and it is one of the many reasons why maritime life can be challenging. Mariners need and deserve our support, and by giving to SCI, you are providing it in a meaningful way. Since its beginnings, SCI has existed to serve mariners practically, professionally, spiritually, and emotionally. Through our chaplaincy, advocacy, and maritime education programs, we can be there for mariners on their best days and their worst days, and every day in between. Thank you for your donations.



seamenschurch.org/giving



Rules of the Road

Video training for all mariners – anytime, anywhere

In 2022, the Seamen's Church Institute's (SCI) Center for Maritime Education (CME) launched Rules of the Road, a series of short video-based training modules designed to disseminate maritime knowledge. The initial focus was on legal obligations, but has expanded to encompass vessel and radar operations. The driving force behind these modules lies in recognizing the limitations of traditional classroom-based maritime education. Classroom learning restricts the number of attendees, requires the onsite presence of instructors, and

With every video, CME has a chance to innovate and customize experiences by leveraging its simulator database, building highly realistic scenarios to illustrate critical lessons and concepts.

is confined to a particular time and place. These constraints hinder scalability and accessibility. It became clear that accessibility to asynchronous learning resources was required to meet the evolving needs of maritime operators, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. CME's *Rules of the Road* project was designed to do just that.

While *Rules of the Road* training modules can stand alone, the focus has always been a blended learning approach—combining the strengths of classroom instruction with the versatility of

video-based content. By capturing expert knowledge and presenting it clearly and succinctly in video format, SCI aimed to reach a broader audience without the limitations of physical spaces or time constraints.

“One of the key features of this project,” noted Capt. Stephen Polk, Director of SCI's Center for Maritime Education, “was the incorporation of objectives, not only comprehensive training content, but also post-module reviews and tests. This offers opportunities for reinforcement. To me, it's a natural progression, or enhancement, of classroom and simulator learning.”

But for CME, *Rules of the Road* represents more than instructional videos. With every video, CME has a chance to innovate and customize experiences by leveraging its simulator database, building highly realistic scenarios to illustrate critical lessons and concepts. With topographical data and ship models, CME can construct hyper-accurate scenarios that mirror those encountered on the water. This provides mariners with a virtual platform to address situations, apply their knowledge, and hone their skills.

“For our videos and our blended learning, our database allows us to look at incidents from any angle, change the



Capt. Stephen Polk
Director, CME

weather or time of day, or even test various locations,” said Polk. “This flexibility empowers us to cater to the diverse needs of various maritime operators and professional mariners whether they be new hires, steersmen in training, or seasoned masters.”

The current collection of *Rules of the Road* videos comprises 20 modules, commencing with legal obligations completed last fall and concluding with the most recent additions covering various aspects of vessel and radar operations. However, it's important to note that the potential for expansion is ever-present. Captain Polk states, “At CME, we highly value the feedback and insights of experienced mariners who participate in our training programs, as their suggestions may catalyze new module ideas. We're

committed to bringing these ideas to fruition if it's within our capacity.” Through the fusion of the most effective elements of traditional classroom instruction and the realism offered by simulator-based learning, CME's Rules of the Road modules have emerged as a substantial educational resource for mariners. They complement existing training and classroom experiences or can be conveniently accessed by mariners, regardless of location or time, whether on the job or at home.

For those interested, the Rules of the Road modules are available for purchase through direct contact with the Center for Maritime Education: Tel.: 713.674.1236 Email: cme@seamenschurch.org

Training Modules Available to all Mariners

The Rules of the Road are important video lessons for all mariners—beginners to masters—as everyone's safety on the water depends on our common understanding of the rules as they are written, and not the rules based on personal interpretation.

