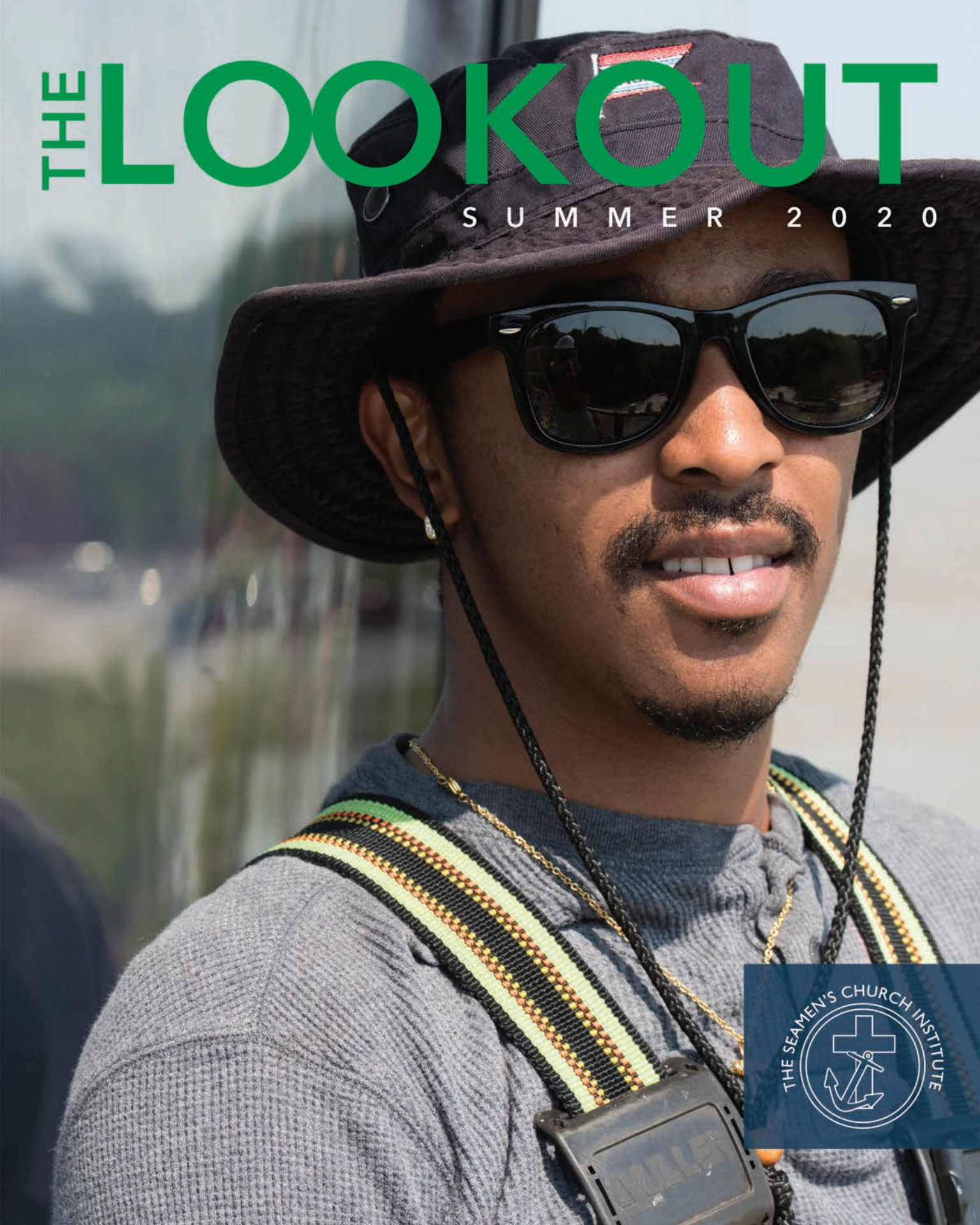


# THE LOOKOUT

S U M M E R 2 0 2 0





"I believe that our receptivity to innovation is paramount to SCl remaining a key organization in meeting the most crucial needs of mariners well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century." – Mark

**THE LOOKOUT** is published biannually by the Communications Office of the Seamen's Church Institute (SCI).

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

As an avid sailor, one of my favorite adages, and one that has crossed my mind many times during the past few months, is former U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's observation that "A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor." Roosevelt joined The Seamen's Church Board in 1908 and served until his death in April of 1945.



