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THE LOOKOUT

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EDITORIAL

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The Rev. Mark Nestlehutt
SCI, President and Executive Director



The Seamen's Church Institute (SCI) has spent the past several months discerning, drafting, and adopting a new strategic plan covering the period 2023–2028. As someone who throughout my life has appreciated maps—roadmaps, flight plans, and nautical charts—I believe that SCI's new strategic plan will serve as both the North Star and compass to guide the Institute in accomplishing our short-term and long-term goals as we aim for the horizon. After much thought and discussion, we have identified 15 strategic initiatives that allow for defining key goals and measurable outcomes. They are predicated on four “anchors:”

- *Improving the health and wellbeing of mariners and their families—physically, mentally, and spiritually;*
- *Providing best-in-class training opportunities that ensure better and safer working conditions on the water;*
- *Raising awareness around the sacrifices mariners make to support the global economy and advocate for policies and practices that improve their quality of life; and,*
- *Building and growing our internal capabilities to more efficiently meet the immediate and emerging needs of mariners.*

Implementing these new initiatives will be our task over the next few years.

Of course, the thrust of SCI's long-term mission continues to focus on three areas: pastoral care and hospitality; maritime education and training; and mariner advocacy and seafarer rights. This issue of *The Lookout* contains stories that provide various accounts and glimpses of that mission. Janet Temchus, who for the past 20 years has welcomed seafarers from around the globe to SCI's International Seafarers' Center (ISC) in the

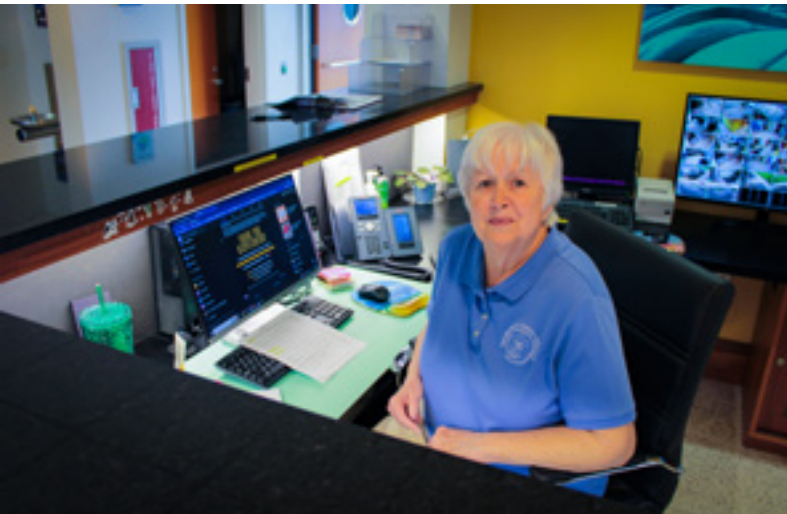
Port of New York and New Jersey, writes of a day in the life of the ISC. Continuing the theme of pastoral care, we profile our newest chaplain, the Reverend Christine Brunson, who joined us earlier this year and is based at SCI-Houston, serving the Houston Ship Channel and Gulf Coast region.

While SCI's work in maritime education dates to the late 19th century, articles on our feasibility study work and on our forty-year partnership with Kongsberg examine the cutting-edge, contemporary nature of this training. Regarding seafarer rights, we have an update on the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) guidelines on seafarer abandonment and our work in this area through our Center for Mariner Advocacy and with the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA). SCI Archivist, Stefan Dreisbach-Williams, profiles our early work with inland mariners in his piece, “Ministry on the Hudson.” And we conclude with a profile of Canal Barge Company's CEO, Merritt Lane III, a longtime supporter of SCI and co-chair of our annual River Bell Luncheon.

As an organization that prioritizes the needs of those serving on vessels in the maritime workforce—both domestic and international—SCI works tirelessly to serve the whole mariner in body, mind, and spirit. Of course, we could not succeed in our work without your incredible generosity and support. It's true that mariners depend on SCI, and that SCI depends on you. We never take that for granted, so thank you for what you do to enable us to carry out our mission day in and day out.

Most faithfully,

A Place of Peace, Welcome, and Support



by Naomi Walker
Manager, Special Projects

Janet Temchus first learned of the Seamen’s Church Institute when the Rev. Jean Smith, President and Executive Director at the time, came to the Trinity Church in Cranford, NJ to give a talk. In response, the church started a coat drive, because at that time seafarers weren’t dressed warmly enough to leave their ships. One cold, snowy Saturday, Janet and her friend drove to the ISC to deliver the coats. Upon arriving at the Center, they found a group of seafarers huddled at a nearby bus stop, trying to get warm. They opened the trunk and gave out coats to all of them. Janet says on that day she became hooked, and had to know more about SCI.

The Seamen’s Church Institute first opened a seafarers’ center in the Port of New York and New Jersey in 1961. The beautiful facility is now a haven of peace in the busy port, offering seafarers, truckers, and port workers alike somewhere to rest and recharge, talk with staff and chaplains, use the gym, have a shower, organize transport to local malls, and even arrange to meet family members.

In the years since Janet started with SCI in 2003, much has changed at the Center. Where previously there were banks of phone booths for seafarers to make calls home, now there is comfortable seating and free WiFi because everyone has their own mobile device. Now that transportation is more widely available, many mariners use their few, precious hours of shore leave to visit malls, or even make a trip into New York City.

A Day in the Life of the ISC: Janet’s day begins by navigating the huge trucks carrying containers and other loads on the roads leading into the Port. Once at the SCI Center, Janet opens the doors and settles in at reception, ready to help all who come through the door. She takes calls from ships requesting transport for their crews during shore leave, helps drivers needing to place money orders, and welcomes port workers who want to use the gym.

Our Port Chaplains use the ship list Janet compiles each day to divide vessel visits between them. Each ship coming into port receives a visit, and often additional visits follow. The rest of the day involves caring for people from her desk.

I asked Janet about a memorable moment during her time at the ISC, and she told me that once a seafarer came to the Center to use the computer, and then shared with all the staff that his wife was giving birth to his first child! He passed around cigars, and everyone at SCI was delighted to share such a special time with him.

Janet says, “People are my favorite aspect of this job. I have met so many seafarers, drivers, and port workers who are so happy to be in a warm and welcoming environment at the ISC. Everyone loves the respite they get from the bustle outside. As I am writing this, I am doing a money order, calling a taxi for a seafarer, and looking at his photos with him until the taxi arrives.”