Module 1 | Intro: The Navigation Rules— Purpose and Architecture

Module 2 | Rules 1 & 3: The Navigation Rules—Application and Definitions

Module 3 | The Pennsylvania Rule: Understanding Non-Compliance Rules

Module 4 | Rule 2: The Navigation Rules—Responsibility

Module 5 | Rule 5: The Navigation Rules—Lookout

Module 6 | Rule 6: The Navigation Rules—Safe Speed

Module 7 | Rule 7: The Navigation Rules—Risk of Collision

Module 8 | Rule 8: The Navigation Rules—Action to Avoid

Module 9 | Rule 9: The Navigation Rules—Narrow Channels

Module 10 | Rule 13: The Navigation Rules—Overtaking Situations

Module 11 | Rule 14: The Navigation Rules—Head-On Situations

Module 12 | Rule 15: The Navigation Rules—Crossing Situations

Module 13 | Rule 16: The Navigation Rules—Action by Give-way Vessel

Module 14 | Rule 17: The Navigation Rules—Action by Stand-On Vessel

Module 15 | Rule 19: The Navigation Rules—Conduct of Vessels in Restricted Visibility

Module 16 | Rule 34: The Navigation Rules—Maneuvering and Warning Signals

Module 17 | Radar Adjustments

These videos are available to all mariners and maritime operators. Contact the Center for Maritime Education to gain access to these courses that include competency review and testing.



2023 Mountain Challenge

Participants Brave Hours of Rain, Cold Temperatures, and Steep Hikes in Support of Mariners and Seafarers



Thank you to our incredible committee members who played a pivotal role in ensuring the event's success. We are also especially grateful to our generous sponsors, including Cargill as our Lead Sponsor, McAllister Towing as our Peak Sponsor, and UBS as our Fueling Station and Breakfast Sponsor.

If you'd like to relive the excitement of the SCI Mountain Challenge, you can check out event photos at seamenschurch.org/2023scimc. Additionally, we invite you to watch event videos at vimeo.com/seamenschurch/2023mc.

Thank you to all who joined and supported the SCI Mountain Challenge 2023 at Mount Snow, Vermont. The two-day challenge featured a full first day of soaking rain, six miles of canoeing, and over 20 miles of vigorous mountain hiking with a variety of challenges faced by competitors at intervals along the course. All our teams stepped up to the challenge admirably, had a lot of fun, and together we achieved remarkable results, raising over \$525,000 for SCI's mission-driven initiatives in support of mariners and seafarers.

We are immensely grateful to our SCI Mountain Challenge co-chairs, Rich du Moulin of Intrepid Shipping and Jan-Willem van den Dijssel of Cargill, for their unwavering commitment.



See you all again for the SCI Mountain Challenge 2025!



Thank you to our 2023 Mountain Challenge Sponsors: "Cargill (Lead Event Sponsor), McAllister Towing (Peak Sponsor), and UBS (Fueling Station & Breakfast Sponsor)." 



ICMA Leadership Meets in Antwerp:

The Benefits of SCI's Partnership with Global Mariner Welfare Organizations

by the Rev. Mark Nestlehutt
SCI, President and Executive Director

In September 2023, ICMA's charity trustees and general membership met in Antwerp, Belgium for the association's Annual General Meeting. The site for these meetings was the architecturally stunning Havenhuis, or Port House, located in the heart of the bustling port. Antwerp, the diamond capital of the world, is one of the largest commercial ports in Europe—second only to neighboring Rotterdam—with 15,000 ships and 60,000 inland barges arriving annually. The Havenhuis, originally a 19th century fire station, is now a striking gem designed by Iraqi born-British architect Zaha Hadid, who died shortly before its completion in 2016. It is topped by a large ship-like structure that floats above the building.

In addition to its size and scale, the Port of Antwerp has one of the best examples of a successful ecumenical seafarer welfare center with chaplains from various organizations working collaboratively under one roof: Stella Maris (Roman Catholic), German Seamen's Mission (Evangelical Church of Germany), Mission to Seafarers (Church of England), and, until recently, Sailors' Society (Protestant/Free Church). Each organization had full-time chaplains based out of the Antwerp

Seafarer Welfare Center. By working together, and by setting aside doctrinal differences for the greater good of serving seafarers, this center represents what is best about ICMA's vision and mission.

As an organization, ICMA was founded to facilitate ecumenical partnerships among the many Christian organizations around the globe that are involved in maritime ministry and chaplaincy. At its first meeting, which was held in Rotterdam in 1969, over 100 delegates representing 52 organizations gathered to discuss both the changing face of maritime ministry and the need to work collaboratively. While now an international organization headquartered in London, ICMA's founding and roots can be traced to the U.S. and to the body now known as NAMMA, or the North American Maritime Ministry Association. The Seamen's Church Institute (SCI) was instrumental in calling together the many separate entities that ministered to seafarers in the United States and Canada, beginning in 1897 with an event hosted by SCI in lower Manhattan, which met again in 1910 and 1930. The National Association of Seamen's Agencies became an official body in 1932. Several name changes later, this agency is now known as NAMMA.