The timing of this edition of *The Lookout* places it on the cusp between our spring of Covid-19 and the arrival of summer, as we endeavor to find our equilibrium in this new normal into which we emerge. My message to you is that The Seamen's Church Institute is weathering this storm and remains focused on our mission of telling our story; caring for the material, mental and spiritual needs of mariners and seafarers; advocating on behalf of those most at-risk; and creating safer waterways through our maritime education and training. Within these pages, you will read stories that provide a verbal and visual snapshot of our mission and ministry over the past few months and of what lies ahead.

One of our core mission areas at SCI is Chaplaincy, or what we term pastoral care, for both international seafarers within the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, as well as for the mariners who serve along the 10,000 miles of our inland river system. Pastoral care means seeing the whole person and meeting his or her material, mental, and spiritual needs in the here and now. In many cases, this mission entails caring for the stranger. And it is a mission in which our five full-time Chaplains and 36 River Chaplain Associates excel.

Feasibility studies serve to make our waterways and commercial ports safer. Before a new bridge that traverses water can be built, a port expanded or dredged, or a new dock or pier built, a feasibility study is performed to ensure that safety parameters are evaluated and met, traffic flow is not negatively impacted, and safe navigation is maintained.

You will also discover two people, Hannah van Hemmen and John Eckstein, whose work in the wider maritime industry impacts their communities in positive ways. It is our connection to people such as Hannah and John, along with Bishop Dorsey McConnell of Pittsburgh, that has enriched and informed SCI and the work we do to serve mariners and seafarers both far and near.

My colleagues at SCI endeavored to gain experiences and insights from the past few months that allowed us to strategize and implement fresh new ways to deliver our services to an even wider community of mariners. Indeed, a smooth sea never created a skilled sailor. Embracing new models of maritime education, along with greater proficiency in digital and virtual chaplaincy, enhanced SCI's ability to operate in this new environment. I believe that our receptivity to innovation is paramount to SCI remaining a key organization in meeting the most crucial needs of mariners well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

On behalf of my Seamen's Church colleagues, volunteers and board, I wish you a safe and healthy summer and I thank you for your support of SCI and its mission.

Most faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mark", with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Reverend Mark S. Nestlehuett  
President & Executive Director

# IN THE DETAILS

"Episcopalians consider the whole person. We have always focused on the material and mental well-being of people in the here and now rather than their position in the afterlife. The Seamen's Church's historical imperative to better the life and working conditions of the mariner resonates with my understanding of the mission."

– The Rev'd Mark Nestlehutt

To the casual observer, Chaplain Cora Koehler, MDiv and Chaplain Michelle McWilliams, MSW, LSW's assistance in the delivery of one seafarer's musical equipment may seem like granular activity. Over months of recurrent ship visits in Port Newark, the two had cultivated a relationship with seafarer Beau. When he needed a camera stand and microphone to produce a music video, Cora and Michelle facilitated the mailing to SCI's International Seafarers' Center. They kept the packages safe under lock and key at the Center until Beau's return to the port.

Beau is an accomplished acoustic guitarist who met his future fiancé in a church choir in his hometown in the Philippines. They share a love of music, and often develop musical projects together. When he is at home, the two hold concerts together. In his free time aboard ship, Beau practices and records his voice and guitar along with drum and bass tracks he creates with phone apps. He then sends the digital files to his fiancé in the Philippines, who records herself singing along to the same songs. Transferring mega files of recordings requires extra mobile phone data because the ship's online network is too slow to accommodate such large files. (Beau and other seafarers can purchase additional data directly from the SCI pastoral team, and our welcome center in Port Newark provides complimentary high speed internet access on site.) The couple then edits all of the footage together. An example of their work may be viewed on their joint YouTube channel: [youtu.be/-Nm5a9-PitY](https://youtu.be/-Nm5a9-PitY). In addition, he has performed for his crew both solo and with another crew member.

Beau acknowledges that living in the Philippines can be difficult, so he and his fiancé must have each other's backs. "Trust is the key in our relationship," Beau writes, "And I think we are both Godfearing. We love music, our first meeting was in the choir, then we started singing and this cover [song] was one of our relationship goals."

Now that many of us have experienced the challenges of quarantine, there is a general recognition of the value of hobbies and outside interests in coping with isolation. Seclusion also magnifies the significance of remote activities that strengthen ties with loved ones, ties that help deflect feelings of hopelessness and depression when we find ourselves physically alone. Any support that chaplains provide for a mariner or seafarer's interests is ministry for their health, and the health and morale of the whole crew.