Janet sums it up: “Seamen’s Church makes a difference by giving everyone the dignity and respect they deserve. We listen, and the seafarers we serve are grateful.”

A Year of Impact for ISC

SCI’s International Seafarers’ Center statistics as reported in the 2022 Annual Report

Last year, our Chaplains at the International Seafarers’ Center—SCI’s base of operations in the Port of New York and New Jersey—met with many Ukrainian seafarers who were struggling with the repercussions of the Russian invasion, the destruction of their homeland, and the violence and displacement affecting their families and friends. They met with other seafarers still facing travel restrictions and extended contracts as a result of COVID-19 policies in other nations. Also, along with the staff of the ISC, our Port Chaplains assisted many seafarers in gaining access to vaccinations while they were in port.

The 2022 numbers underscore their dedication:

Seafarers visited on board ships	9,801
Vessels visited in Port Newark	1,862
Seafarers, truckers, and port workers hosted at the International Seafarers’ Center	22,419
Seafarers transported by SCI vans	6,522
Seafarers vaccinated (transportation: 147, onboard 107)	254



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Bridge Building and the Center for Maritime Education: Considering the Impact of Feasibility Studies



by **Evan Brown**
Director, Communications

“I remember doing a study one time, back in 2015 I believe, and things just weren’t going right. Every run was a failure. Every run was unsuccessful, unsafe, stressful, and difficult. The guys kept hitting the bridge piers; every run was a bridge strike.”

When SCI’s Center for Maritime Education Director, Capt. Stephen Polk, recalls a particular feasibility study—where they used our simulators to assist in gathering data to help an engineering firm design the U.S. 60 Bridge spanning the Cumberland River near Smithland, Kentucky—he remembers the days of stress and anxiety he felt, as no run they tried brought successful results. “On the last day,” he recalled, “we had the chief project engineer in, we showed him all the failed runs with all the variables, and he was smiling. I asked, ‘how can you be happy about this?’ And he replied, ‘Because, Stephen, after three days, I know exactly what kind of bridge I need to build.’” As it turns out, the bridge piers needed to be built on land, not in the river, which was how the plans were originally drawn up. This allowed for a larger and safer opening for towboats and their barges through a particularly narrow part of the Cumberland River.

◀ **Left:** Image from the Pelican Island Causeway Replacement feasibility study report. Among other variables, SCI ran simulations to determine the effectiveness of different bridge openings.

The concept of a maritime feasibility study seems simple enough, but it has an expansive range that may not be readily recognizable for most. Maritime feasibility studies determine the viability and potential of a project, such as bridges, docks, or dredging. But the breadth of considerations before anything can be designed and built is significant: cost-effectiveness, risk-reduction, informed decision-making, stakeholder and investor engagement, environmental considerations, and numerous regulatory compliances are among the many factors that must go into any maritime infrastructure project. Helping to manage some of those variables and gather important data is where CME’s feasibility study expertise comes in.

“When a company comes to us with a project,” Stephen notes, “we ask for the objectives and specifications, to a T, and we build that into our database. We account for every variable they ask for, and some they didn’t even consider, and we start making the runs on the simulators.”

Of course, it’s not as simple as that. Take, for example, CME’s most recently completed project, the bridge replacement for the Pelican Island Causeway in Galveston, Texas. When the Texas Department of Transportation and Michael Baker International Engineering Firm approached SCI to assist in providing data for a new span, CME began working on two distinct levels: gathering the data to create the simulations—which includes, among other variables, geographic measurements, bathymetry, tide and current dynamics, weather possibilities, vessel types including tug and barges, tows expected to transit the area, and bridge specifications from the designers—and also gathering a team of experienced mariners to run the simulations once they are ready to test.

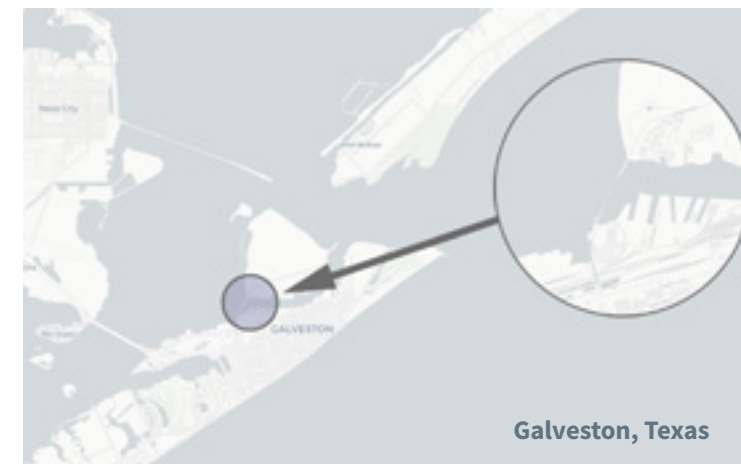


Mariner feed back is critical, says Stephen. “We brought in mariners from Kirby Inland Marine, Ingram Marine Group, David Foret from Action Group who serves as Chair of the Navigation Subcommittee for the Houston area Lonestar Safety Committee, and Ryan Marine Services, who operate specifically out of Galveston and know the water there better than anyone.”

Stephen points out that while SCI strives to account for every variable imaginable, often the mariners themselves will point to additional factors that hadn’t been considered.

For Pelican Island, CME and the team of mariners ran simulations at various bridge openings (space where boats and barges can pass underneath) and bridge pier alignments. When the data is collected, Stephen, as director, personally reviews the data and writes up his summary observations and recommendations for the clients. “Companies and investors in the infrastructure will better understand the operational factors and whether their design assumptions will hold up. And for our part, from the mariner and maritime considerations, we aim to deliver those assurances.”

“So, for bridge studies like this, and this one was fairly straightforward, we may run over a hundred simulations,” Stephen continued, “and in the end, the simulator data and feedback provided by mariners set you free because the people constructing the bridge will get the information they need to make it better for the users of the bridge, and the stakeholders will get the information they need—and all this before the project even starts. So, TXDOT gets a good bridge, boat operators get a good bridge, engineering companies can move on to the next project—it’s really a win-win all the way around.”



Above: The project: replacing a dated bridge, built in the 1960s, with a new span connecting Pelican Island and Galveston, along the Texas Gulf coast.