Above: Leadership and representatives from the 27 organizations that constitute ICMA's membership, gathered for the 2023 AGM in Antwerp.

Right: ICMA Charity Trustees (left to right): Fr. Sergio Massironi, Stella Maris; Sara Baade, Sailors' Society; the Rev'd Mark Nestlehutt, The Seamen's Church Institute (SCI); Rev. Jeffrey Huseby, Nordic Council of Seamen's Missions; the Rev'd Canon Andrew Wright, Mission to Seafarers (Mts); Hilbert Penninga, Nederlandse Zeevarendencentrale; Deacon Paul Rosenblum, NAMMA; and Rev. Matthias Ristau, Deutsche Seemannsmission e.V. (DSM), standing on an illuminated map of the Port of Antwerp.

Left: Havenhuis, or Port House, located in the heart of Antwerp's bustling port.

Given SCI's long association with NAMMA and ICMA, how does SCI both strengthen and benefit from these associations? For decades, SCI was the single largest seafarer welfare organization in North America and operated various SCI subsidiaries throughout the U.S. on behalf of the National Episcopal Church. Today, SCI remains North America's largest and most comprehensive seafarer and mariner service agency offering vessel visits and counseling, crisis response, continuing maritime education and training, and advancing mariner advocacy and seafarer rights. We undertake this work to live out our mission of improving mariners' lives and well-being 24/7/365. Our Center for Mariner Advocacy (formerly Seafarers' Rights) provides the only pro-bono legal counsel for mariners and maritime chaplains, both in the U.S. and globally. As such, we offer legal support to NAMMA chaplains throughout North America and teach at the annual Introduction to Seafarer Welfare and Maritime Chaplaincy training program. With ICMA, SCI provides staffing and thought leadership for its delegations to the International Labour Organization and International Maritime Organization. SCI, in turn, benefits from the network of independent chaplains within North America and the larger associations around the world.



The meeting in Antwerp highlighted the powerful unity of the 27 maritime ministry organizations that comprise ICMA's membership in addressing seafarer welfare. In this way, the partnership among agencies proves to be greater than the sum of its parts. The representatives in attendance examined and assessed ICMA's efforts, which encompassed issues like crew changes, COVID vaccinations, shore leave, and chaplain training programs conducted in Houston, Manila, and Hamburg. The review also extended to the numerous gatherings of the ILO and IMO, as well as the recently established Joint ILO-IMO Tripartite Working Group dedicated to addressing seafarer concerns and the human factor. Over the decades, ICMA's work has changed to contend with the most pressing issues and needs for seafarer welfare, whether it be seafarer shore leave in the aftermath of 9/11, maritime piracy off the coasts of Africa, abandonment of ships at sea and in port, stowaways, and more recently, the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Through all these changes, SCI has been an effective voice within ICMA, while simultaneously being more effective in our own work and mission because of our association with ICMA. Indeed, the whole is stronger than the sum of its parts.



Seafarer Sports

by **Stefan Dreisbach-Williams**
SCI Archivist

Just east of SCI's International Seafarers' Center at Port Newark, a green field fills a space surrounded by warehouses, stacks of containers, and mountains of scrap metal. Although now attracting little more than Canada geese, the soccer field is a testament to seafarers' contributions to soccer and SCI's support for boat workers through athletic competition.

As world travelers, seafarers played an important role in popularizing and professionalizing soccer internationally. Benevolent associations like SCI supported soccer in hopes of distracting seafarers from less wholesome pastimes and entertainment. In time, their motivation shifted to a concern for physical and mental health. Soccer would remain an important part of seafarer life in New York Harbor until containerization drastically reduced shore leave.

England led the world in the codification and professionalization of soccer in the latter half of the 19th century. British seafarers brought their version of soccer to America as early as 1890 when Cunard line seafarers were playing exhibition games against teams like one from the *New York Herald* newspaper's composing room. Many early soccer teams were sponsored by businesses and composed of industrial

workers. At least three New York Harbor shipyards had teams in America's most prominent league of the 1910s and 1920s. Seafaring teams tended to play exhibition games, likely because their infrequent visits to port made tournament play challenging.