In some instances, a mariner's auxiliary pursuits can even reach beyond the health of a crew to positively influence a whole industry.

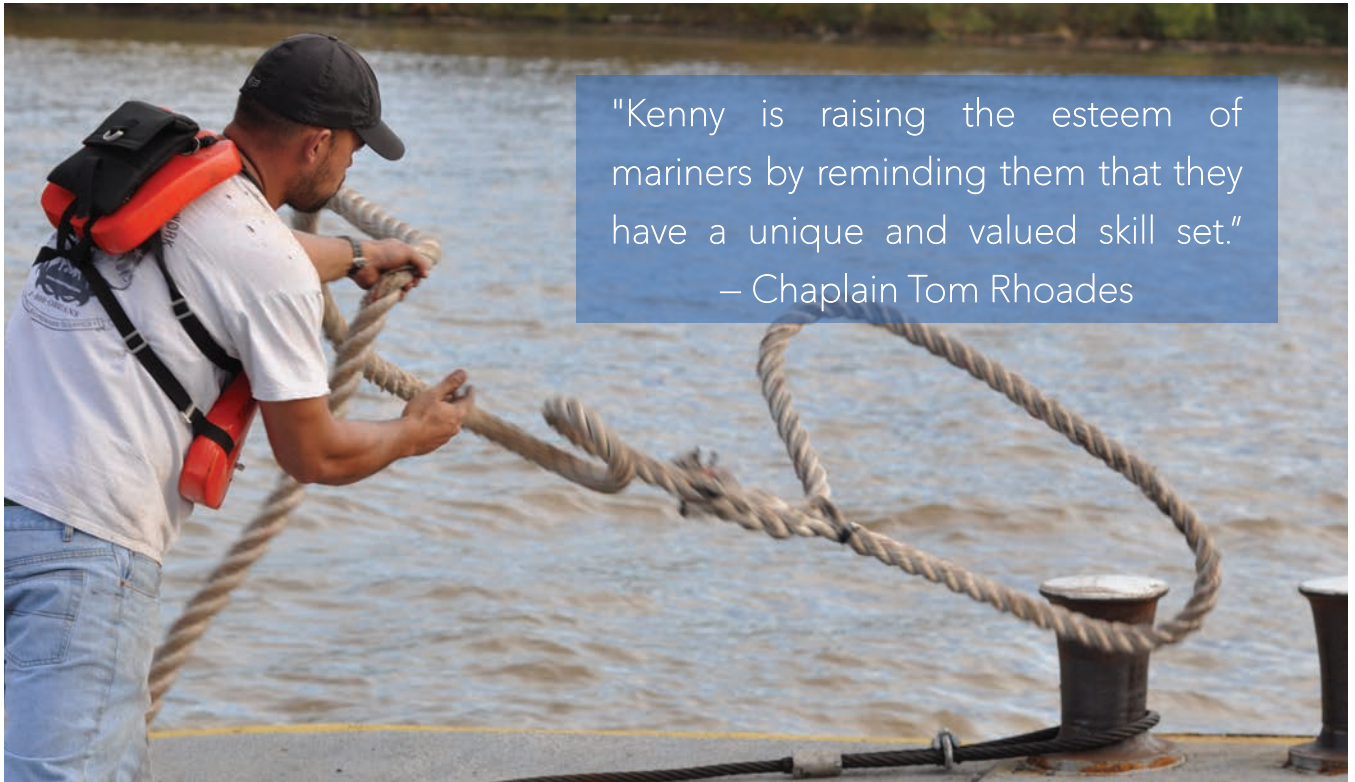
SCI Chaplain Tom Rhoades first encountered Capt. Kenny Brown and his innovative Maritime Throwdown project in its infancy at a RiverWorks Discovery's *Who Works the River* career event in New Orleans in 2018. The concept, originally designed to celebrate deckhand line-handling skills in the tradition of physical competitions for firemen and lumberjacks, has grown exponentially in a short period of time. Recently recognized in *The Waterways Journal* as a promotion of "safety training and professional excellence through a series of competitions designed to simulate real-life scenarios on the nation's inland waterways," Maritime





"Imagine going home in January of 2020 after being away from your family for nine months only to realize that your time with them would erase all economic opportunity."