Our Chaplaincy in Houston:

The Rev. Christine Brunson shares her insights about her first few months at SCI



◀ **Left:** Chaplains Tom Rhoades (L) and Christine Brunson (R) on a vessel visit in the Houston area

Chaplain Christine Brunson, an Episcopal priest and former counselor with experience working with veterans and trauma responders, joined SCI in January 2023. Christine is based at SCI-Houston and focuses her work on the Houston Ship Channel and Gulf Coast region.

How did you come to find the job with SCI, and what motivated you to apply? Had you heard of the organization before you joined us?

I was having a conversation with my Transition Minister (the person in charge of helping clergy transition into new jobs), and she mentioned SCI. I was curious about it, but not sure. Despite having done years of work with military personnel and first responders, the maritime world felt unfamiliar to me. However, as I read the job description for the Chaplain position, I felt drawn to it. I looked up at her and said, “This is me.” She gave me a knowing smile. When I got home, I pored over all I could learn about maritime ministry and port chaplaincy. That day, I emailed Mark Nestlehutt and the mutual discernment began. I had not heard of SCI before, but now my goal is to tell as many people as I can about this organization. Mariners are just as much a part of this country’s

past as they are its future. Not only do we need them, we need to care for them. I am grateful to be on their care team.

How have you found your first few months as a maritime chaplain? Has anything surprised or challenged you?

My first few months in this work have been packed with trainings, conferences, and settling into my own style of chaplaincy. I am deeply enjoying it all. I love the thrill of driving into the Port Houston campus each morning and not knowing what will unfold that day. I love traveling the coast and meeting the various crews. As I step onto each vessel, I hold reverence for their space, and I say a prayer for the mariners I’m about to meet.

How do you see your role with the mariners you meet? What difference do you see SCI making to mariners?

I see my role with mariners as being a companion along the way for them. I hope they see a chaplain who respects their faith traditions, who will work hard to troubleshoot with them, and who will listen to anything they want to share. Working with mariners reminds me so much of working with military personnel and first responders. The culture is similar, so I’ve found it easy to talk with mariners and I especially enjoy connecting with them through humor. I also enjoy doing advocacy work for mariners at local churches and groups.

Through SCI’s ethos—in the very marrow of the organization—is a holistic approach to mariner care. When mariners see the SCI logo on my life vest, they often mention their memories of Christmas at Sea or training at the Center for Maritime Education here in Houston. SCI has built a reputation over the years, and I am proud to do this sacred work with our mariners. I am grateful to be their chaplain.



Above: Chaplain in the wheelhouse visiting with the Pilot of the M/V San Roberto. April 2023, Houston Ship Channel.

Vessel: The Navigator

*The Rev. Christine Brunson
Pastoral Activity Report, March 2023*

Being escorted into the world of maritime ministry has been a holy adventure—an adventure filled with a joyfully steep learning curve. From onboarding with various chaplains, North American Maritime Ministry Association training, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, American Waterways information, and all the training in between, I have been thoroughly saturated in the beautiful work of SCI’s chaplaincy and the Ministry on the River program.

Throughout the flurry of preparations and classes over the past month, I found myself looking forward to the opportunity to board a vessel on my own, meet a crew, and simply be with them. I was eager to begin to figure out my style and to have time with the mariners.

Surveying the row of towboats on my first morning, solo, there was one name that caught my eye. As I climbed on board The Navigator, I felt a growing excitement and some nerves. I knocked and opened the door. It was as if I had walked into my own surprise party. I was greeted exuberantly by five cheerful crew members. They saw my SCI jacket, shook my hand, and greeted me as an old friend. With pleasantries exchanged and a demonstration of my security credential to the deckhand, the fun began. I immediately picked up on their humor and began slinging it back to them. We talked about surface-

level things with ease, which helped them feel comfortable as we moved into more deep-rooted issues in their lives. I stayed with that crew as I listened to their experiences on the water, their family dynamics off it, and their joy when they get a hand-made hat from Christmas at Sea. We talked about mariner advocacy and their hopes for their future careers. They know I am SCI’s first Houston-based chaplain, so at the end of our conversation, I told them The Navigator was my first boat to visit on my own. They celebrated that fact with gusto.

From them, I learned about the pride mariners have in their work, in their vessels, and in their vision for the future. From deckhand to captain, these men shared their common goals, with the understanding that these goals could only be reached with the participation of each member of their team. That solid teamwork is born from an atmosphere of respect. This crew loved and cared for each other. I know that they will continue to accomplish their goals, and I hope to be along with them for the ride.

I am grateful that The Navigator welcomed me onto their team. That is so much of what chaplaincy is—meeting people exactly as they are, where they are, and walking with them from there. I picked The Navigator as my first boat because of the name. I stayed because of the people. They are navigators themselves; they are the lifeblood of this country. What a joy it is to be invited onto their vessels and minister to them as we navigate this world together.

2023 Maritime Training Benefit Luncheon

SCI Honors Channel and Lynchburg Shipyard Founder Dennis Steger

The Seamen’s Church Institute hosted Inland and Gulf Maritime leadership for their annual Maritime Training Benefit Luncheon on April 20, 2023, at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Houston, Texas. The event, chaired this year by Austin Golding (President and CEO of Golding Barge Line) and Clark Todd (President and CEO of Blessey Marine Services), honored industry legend Dennis Steger, founder of three major shipyards and a medical clinic in the Houston Area, as well as serving as Chairman for the Shipyard Council of America in 1996 and Chairman and Director of Lone Star Bank from 1992 to 1998.

SCI’s President and Executive Director, the Rev. Mark Nestlehuht, noted how “the luncheon brings this amazing community together to celebrate those working in this crucial industry while highlighting the importance of mariner training, pastoral care, and crisis response. It was truly an honor to present a legend like Dennis Steger with the Lifetime Achievement Award, given all that he has done for mariners throughout the Inland and Gulf regions.”

The 2023 Maritime Training Benefit Luncheon welcomed more than 300 attendees and raised \$251,200 to assist with mariner training and pastoral care. The event also featured an endearing mariner reflection by JR Miller, Captain of the M/V Sarah Golding of Golding Barge Line, and honoree introductory remarks by Cherrie Felder of Channel Shipyard. The opening benediction was offered by SCI’s newest Chaplain, based in Houston, the Rev. Christine Brunson. Also, the event featured remarks on “Excellence in Training” by SCI’s Center for Maritime Education Director, Captain Stephen Polk, MNI.