Seafaring teams played one another as early as the first years of the 20th century. In April 1909, the *New York Sun* reported that a team from the Oceanic won their fifth straight Ahern Cup, defeating the American Lines' St. Paul in the Soccer Championship of the Atlantic at Macombs Dam Park, located near present day Yankee Stadium.

The Norwegian Seamen's Association was an early and consistent leader in promoting soccer as a distraction from less savory seafarer entertainments and pastimes. As early as 1911, they formed the Gjoa Sporting Club in Brooklyn, which continues today as the Gjoa Youth Soccer Club.

In the 1920s, the YMCA Seamen's House, a boat workers' hotel similar to SCI's 25 South Street but located at the Chelsea Piers (the ocean liner equivalent of Grand Central Terminal), led a group of seafarer missions and liner companies in organizing an annual soccer tournament for teams from ships frequenting Atlantic ports with matches played wherever two league ships were in the same port and the finals played in New York City.

Benevolent associations like SCI supported soccer in hopes of distracting seafarers from less savory pastimes and entertainment. In time, their motivation shifted to a concern for physical and mental health.

The league's first season was in 1929. Teams vied for the Caroline De Lancey Cowl Cup until 1939 when the outbreak of WWII tied up international shipping.

Friendly soccer matches between ships of allied and exiled seafarers continued through the war on fields in the far reaches of the city and on the deserted streets at the piers. It wasn't until 1949 that the Seamen's YMCA revived international soccer tournaments among seafarers along with track and field and lifeboat races.

From 1950-1952, the city of New York set aside a field at 2nd Ave and 36th street in Brooklyn, at the edge of the Bush Terminals complex, for the use of seafaring soccer players. The league persisted another ten years on borrowed fields, notably a stadium in Red Hook behind Todd Shipyards.

When SCI announced plans to open a center at Newark, its primary function was as a recreation center. The center, dedicated in June 1961, featured a snack bar, lounge, dressing rooms, and a soccer field where the Ciudad de Pasto team of the Grand Colombiana Line tied the Meyer Line's Havhok team 1-1 following the ceremony. Renovations and expansions would pause soccer and track and field competition. The



Norwegians coordinated with SCI to sponsor an international sports week in the 1970s and 1980s.



From 1976-1986 the tournament ran as part of Harbor Festival, a celebration that revived the lifeboat and tugboat races that had petered out in the mid-1960s. Community organizations used SCI's soccer field into the 1990s, and SCI formed an intraport

basketball league in 1993, but the soccer field hasn't seen an organized game in years.

The physical and mental wellness that mariners get from athletic competition is no less important today than it was a century ago, but the short turnaround times of modern shipping pose a challenge to any kind of shore leave. Seafarers often have gym facilities aboard ship, but port workers make use of our fitness center at the International Seafarers' Center in Port Newark. Today, SCI's soccer field is a green oasis in the midst of the dust and bustle of Port Newark and a reminder of our commitment to mariners' physical well-being.



Soccer Games at Port Newark Seafarers' Center Sports Field (1960s)



John Wobensmith

CEO & President of Genco Shipping and Trading



Who were some important mentors or role models for you?

I have been fortunate to have had a number of mentors, in both my personal life and throughout my career, who have helped shape the person I am today, including my leadership style and core values. Two role

models who stand out are my father and George Wood, who was the first person I worked for in shipping.

My father instilled in me a strong moral compass, work ethic, and an ability to work with others to achieve a common goal. His love of people and his capacity to collaborate with others and bring them together to make decisions is unique. He taught me that respecting people, even if they think differently to you, can go a long way. My father also showed me the importance of giving back to the community, which is one of the reasons I began working with Children of Bellevue, a non-profit organization focused on the health and well-being of children in New York City. I've been working with the organization for nearly 25 years, as community engagement has become an important tenet of both my work and personal life.

The other influential mentor in my career is George Wood. George, who is currently the Chairman of Wawa, was the first person I worked for in shipping nearly three decades ago. I learned from George that hiring right is critical, and once you bring in talented people, you should trust and empower them. George gave me the autonomy to run a key segment of the bank's shipping portfolio. Looking back, this experience was invaluable and taught me so much about accountability, responsibility, and how to run a business early in my career – skills and values that I still apply today.