– Chaplain Cora Koehler



"Kenny is raising the esteem of mariners by reminding them that they have a unique and valued skill set."

— Chaplain Tom Rhoades

Throwdown now includes three regional qualifying competitions. The finals are scheduled to be held at the Inland Marine Expo (IMX) in St. Louis in the fall with a grand prize of a new 4x4 all-terrain vehicle.

"I'm very blessed to have met Tom," says Kenny. "Since day one, he's always been an ear that I could unload thoughts and ideas. He listens without interruption, and when he responds, it is with a voice of reason and calm. Our conversations have been on many, many different subjects, and no matter what, when we got off the phone, I've always had a sense of clarity."

"I think I've become a morale coach and also a realist's voice in Kenny's life," says Tom. "I certainly don't have any decking skills to offer! It is not easy to fulfill large dreams. We talk from time to time, and he helps me do this ministry because he is so well-known and appreciated in our industry for how much he cares about others, and about the mariner's craft, especially decking skills."

Kenny's objective is to extend the goals he has for himself and his crews – "to leave the boat each time in the same condition they get on" – to deckhands everywhere by motivating them to hone their skills. His competitions encourage mariners to take pride in their work and engage in safe practices without shortcuts.

"Kenny is raising the esteem of mariners by reminding them that they have a unique and valued skill set. One thing I love about these events is that they get the mariners' families involved. Maritime Throwdowns are like rodeos for mariners where the spouse and kids get to see the mariner perform," says Tom.

"As for the Maritime Throwdown, Tom knows most all of my ideas, and always shoots me straight with his opinion, which I value because it's unbiased and from the heart," says Kenny ([maritimethrowdown.com](http://maritimethrowdown.com)).

Kenny is not resting on his laurels. As swiftly as the acclaim for Maritime Throwdown has grown, Kenny has an even greater vision for the future. He hopes to create a line-handling school or system modeled after SCI's Center for Maritime Training where companies would hire him to evaluate the skills of their deckhands in a similar fashion to captain and pilot testing on SCI's simulators.

"Our future isn't 100% clear, but I know one of our core values is to serve mariners from a mariners' point of view, and bringing back the pride to our skilled mariners is just the beginning of Maritime Throwdown," says Kenny. "I love the industry that has allowed me to provide for my family with a lifestyle that wouldn't have been possible for a small-town guy like myself."

Chaplain Kempton Baldrige and Chaplain Tom Rhoades are partnering on another project advocating for mental and physical health through outside interests. In an initiative to communicate virtually with mariners and others during the pandemic, Kempton and Tom had developed a series of videos under the title Pastoral Conversations that addressed Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and other issues around stress. The videos, disseminated on social media and email, received a widespread positive reception. Because of their initial success, Kempton and Tom now plan to extend that series, and produce another set with the help of a

volunteer media professional to raise the production value. They have invited mariners who also happen to be expert musicians, chefs, historians and others to perform and speak about their dreams and passions on the show. The interviews will be facilitated by the two chaplains.

"We would like our mariners to share some of the methods they employ to cope successfully with isolation, loneliness, and being away from their families," says Tom. "Physical distancing is a mariner's way of life, and many of us have developed remarkable ways to thrive amid separation."



While the early crisis days are over, the awareness that we are in a long-term emergency has started to settle into our bones and brains. I could not be prouder to represent part of Seamen's Church Institute's chaplain crisis response team in Port Newark, NJ. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Port Newark team quickly and creatively built an online network to serve seafarers more broadly and with greater compassion. Our connections with NAMMA and ISWAN directed us toward the importance of micro grants during this difficult time.

John R. contacted SCI in early April. I had never met him on board, but he reached out with a small financial request to help his family survive through the pandemic. All of the members of his family were in relatively good health and virus free, however they were facing a strict lockdown in India. John made his livelihood working on cruise ships, but was currently at home, on vacation, with his family during the pandemic. So much of my work is focused on caring for seafarers while they are on board, that I didn't even consider the implications of those who would be at home without work. Seafarers on board are facing

the reality of extended contracts with no end dates, but also receiving extended pay. At the same time, those who are homebound are facing the small funds they have in their pockets without any official opportunity to return to work. John's company shared that he would not be able to join another cruise ship until 2021. Imagine going home in January of 2020 after being away from your family for nine months only to realize that your time with them would erase all economic opportunity. The wide reach of the pandemic has become absolutely soul crushing. Clearly, SCI needed to extend our focus to homebound seafarers while still maintaining our care for those on board.