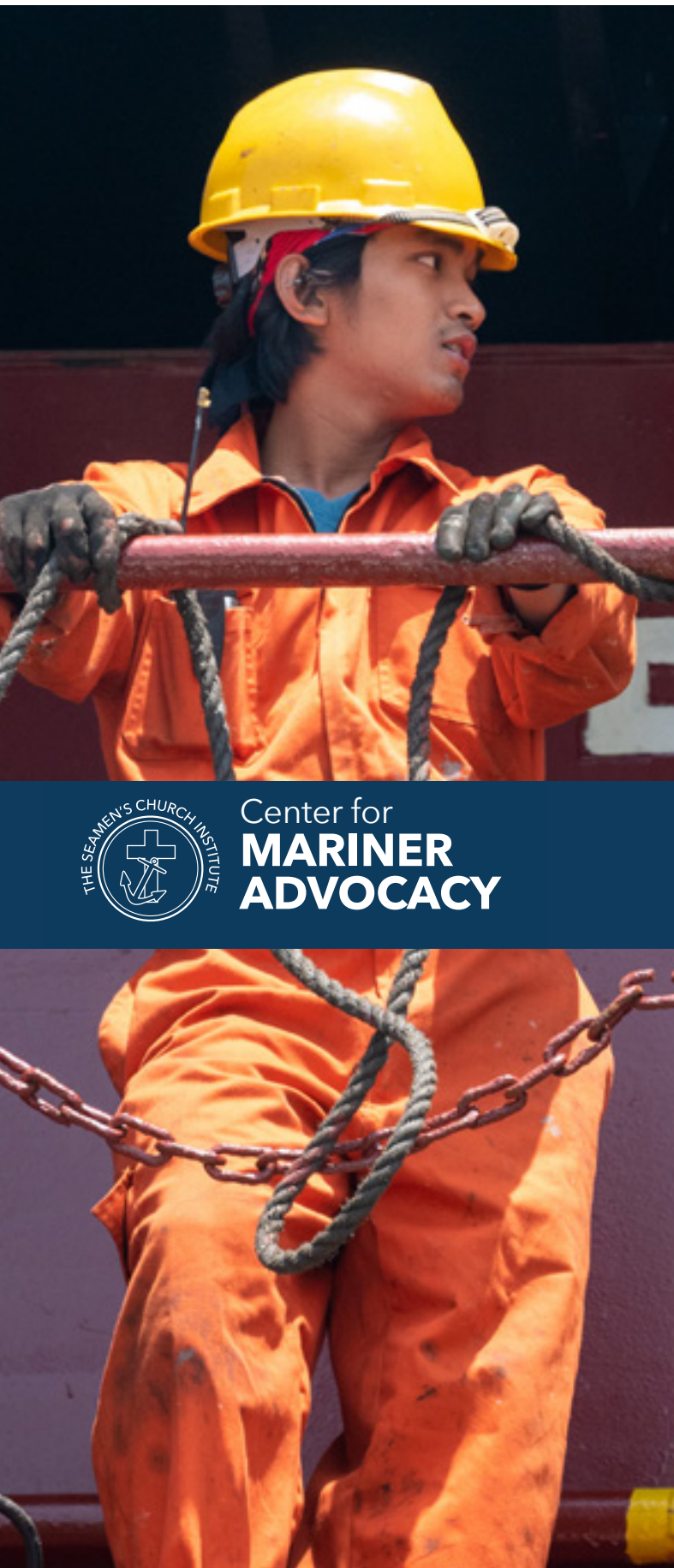
Below: Dennis Steger: SCI’s 2023 Maritime Training Benefit Luncheon Lifetime Achievement honoree.



Below: (Opposite left) SCI Ministry on the River Chaplains, from left to right, the Revs. David Shirk, Thomas Rhoades, and Christine Brunson. (Middle) Dennis Steger with Channel Shipyard Vice President Cherrie Felder, who offered the honoree introductory remarks. (Right) Mariner reflection offered by Captain JR Miller, M/V Sara Golding, Golding Barge Line.

◀ This year’s MTBL in Houston welcomed more than 300 attendees and raised \$251,200 to assist with mariner training and pastoral care.





Latest Guidelines: Addressing Seafarer Abandonment

by **Phil Schifflin, Esq.**
Director, Center for Mariner Advocacy



Abandonment of seafarers has been a plague upon the shipping industry for years, and has recently seen a significant uptick in reported cases. It occurs when, for a variety of reasons, a shipowner neglects their responsibility to their crews, denying them the option

of timely repatriation, neglecting to pay their wages, and even leaving them in dangerous conditions. In the years 2011–2016 there were less than 20 reported cases each year. 2017–2019 saw a large increase as the reported number of cases each year ranged between 40 and 55. While a direct causation has not been established, the rise in abandonment cases has continued to grow dramatically since the COVID-19 pandemic started; there were 85 cases of abandonment reported in 2020, 95 cases in 2021, and 109 cases in 2022.

Abandonment can often be challenging to deal with since a vessel is virtually always abandoned in a port, but port states do not typically have a legal obligation to resolve these cases. In accordance with the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, individual shipowners, a shipowner's financial security provider, and the flag state of the ship are the entities that normally are obligated to help resolve an abandonment matter. In many abandonment cases, however, a shipowner might not be available to assist, the financial security may have lapsed, or in many cases the flag state is reluctant to use its financial resources to resolve the case prior to exhausting all other potential avenues. Accordingly, seafarers all too often remain stuck in a foreign country with no means of being repatriated home and no means of supporting themselves or their families who depend on their wages.

The International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Legal Committee recognized this growing crisis and in November 2020 agreed to the development of guidelines for resolving seafarer abandonment cases. This work began during the fall 2021, and after multiple meetings held at both the IMO and the International Labor Organization (ILO), these joint ILO/IMO guidelines were ready to receive their final review and approval. This last step was accomplished in March 2023 when they were approved by the IMO's Legal Committee. Phil Schifflin, Director of the Center for Mariner Advocacy, participated in all the meetings throughout the development of these important guidelines.

The guidelines, while not mandatory, provide best practices for improving coordination between the different entities that can help to resolve seafarer abandonment cases.

One particular set of recommendations that has the potential to make a significant difference addresses financial security. The guidelines recommend that flag states verify, at least on an annual basis, that vessels flying their flag still maintain valid financial security. The guidelines also recommend that port states "pay particular attention to the validity of the financial security" during their inspections. Both recommendations, if widely adopted, will help prevent ships from sailing without valid financial security. This is important, since data has shown that when a vessel has valid financial security, cases of seafarer abandonment are resolved faster and at a significantly higher rate.