Do you remember your first leadership role? How has your view of leadership evolved over time?

My first leadership role was at First National Bank of Maryland, where I was tasked with running their Latin American shipping portfolio. At 24, with minimal career and life experience, you're learning on the job. All you have to lean on are your core values. But being given autonomy and decision-making capabilities at a young age helped to super-charge my growth trajectory. The experience laid the foundation for further milestones in my career.

I believe that impactful leaders know when to make quick, informed decisions but also know when to roll up their sleeves to solve a complex problem with their team. I continue to look forward, take grace in a good decision, trust the analysis, and learn from learn from what worked and what didn't. No one bats a thousand, but the key is to make more good decisions than not - that's when you know you're doing well. I enjoy working with smart, driven individuals who can provide unique insights utilizing their skillsets to solve problems. A lot of the time, it's my job to listen, decipher the various views and choose a path forward that is best for the company.

What advice would you give someone who is beginning a career in the maritime industry? How do you hire? What do you seek in a candidate?

Learn the whole business, not just your current role. Seek out opportunities that will challenge you and your individual growth.

People at the beginning of their careers sometimes struggle with the choice of working at a smaller or larger company. I found a real advantage working at a smaller firm, because you can make a significant impact every single day and you have a lot of responsibility early on.

I believe that impactful leaders know when to make quick, informed decisions, but also know when to roll up their sleeves to solve a complex problem with their team.

At Genco, we have a methodical process to ensure we hire right from a culture and talent perspective. We also seek out people with skillsets different to what we already have in-house. This process has proved successful as many of our team members have been at Genco for well over a decade.

People are introduced to shipping in a number of ways. I didn't come from a 'shipping family'. I grew up in Annapolis, Maryland where competitive sailing was a big part of my childhood all the way through college. Between my junior and senior years, I was introduced to shipping through my internship at the Maryland Port Authority of Baltimore. After completing First National Bank of Maryland's Credit Training program, I was fortunate enough to be offered a job in the bank's specialty ship lending group, which launched my career and passion for shipping.

What is the role of culture and innovation in your work?

Innovation can be defined in many ways – naturally, we think of technological paradigm shifts, however, over the years at Genco in particular, innovation can be viewed as the way in which we've changed our business model.

An important example of our approach is when we hit reset on the entire company in 2017. We implemented a strategic plan undertaking a bottom-up approach revamping every aspect of the company, including the assets we own, the commodities we trade, and the way we generate revenue. Specifically, we transformed the company from a tonnage provider to an active owner-operator doing business directly with cargo owners to create value for both Genco and our customers.

Furthermore, in early 2021, we embarked on a path to reset our capital structure creating a low financial leverage, compelling dividend company, the likes of which never existed in the public equity markets at this scale in drybulk.

Innovation from a technological perspective continues to enable us to work smarter and more efficiently. We have a performance-based culture at Genco, and technology will continue to help improve our workflows going forward and also enhance the efficiency of our asset base. We recently participated in the Global Maritime Forum to ensure we have a 'seat at the table' to help drive innovation to shipping. There are many exciting advancements going forward that will help reshape this business, including decarbonization and AI.

While the way we work has changed over the course of my career, a lot of the same principles remain intact, including: relationship building, personal accountability, the importance of face-to-face interaction, and getting smart people with different backgrounds in the same room. The entrepreneurial environment that I essentially grew up in back in my 20s that helped to kick-start my career is the same type of environment I strive to preserve at Genco.

What inspires you?

Shipping is such a dynamic business and global industry – every day I strive to learn and stay curious.

First, continued advancement of the shipping industry. We've come a long way as an industry but there's a lot of work to be done. It feels like we're at an inflection point in terms of decarbonization and technological advancement for the industry.

Second, New York City inspires me. I really enjoy the energy of the city and what it offers to Genco as a company. The population is so diverse which provides a terrific talent pool – we'd like to think our team based in NY is a microcosm of the city – different ethnicities, sometimes a little loud, but hard working, motivated, and driven.