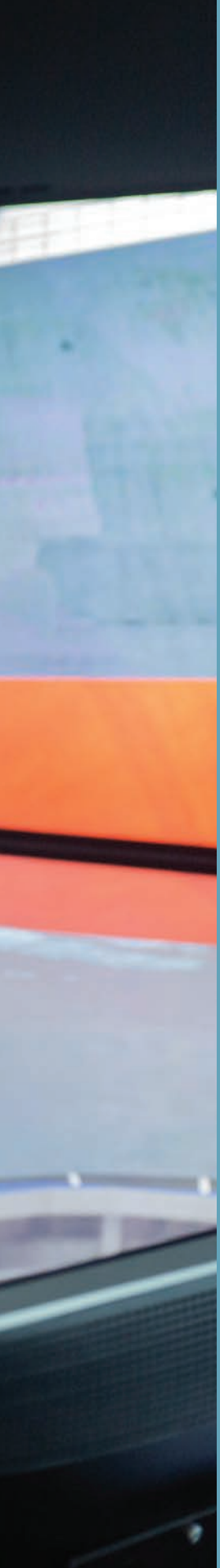
I worked very closely with John to collect and prepare an emergency grant application through ISWAN. Throughout the application process, John would anxiously check in hoping for any word of financial assistance at all. In the end, I – through Seamen's Church – was able to sponsor John in receiving a small survival amount that will be disbursed monthly for the next three months. We didn't fix John's financial situation, we didn't get him a job on another ship, but we did rise to John's immediate need. Through the help of ISWAN and SCI, John's family will have enough money to purchase food, prescription medications, and pay their water and electric bills for the next three months. It is my hope and prayer that John will be able to receive a job on a different type of ship before the end of the three months. As for now, I am grateful for the relationships, connections, and support SCI affords the chaplains in order to do good work and serve the seafarers during this unique moment in time.

– Chaplain Cora Koehler



# SMART DESIGN

F E A S I B I L I T Y S T U D I E S



In early 1999, a roundtable discussion group of SCI trainers, the President Casino on the Admiral leadership, and Coast Guard personnel shared a Thomas Edison moment. Mike Schafersman, Director of Safety and Facilities for the casinos, had been brainstorming with the others about a proposal to move one of their vessels, the Admiral, down river. How would that move effect traffic?

And then someone, (but as often happens in a robust conversation no one quite remembers who), asked, "Couldn't you move it on the simulator? "

Thus, the idea of the feasibility study was born. Employing the same sophisticated technology and expertise developed for mariner training, SCI's Center for Maritime Education now collaborates regularly with engineering firms to test designs for new bridges, port terminals and vessels.

"This is the second time I've used SCI simulators in the past year. It just goes to prove that this class of simulator with this level of professionalism is an essential tool in establishing proof of concept for the construction and design of any port facility anywhere in the world," says Capt. John Swann of Buckeye Partners.

## AN ELEGANT SOLUTION

An engineer's initial concept is run through a gamut of real world scenarios applying hundreds of variables with maneuvers performed by actual mariners. The mariners' feedback and other findings generated by SCI's leading edge simulator technology is incorporated into a modified design that is then subjected to another round of tests. In this way, design refinement can be established even before permit applications are submitted to the regulators for project approval.

SCI's feasibility studies elevate the validity of the findings by enabling mariner voices in the design process as well as alerting mariners to new structures prior to their development. The resulting vessels, port terminals and bridges are both more user-friendly and safer as a result of mariner input.

"Throughout a study, captains and pilots can test navigability through multiple situations considering variables such as medium or high flow currents, day or night situations, fully loaded or empty vessels, and the direction of approach in different scenarios. After each run, participating mariners are debriefed, providing feedback on the navigational safety of the scenario," says Capt. Stephen Polk, Director of CME.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The CME group took the opportunity presented during the COVID-19 break to repurpose a Transas classroom into a fifth bridge without interruption to training on SCI's Houston campus. Houston now has the firepower to provide a full ship's bridge navigation capability with up to four independent tugboats in a feasibility study. They can also accommodate a standard training class plus an assessment on Transas, while conducting a smaller feasibility study at the same time.