Another important aspect in the adoption of guidelines are specific actionable items that port states can implement to help resolve abandonment cases. As mentioned above, many port states are not obligated to assist in rectifying these matters, but as a result, these port states do not have action plans in place for responding to a case of seafarer abandonment. The reality is that seafarers are always abandoned in a port that differs from where their vessel is flagged and from where they reside. As such, port states are in a unique position to help



these distressed seafarers. With guidelines like those proposed, port states would have a playbook to follow in resolving abandonment issues, which could result in quicker resolution and could lessen the negative impacts on affected seafarers.

The guidelines also recommend that flag states, port states, and the home countries of seafarers all develop standard operating procedures that specifically define what roles the various national stakeholders will fulfill in helping to resolve cases of seafarer abandonment. Taking the time to define responsibilities ahead of time will ensure a coordinated government response, which should aid in the resolution of seafarer abandonment cases.

Finally, it is worth noting that the guidelines, in multiple locations, recommend that the entities responding to seafarer abandonment cases should notify a local seafarer welfare organization, which would include SCI, so that such organizations are aware of the case and can assist.

Paducah: Making a Difference

Buck Viniard and Kelly Butts mark more than 25 years with SCI

William “Buck” Viniard (Building Facility Coordinator) and Kelly Butts (Administrative and Marketing Assistant) both started working for the Center for Maritime Education in Paducah, Kentucky, in 1997, the year the facility first opened. They celebrated 25 years with SCI last year and were honored at the River Bell Awards Luncheon in December 2022. Here, they reflect on how times have changed, and what has endured.

When you first started at CME, what was it like?

How have you seen things changing since those early days — both in terms of how SCI works and how the towboat industry has changed?

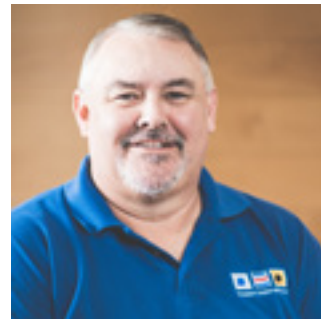
Buck My first day on the job was kind of scary. The very first time I saw the facility, you could literally see through the building from one end of it to the other. The only thing that had been built was the steel framework that would later be covered with sheetrock for the walls. We didn’t even have offices. We set up our temporary offices in a small warehouse area in the construction zone. I thought, “What have I done?!” Looking back, it turns out that it was a very good move for me.

A lot has changed since then, and mostly all for the good. I have seen four Executive Directors, six Ministry on the River Chaplains, and sixteen different CME instructors in my 25-plus years here at SCI. Each one of them has been awesome to work with. It’s also been interesting to watch the mariners and their companies evolve.

A few things that I’ve seen change within the industry are how the mariners communicate better, how they are safer in every aspect of their jobs, and their overall professionalism. I take pride in knowing that I work for and with the people that made some of that happen.



Kelly Butts, CME, Training Administrator



William “Buck” Viniard, CME, Building Facility Coordinator/Simulator Operator

Kelly In the beginning, the industry and certainly the mariners were extremely skeptical of coming to participate in classes. They had never had this type of training. Often, we would hear things like, “I have worked on a boat for 39 years, what are they going to teach me?!” Of course, over time the companies and the mariners learned that SCI offered much more than teaching somebody to steer a boat, and the mariners came to enjoy and benefit from attending trainings year after year. In the 25 years I have been involved, the industry as a whole has changed for the better. The emphasis on safety has increased, as has the focus on helping the mariners realize they have an extremely important job and should consider themselves professionals.

What is your favorite part of the job, today and over the past 25 years?

Buck My favorite part of my job is all the different people I work with, from my coworkers to the mariners, to each office person from the companies that train with us. They are what make this job possible. It’s a great feeling knowing that what we do makes a difference for the better in other people’s lives, and the marine industry.

Kelly My favorite part of the job has always been the people. The relationships with the mariners and various company personnel are what keep this job great year after year. Each class has its own dynamic and it’s a pleasure to get to know them. The familiar faces who have become more like friends over the past 25 years are now often combined with the next generation of mariners. It is so satisfying to see a mariner come through the door as a captain and remember him coming here when he was a steersman trying to work through the program and get into the wheelhouse. They remember the impact CME training had on them.



Above: CME-Paducah Instructor Capt. Jake Horman working with a mariner in the simulator.

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Ministry on the Hudson (and the Erie Canal too)

by **Stefan Dreisbach-Williams**
SCI Archivist

Today, Ministry on the River is a core SCI program. While a glance at our history suggests that SCI first served inland mariners in the 1990s, inland mariners have been a part of our work from the beginning. In the first decades of SCI's existence, overland travel remained impractical, and inland navigation connections were unavoidable for organizations serving boat workers. The Port of New York was full of boats that worked the Hudson River, the canals that joined with the port, and barges that connected Manhattan, Staten Island, and Long Island to one another and the mainland. From its beginning, SCI openly sought to serve inland mariners and seafarers alike.

Rail was still in its infancy at the time of SCI's founding in 1834, and the steamboats that had been running up the Hudson River for 27 years would continue well into the 20th century. Steam-powered towing commenced nine years before SCI's inception, making it easier for canal boats to carry cargo directly between the port, and Appalachian coal fields, and the Great Lakes. In addition to caring for the river boat crews that towed those canal boats, SCI also tended to the needs of the canal boat crews, which were often families.

With the rise of railroads, New York Harbor quickly filled with barges shuttling goods between the railroad terminals in New Jersey and the piers in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Every barge had its captain, and most lived aboard full time with their families. The barges and the canal boats were unusual in this respect. Like seafarers, river boaters experienced housing insecurity and infrequent paydays. Many canallers and all barge captains lived aboard full time. SCI served them



all and developed services specially adapted to their needs. In fact, SCI had a mission dedicated to canallers and their families that opened at their moorage on Coenties Slip in lower Manhattan on June 16, 1872, under the leadership of the Rev. Isaac Macguire, who served in that capacity until his retirement on May 1, 1902.

When SCI consolidated its services in one building on the other side of Coenties Slip, it continued to serve the canallers. Mrs. B.H. Buckingham paid for an illuminated sign outside the new building welcoming "Seamen, Boatmen, and Others." *The Lookout* mentions chaplains visiting canal boats and barges with a portable organ and barge and canal boat families attending concerts on summer nights in Coenties Slip's Jeanette Park or in SCI's auditorium.