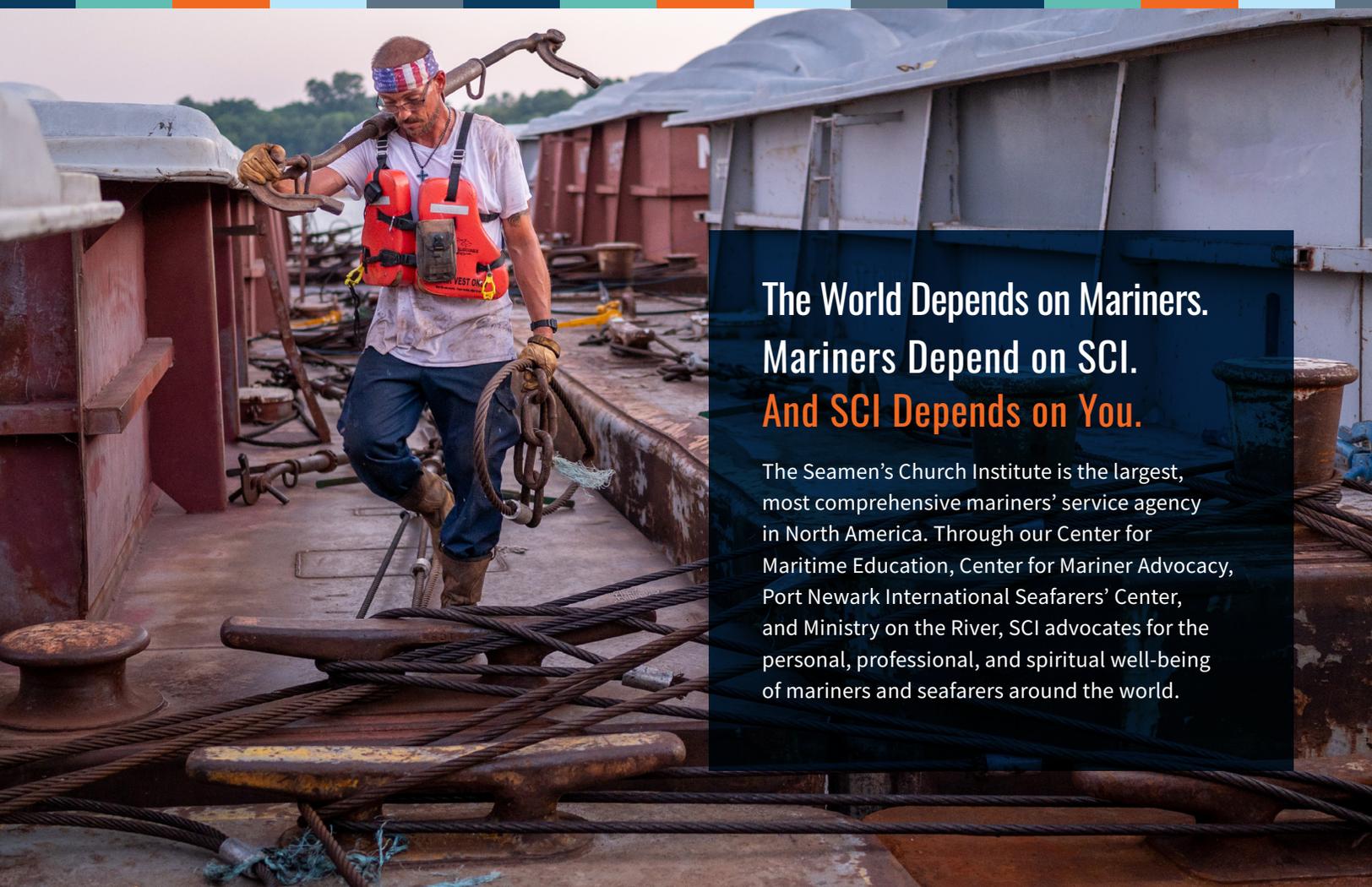
And third is my family. As shipping is a 24/7 business, having the support of family is paramount. Being a good example for my two daughters, the way my father was to me, is so important. Maybe one day you'll be interviewing one of them for this article!



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Mariners Depend on SCI.
And SCI Depends on You.**

The Seamen's Church Institute is the largest, most comprehensive mariners' service agency in North America. Through our Center for Maritime Education, Center for Mariner Advocacy, Port Newark International Seafarers' Center, and Ministry on the River, SCI advocates for the personal, professional, and spiritual well-being of mariners and seafarers around the world.