## BENEFITS TO MARINERS

1. Facilitates mariner input in the design process of their vessels and maritime infrastructure
2. Generates increased safety and usability in the mariner's workplace
3. Alerts mariners to the navigational impacts of a project before it is built, and allows for testing of mitigating strategies in a plan for completing evolutions safely within the new structures

## BENEFITS TO ENGINEERING FIRMS

1. Affirmation that design is correct while still in permit stage rather than fixing errors after construction
2. Test and refine innovative ideas without risk to people or the environment
3. Allows engineer to make informed design improvements
4. Reduces cost and mitigate disruption to the environment by refining broad stroke definitions provided in federal and international guidelines
5. Reduces timeline of regulatory approval process by testing with appropriate representatives of local pilot association, mariners, Port Authority and tug service providers.
6. Clarifies design by integrating user input

## BENEFITS TO CLIENTS

1. Assurance that project investment will meet safety and efficiency goals
2. New vessel prototypes can be robustly tested before any investment in construction
3. Optimizes project budget and timelines; for a terminal project in the Port of Corpus Christi, SCI's Feasibility Study saved a customer approximately \$10M in dredging costs
4. Because the studies identify the largest ship that will fit safely in an area, port clients will continue to reap financial benefits long after the completion of the project

## BENEFITS TO PORT AUTHORITIES AND REGULATORY AGENCIES

1. Instills confidence in understanding the impact of the project
  - a. Example: study helps demonstrate the regulatory requirement that a bridge will not be an unreasonable impediment to navigation.
  - b. Example: study may reduce dredging requirements from the "presumed requirements"
2. Confirms that important maritime stakeholders have provided their input through a formal process



## THE RT. REV. DORSEY W. M. MCCONNELL D. D.

BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

The Rt. Rev. Dorsey W. M. McConnell D. D.'s ordination as the 8th Bishop of Pittsburgh on October 20, 2012 was the culmination of a career of ministry that included Rector of the Church of the Epiphany in New York, and Church of the Redeemer in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts as well as positions on various committees and commissions in four dioceses. He was twice a deputy at General Conventions of the Episcopal Church. He holds a bachelor's degree from Yale College, was a Fulbright Scholar in Paris, and earned a Masters of Divinity cum laude from General Theological Seminary.

most courageous and devoted people working away from home for weeks and months at a time to make money for their families. I prayed with them, and for them. They were so grateful for the smallest attention. Just thinking of them now, brings tears to my eyes. Maybe I will do it again once I retire. In the course of my conversations with these seafarers, I would sometimes discover intolerable injustices – infringement of human rights or violation of maritime law. SCI would be on it immediately! We would go to bat for the seafarer and correct the situation. Those experiences were very powerful!"



**1981**



**2020**

Also, in the summer of 1981, Bishop Dorsey began an internship in Port Newark and Port Elizabeth with SCI.

"Having already served several parish placements, I was excited for the opportunity to try out my Spanish and French language skills, and I wanted to engage in industrial ministry," says Bishop Dorsey. "We would go on board the ships, and visit with officers and crew in their own context. I came to believe pretty early that the place for the gospel is in this world, not out of it. The essential nature of the church is to be embedded in places where people live and work. Your obligation is to everyone in the neighborhood, not just the people who walk in the church doors.

If you really want to meet and learn about extraordinary people, the ships are the place to go. I encountered the

Bishop McConnell's current field ministry mirrors the advocacy work he performed so long ago for seafarers.

"Two-thirds of the people I served in Port Newark were people of color. Now we find ourselves with an occasion to address systemic racism and practice reconciliation. In distributing water bottles to the protesters, I am meeting people of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds who are passionate, with a clear heart and a clear head. They do not know who I am, yet to a person they could not be more polite.

We have a long road ahead of us in dismantling racism and it will not be an easy one. The key to any ministry is to expect to be blessed by people rather than fixing them. I have faith that God has called us to this moment."



# HANNAH

## HANNAH VAN HEMMEN

Hannah can remember seeing SCI Chaplains on ships when “tagging along with her father” as a middle schooler while he conducted ship surveys. Hannah’s father Rik van Hemmen, a naval architect and marine engineer, is President and Senior Partner of Martin & Ottaway.

“From the very beginning, I was taught that SCI was the advocate for the seafarer,” says Hannah, who is currently employed with The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey as a Senior Environmental Programs Specialist. Her contact with chaplains as a child began a lifetime association with SCI. Depending upon the year, Hannah has volunteered for SCI’s Port Packing Days in New Jersey with the Women’s International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA) group since 2013, or on behalf of the Port Authority since 2017.