The Lookout rarely distinguished between riverboat workers and other mariners, but there are lots of references to the employment office finding jobs for boat workers on tugboats and barges. Firemen and stokers moved smoothly between blue and brown water navigations, and there are even accounts of seagoing officers taking positions on inland waterways during shipping depressions.

When ice ended the shipping season on the Great Lakes and northern rivers, inland mariners walked, hitched, or hopped

freight trains to ocean ports in search of work. The canal serving the Port of New York also had its seasons, typically operating from April to November with many canallers tying up next to 25 South Street until spring.

It wasn't only SCI's service connections that reached inland; we also stretched across the entire country administratively, incubating new institutes in ports at the mouths of the Delaware, Sacramento, San Jacinto, Savannah, and Mississippi Rivers. We trained their superintendents and chaplains, guided their development, and promoted their calls for donations. At these institutes and at home in New York, we not only served seafarers but also people working on river boats, canal boats, tugs, and lighters.

SCI's expansion to serving inland mariners in the 1990s wasn't so much a change in who we served but how and where we served them. This adjustment was consistent with diminished inland navigation in the Hudson River Estuary. Shifting markets and the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway left the Erie Canal to pleasure craft with little commercial use. The other canals fell to rail and road competition in the 1920s. The last Hudson River sidewheel passenger steamer, the Alexander Hamilton, ended operations in 1971. The port's shift from breakbulk to containerization was complete by 1987, and the few barges that remained were unmanned.

Above: Map of the Erie Canal connecting the Hudson River to the Great Lakes.

From left to right: Ticket for one of Fulton's original ferries, *The Nassau*, that carried passengers across the East River. >> SCI's first floating church was built on the twin hulls of a retired steam ferry from Fulton's original fleet, an old design that used those twin hulls to protect a single central paddlewheel. >> SCI Headquarters at 1 State Street: Battery Station at 1 State Street was SCI's headquarters from 1902-1913 and former home of Robert Fulton (1765-1815).



K-Sim and the Advancement of Simulator-Based Mariner Training

by **The Rev. Mark Nestlehutt**
SCI President and Executive Director

Kongsberg, Norway, a small former mining town just 50 miles west-southwest of Oslo, is the headquarters of Kongsberg Gruppen, Norway's largest defense contractor, and one of its subsidiaries, Kongsberg Digital. The Seamen's Church Institute (SCI) and Kongsberg Digital first crossed paths in the mid-1980s when SCI partnered with Norcontrol (an earlier iteration of Kongsberg Digital) to provide simulators for SCI's Center for Maritime Education in lower Manhattan. For the past 40 years, this partnership has remained strong as both entities grew and SCI's training moved from Manhattan to Paducah, Kentucky and Houston, Texas. This past November, SCI sent a team to Horten, Norway for Kongsberg Digital's international users' meeting to catch a glimpse of how Kongsberg's newly introduced operating system would transform simulator-based mariner training.

Most of us are familiar with Apple iOS, Google Android, and Microsoft Windows. These are the operating systems that run our smartphones, tablets, notebooks, and desktop computers. Similarly, the universe of simulator-based maritime education has its own operating systems and companies that provide the hardware that run these complex systems. Instead of Apple and Dell, there's Kongsberg and Wartsila. And instead of Android and Windows, there are names such as Polaris and K-Sim. SCI has been devoting a great deal of attention to these operating systems during the past year as we complete a major transition and upgrade from an older operating system that has run our Kongsberg simulators since 1997 to a revolutionary new one.

Since the late 19th century, SCI has provided professional training in navigation and seamanship for mariners, and since the post-war era, we added radar training and introduced computer-based simulators. SCI did so out of a desire to help mariners advance in their careers and to increase the overall safety for them and the maritime industry. For years,

MARAD (the U.S. Maritime Administration) operated two radar simulators based in SCI's lower Manhattan facility, and in 1982, the operation of these radar simulators transitioned to SCI's Center for Maritime Education (CME). Four years later, the original simulators were replaced by new Norcontrol radar simulators capable of training a broad range of mariners—deep sea, coastal, and inland.

SCI's then Director of the Center for Maritime Education, Eric Larsson, and SCI's then Executive Director, the Reverend Jim Whittemore worked closely with a young Herb Taylor on these projects during the mid-1980s. A decade later, SCI relocated its training facility from Manhattan to the Western Rivers and, in 2001, added a Gulf Coast location. And Kongsberg went with us. The original Norcontrol radar simulators used in Manhattan were upgraded to NMS-90 ship simulators and geared towards inland marine training needs, and in 1996 SCI became the first client to sign on to the new PC Windows-based shiphandling simulators (quickly followed by the French Navy). The operating system for this new PC Windows-based system was named Polaris and this system—in various versions, updates, and patches—has allowed SCI to train tens of thousands of mariners during the past quarter century.

Yet, along the lines of the advancement of AI, computer games, and high-resolution graphics, maritime simulators needed to remain current in order to provide realistic and accurate training. A few years ago, Kongsberg began testing, and then slowly implemented Polaris's successor, K-Sim. In short, we went from a plotting or maritime positioning program to a total marine environment program in which the various dimensions that impact a vessel's performance and steering—the contours of the riverbed, current, wind, and other variables—are factored into the simulation. To quote Captain Stephen Polk, SCI's Director for the Center of Maritime Education, "The new K-Sim operating system provides significantly enhanced visuals utilizing a much more realistic physics engine to better replicate within the simulator what the mariner will encounter out on the water."



Above: SCI's Director, Center for Maritime Education Capt. Stephen Polk tests the K-Sim operating system. **Right:** SCI's team attending Kongsberg Digital's international users' meeting in Horten, Norway (L-R: Jenny Butler, SCI Trustee; Jonathan Burson, SCI's e-learning Business Relations Manager; the Rev. Mark Nestlehutt, SCI's President & Executive Director; Capt. Stephen Polk, SCI's Director, Maritime Education and Training)

It's been said that the world is changing faster than it ever has and yet, it will never change this slowly again. As such, technology and new demands mean that maritime is a rapidly-changing industry. Other new technologies developed by Kongsberg allow for the creation of digital twins—computer-generated versions of a vessel underway that allows shore-based operators and technicians to monitor all aspects of the vessel's performance and to make repairs—and even fully autonomous ships piloted like drones by masters and engineers based shoreside. This may read like science fiction, but technology is changing the industry at great speed.