Before her employment with the Port Authority, Hannah worked as an engineer for her father’s firm. “I was in my mid-twenties and seriously campaigned to put a team together for SCI Mountain Challenge,” says Hannah, “but I couldn’t find any takers. At that time Martin & Ottaway was mostly older guys. Maybe I will have better luck gathering a 2021 team at the Port Authority.”

She did attend SCI’s 2019 Food Truck Fest held in the Center’s backyard. “I accidentally missed it in 2018 and was so disappointed that I blocked out the day on my calendar months way ahead of time for 2019. It’s a great event!”

***“Maintaining a sense of optimism – realistic and smart, but hoping for the best – is important for our collective psyche,” says Hannah.***

Hannah is descended from a long line of maritime professionals. Her grandfather Henk van Hemmen immigrated from Holland, when her father was 16 years old, to work for the US Salvage Association, after working as a sailing engineer and superintendent for the Holland America Line. Henk later became a partner and then purchased Martin & Ottaway in the 1990s with her father. Her great-grandfather was a Chief Engineer with Oranje

Line. Hannah's uncle is a maritime photographer who met her aunt, a maritime attorney, through her dad. Another aunt has worked for maritime museums and NGOs, and Hannah's sister is a marine biologist.

"My brother is the only one who escaped the maritime industry," says Hannah jokingly. "He worked for a time as a drilling engineer on offshore drilling rigs, and now he is practicing law, but not maritime law."

Hannah's four-generation heritage in the maritime industry has served her well in adjusting to the parameters of the pandemic. "Maintaining a sense of optimism – realistic and smart, but hoping for the best – is important for our collective psyche," says Hannah. "Change is hard, but inevitable and you have to be flexible in this new COVID world. We have really hard workers in the maritime industry, and I'm finding immersion in my work to be one of the most effective coping strategies."



Director of SCI's International Seafarers' Center, Timothy Wong values his membership in this Port business community distinguished by its hard-working and resilient members. "I first met Hannah at SCI's Food Truck Fest. It is our pleasure to serve our Port neighbors by hosting meetings and events at our welcome center. One of the disappointments of the quarantine is that we are not able to hold our summer event this year. We had planned to transform Food Truck Fest to a Lobsterfest. We were all so excited! The good news is that the event will be back, better than ever in 2021!" Tim serves on the Port of NY & NJ Council on Port Performance – Workforce Development Implementation Team led by Hilary McCarron, Manager of Port Policy & Planning for Port Authority of NY & NJ.





While the intent of *At the Helm* interviews featuring a major leader and innovator in the maritime industry is normally to explore concepts in management, company culture, and personal values, these are not normal times. Marquette Transportation Company CEO and Chairman of the family foundation, Ray & Kay Eckstein Charitable Trust, John Eckstein agreed to speak with us about the Power Up the River campaign, a novel initiative developed in response to the pandemic.

Since 1991, Mr. Eckstein has served as CEO of the transportation company founded by his late father in 1978, and headquartered in Paducah, Kentucky. Mr. Eckstein first fell in love with the industry while working as a deckhand on Marquette boats every summer while attending college. Over the 29 years that John has led Marquette Transportation Company, he has successfully built a leading provider of towing services with River, Gulf-Inland and Offshore divisions.

For the Power Up the River campaign, every gift donated online at [tinyurl.com/poweruptheriver](https://tinyurl.com/poweruptheriver) will be matched by the family foundation for an amount up to \$300,000. Donors may choose among five designated food banks that have been vetted by the foundation or have their gift distributed equally between the five. Mr. Eckstein has authorized an additional dollar-for-dollar donation by Marquette Transportation for their employees.

## 1. Who were some important role models for you?

My parents, Ray and Kay Eckstein, were very charitable. They both had big hearts for the sick and needy, and most importantly for poor and hungry mothers and children.

They were strong Catholics who believed in faith-based giving. Marquette Transportation is named after a French Jesuit priest. The principle of giving back is one that I have tried to instill in my children.

## 2. What is your view on the role of company culture?

The success of any company emanates from its people, and we have really good people at Marquette, most of whom are hard-working and community-driven.

## 3. What is the Charitable Trust's criteria for the organizations that they choose to support?

My four siblings and I work diligently to identify appropriate organizations to support. It would be so easy just to give to the big established non-profit organizations, and call it a day. But we actively research and seek out the grassroots, hands-on associations that reflect our values and those of our parents. We take the time to find charities that will give us "a big bang for our buck," meaning those non-profits with good expense ratios. Often a faith-based group and/or one with a strong volunteer base will demonstrate favorable programming expense ratios of 80-90%.

We do not require non-profits to undergo a lot of red tape to receive our donations, and we don't want our support to go to organizations that incur high administrative costs. By spending the time seeking quality, well-run non-profits, we can ensure that the majority of our dollars go directly to the people in need.

## 4. Why did you decide to place your support behind food banks now?

In the past, we have helped people who need immediate relief due to hurricanes, flooding or other emergencies. I was on a lot of calls, and I was shocked to hear what was happening to food banks due to COVID. There are so many people displaced from jobs that have never had to ask for help before in their life. I know that it is difficult to ask, but when you or your children are hungry, you have to. Food banks are on the front lines helping people, and they are operating under incredible strain right now.

The demand on the food banks has doubled or tripled at the same time that the food donation sources have been disrupted. Most food banks rely on donated food, and with the COVID crisis there has been a disruption in the supply chain across the country, dramatically reducing supply when demand for food has skyrocketed. This country is facing a severe food scarcity problem and the most vulnerable of us are suffering for it.

Many of the people we are trying to help live in cities along U.S. waterways. In my calls, I was immediately drawn to the Second Harvest Food Bank founded by a Catholic bishop and serving people in Greater New Orleans. The foundation proceeded to engage with Second Harvest and have

committed to a long term partnership that extends beyond this current campaign. After making this commitment to Second Harvest, we identified four additional food banks serving cities located along the inland rivers who might represent our employees' communities.



## 5. What are your views on philanthropy and how did you think of the idea of the Power Up the River initiative?

Because the river industry has been deemed essential, most of us have been able to maintain our income at a time when so many have found themselves out of work through no fault of their own.

We wanted to empower our mariners with the opportunity to give in a meaningful way. Any dollar donated online through the site [tinyurl.com/poweruptheriver](https://tinyurl.com/poweruptheriver) will be matched, and if you are a Marquette employee, your gift will be tripled. Any size gift is important. In my mind, those who have the ability to give more are no more valuable than those with donations of \$10 or \$20. Those gifts mean a lot, and they add up. With the two matches, a Marquette boat crew together might donate \$50 which translates to \$150 providing 600 meals to families in need.

I also hope to raise awareness around the food insecurity issue, and the significance of the food banks in facing that problem head-on. Nothing compares to the work those folks are doing to help people in our community.

## 6. What are your objectives for the campaign?

I am continuing to work toward the goal of giving the food banks as much of the \$300,000 as we can – that would mean at least \$600,000 of aid. I hope we get there.



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## WELLNESS CIRCLES



Nick Duncan, a Deckineer for Hines Furlong, messaged me last winter,

"Hey Tom, don't know if you remember. We rode the M/V Robert Green together at ACBL and I was just thinking at the time I was trying to quit smoking and you wrote me an essay about quitting and how hard it was and all the things we perceive as good when smoking. Even though I didn't quit then, I have quit now. It's been about 3 months and I just wanted to say thank you for trying to help."

I did not realize it at the time, but I was being a wellness advocate, a voice championing mariner well-being. But when Jamie Addison, Captain of Ingram's M/V Louisiana Star, asked: "What does SCI do for day-to-day stress?" The only answer I could think of was, "We train pilots and captains really well at our Centers for Maritime Education." I realized we need to champion mariner's voices by providing them opportunities and a means of reducing stress, deepening resilience, and improving their overall emotional, mental, spiritual and physical well-being. I am reminded of the fundamental importance of this effort every time SCI receives a call to respond to a Critical Incident.

Last October, Chaplain Associate Rev. Bob Coulson introduced me to a health and wellness organization called Living Compass that "[o]utfits individuals, families, congregations, and organizations with tools and training for the journey toward wellness and wholeness."

Living Compass trains Community Wellness Advocates who develop wellness centers in their communities. Our community is the maritime industry which includes our mariners, their families, and shoreside support. Currently, SCI is developing a virtual Maritime Wellness Center on Facebook and our Associates are facilitating Maritime Wellness Circles on Zoom. Our first circle in April received an enthusiastic reception. We are hoping to grow with more circles in the near future.

– The Rev. Thomas Rhoades