As a nation, Norway is investing heavily in electrification of its transportation infrastructure—private automobiles, commercial trucking, public buses, trains, and even passenger ferries and cargo ships. One test case, a partnership between Kongsberg and Wilhelmsen, is the Yara Birkeland, the world's first crewless, zero-emissions cargo ship, which is operated from the third floor of an office building in Horten, Norway. While these changes may not impact the domestic maritime industry for years to come, they do offer a glimpse as to how technology can enhance vessel performance and safe operation to augment the skilled crew at the helm. Wherever technology takes the industry, SCI stands ready to leverage successful and longstanding partnerships, such as ours with Kongsberg, to prepare and improve mariner training, and, ultimately, mariner safety and well-being.



After a forty-year long partnership between SCI and Kongsberg, much has changed in the industry and at both organizations. The Rev. Jim Whittemore retired in 1992 and was succeeded by the Rev. Peter Larom, the Rev. Jean Smith, the Rev. David Rider, and now me. Eric Larsson retired in 2011 and was succeeded by Captain Stephen Polk. The one constant in this four-decade partnership has been Herb Taylor, with Kongsberg Digital, who today remains the primary liaison in shepherding SCI's transition from Polaris to K-Sim. Thank you, Herb Taylor and Bravo Zulu!

To learn more about the new K-Sim operating system and its enhanced effectiveness for both simulator training and feasibility studies, contact Stephen Polk, Director, CME, spolk@seamenschurch.org

Merritt Lane

President and CEO, Canal Barge Company



Who were some important mentors or role models for you?

I have been blessed with some outstanding mentors.

First is my father who was a longtime executive at our company. Dad always reinforced to us the importance of integrity, being true to your word, and doing our part for the betterment of the team. He loved the barge business and the people in it. He emphasized the need to be humble and to do whatever it takes to get the job done. My brother and I have complementary skills and get along very well together. Dad used to say about us, “If I could put you guys in a blender and mix you up, I’d have one really good man.” Of course, he wasn’t diminishing either of us so much as reminding us that we are better together and neither one of us should get too big for our britches.

My uncle, Merrick Jones, was my boss and mentor for many years. He stressed to all of us that if we take good care of our people, they will take good care of us. He always demonstrated respect for the mariner and expected us to spend time in the field experiencing and getting to know operations. He also set a high bar for partnership—he preached that you should always treat the other party as you would want to be treated yourself. I have attempted to put all of these principles into practice over the years, both at CBC and in other areas of my life.

While there are certainly several others, the last mentor I will mention is my executive coach, Nawzer Parakh. He is a retired executive from the chemical manufacturing industry who works with CEOs. I found him several years ago when I became concerned that I was plateauing in my job and was looking for a way to continue expanding my skills and improving my effectiveness. He is very wise and has shared some useful techniques, but most of all he makes me articulate my priorities and helps me hold myself accountable for aligning my actions with my personal goals.

Finally, I have been blessed with a great business partner in my brother, David. He is very knowledgeable in many aspects of our business and it’s great to have his leadership in some vital areas of our company. More significantly to me, I trust him to be bone honest and always focused on what he thinks is right and best for us. I know that both of our parents are very proud to know that we have taken their guidance to heart and been supportive of one another—and together we have capitalized on the opportunity to continue building a good business.

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

My first leadership role at Canal Barge was in managing our Deck Barge business unit. We had one of the largest deck barge fleets for hire in the U.S. but the mid-1980s had decimated their principal market—oilfield services. This was not exactly a plum assignment in my mind, but I threw myself into it and it was a transformational experience. As it turned out, it was a great opportunity to take over a business that was kind of down and out. I couldn’t screw it up too badly, and although I did make some decisions that didn’t pan out, I kept learning and dreaming about what could be...and eventually we built a niche business that is one of the leading U.S. flag movers of over-dimensional project cargos.

I had the opportunity to really immerse myself in every aspect of the business, from crawling barges to knocking on trailers and going “down the bayou” to ask for business, to learning about ABS inspections and doing business internationally. Most of all, I learned about the challenge and opportunity of working with people who have deep experience and knowledge well beyond my own.

As I reflect, I see that I frequently tried to do too much myself and didn’t do a very good job of delegating in my first leadership role. My uncle pointed that out to me by letting me know that my approach was unsustainable for me and would eventually hurt my co-workers and our company. He got my

We hire carefully and with high standards. Philosophically, we are hiring more for “will” than “skill.” We will provide the training and experience.

attention, and little by little I learned to be a better delegator. For most of us, it’s not easy to go from individual contributor to organizational leader. My tendency to “do it myself” was a habit that I needed to wean myself from over time.

What is your view on the impact of organizational culture in individual and company performance?

I was trained in finance and that’s proven to be very valuable to me. However, I quickly realized that being a transactionalist is only a fraction of a leader’s job. Similarly, I have learned that vision, no matter how lofty and clever, does not carry the day without execution. I have learned that teams at any scale do best with unifying goals and principles. Culture is the glue that holds an organization together. No one wakes up every morning excited by policies and procedures. They get excited about a sense of purpose and a belief that they are making a positive difference. We work hard to nurture and improve a culture that reinforces our approach to safety, risk management, customer service and decision making. At CBC we say that People Make the Difference and we mean it. Most of all, we make it clear that our people are the key to developing and sustaining the trusting relationships that create long term value.

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?

I would emphasize to any candidates that this career is unique in many ways. For folks who work in more typical jobs ashore, no matter how smart and educated you might be, you will learn most of what you know through on-the-job experience. You must be open to going to the field, putting boots on steel and getting to know the wonderful people who do the vital operational jobs at CBC. You also need to understand that our business never closes and so we do not offer a typical 9

to 5 existence. For prospective mariners, I would stress that there is remarkable upside for those who can commit to the work schedule and lifestyle and meet our safety requirements. I am immensely proud of the fact that our industry creates opportunities for hard-working Americans to move themselves several rungs up the economic ladder, advancing themselves and improving their families’ quality of life.

We hire carefully and with high standards. We frequently use testing instruments and do comprehensive background checking. We have enjoyed a lot of success through referrals of current employees. Philosophically, we are hiring more for “will” than “skill.” We will provide the training and experience. We need to make sure that we are hiring folks that fit our culture and have motivations and values that align with ours.

I tell our younger employees that I am looking for three things once they are on our team:

1. *How do you show up? Willing, prepared, enthusiastic, curious?*
2. *Do you listen to learn? Are you an active listener who tries to connect the dots and asks great questions? This requires some courage and an ability to engage in the discourse.*
3. *When did you last give us a pleasant surprise? It could be a great insight, or delivering on a wonderful project, or it could be as simple as following up with good questions and sharing your learnings with others.*

We are looking for intentional learners who make a difference for themselves and others.

What is the role of innovation in your work?

Some parts of what we do are routine, and we would define quality as achieving the expected result every time. While not sexy, that requires a lot of effort in this business, and many of our innovations are about finding better (and hopefully simpler) ways of assuring quality results and continuously improving what we are currently doing.

On the other end of the spectrum, we are looking at technological, logistical, and human performance innovations that are more revolutionary. Over the years, our company has advanced the development of marine equipment, logistical systems, and special cargo movement to name a few.

It seems to me that we are entering a new era of change as we look at greener alternatives, the use of navigational technology, and artificial intelligence. We encourage both kinds of innovation by empowering our employees to be engaged in finding better ways to run our business. We have a Performance Improvement Program that has resulted in hundreds of changes—large and small—recommended and implemented by our employees. In addition, we have put talent to the mission of studying technological advances both in our industry and adjacent to us that have potential to improve our business.

While we do not seek to be on the cutting edge of technological advancement, we certainly want to make this an important part of how we build our future, especially finding new solutions to existing problems.

What inspires you?

My family— especially my wife and three daughters. They give me my most important purpose and inspire me to be a better man.

Our company—this is a challenging job, but it has so much meaning for me. I think what our industry does is vital to the nation, and I appreciate that CBC is among the leading companies in it.

Our people—it's great to see a plan come together and for the team feel a real sense of accomplishment. I love seeing people grow and prosper and becoming increasingly competent and confident in themselves.



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Lifetime Achievement Award*

The Seamen's Church Institute is excited to gather our friends, supporters, and colleagues from across the maritime industry at the 45th Annual Silver Bell Awards Dinner. At this event, we will also mark the 125th Anniversary of SCI's Christmas at Sea program.

For more information, contact silverbell@seamenschurch.org or call (212) 401-4072.

Life as a mariner or seafarer has constant challenges. Long contracts or shift work can lead to extended periods of loneliness and isolation from loved ones. At the same time, ships and boats require expertise and exacting attention from their crews. Even without considering the effects of severe weather, working on the water is dangerous and demanding.

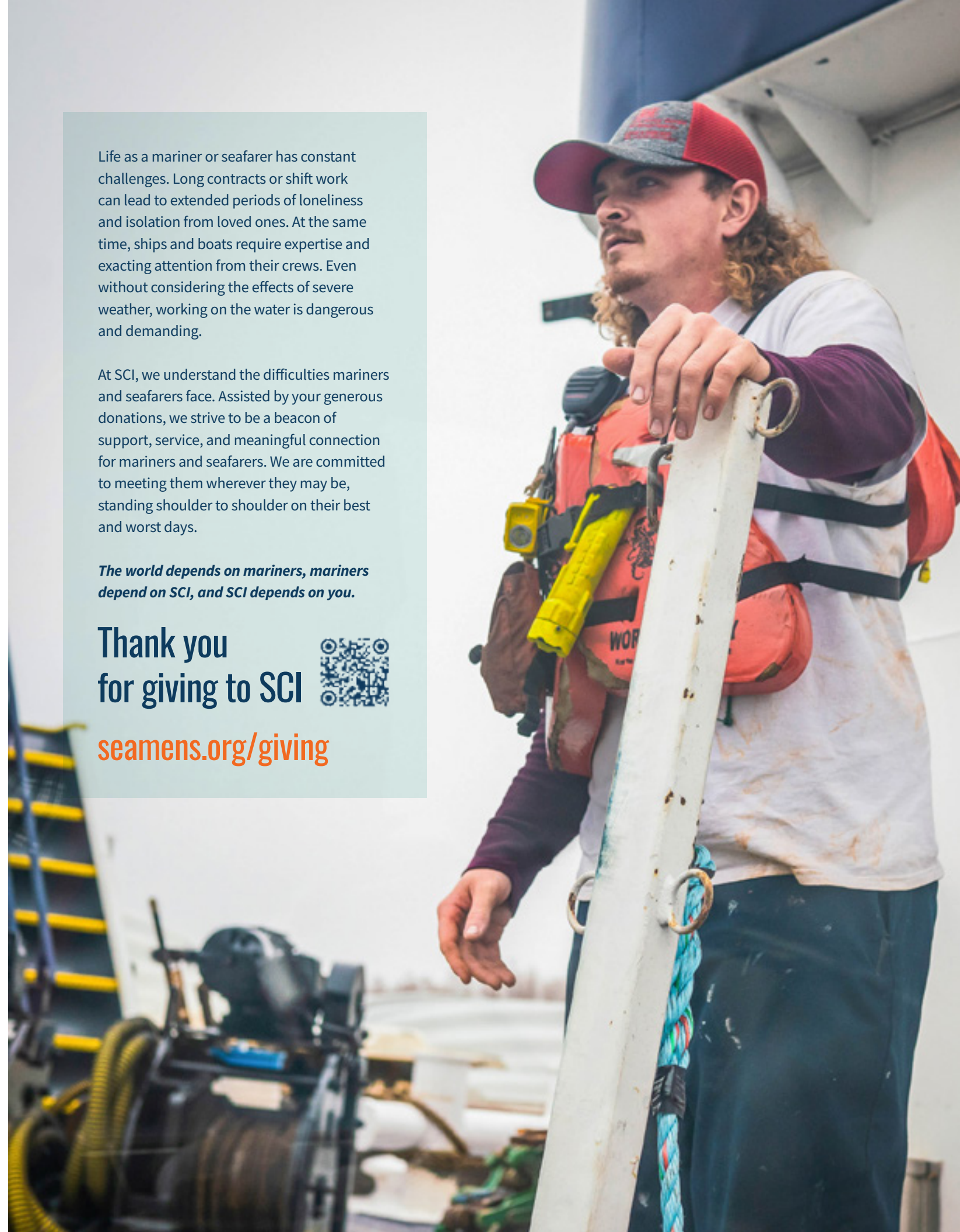
At SCI, we understand the difficulties mariners and seafarers face. Assisted by your generous donations, we strive to be a beacon of support, service, and meaningful connection for mariners and seafarers. We are committed to meeting them wherever they may be, standing shoulder to shoulder on their best and worst days.

The world depends on mariners, mariners depend on SCI, and SCI depends on you.

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OUR MISSION

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.

