

FORT SCHUYLER

THE MAGAZINE FOR MARITIME COLLEGE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

WINTER 2025



Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association

Set Your Course with the M.E.B.A!

M.E.B.A. Headquarters

444 North Capitol St., NW #800
Washington D.C. 20001
Phone: (202) 638-5355
mebahq@mebaunion.org

NY/NJ Union Hall

37 Edward Hart Drive
Jersey City, NJ 07305
Phone: (201) 433-7700
newyork@mebaunion.org

Adam Vokac '00

M.E.B.A. President

Claudia Cimini '90

Executive V.P.

Roland "Rex" Rexha '04

Secretary-Treasurer

Jason Callahan '99

Atlantic Coast V.P.

Adam Smith '09

Gulf Coast V.P.

The M.E.B.A. Advantage: Highest paying jobs, most protective work rules, best benefits! Work hard & retire with full pension as early as age 41. Opportunities for Deep Sea, Shore-side and Inland jobs for both Engine and Deck.

Fulfill your commitment with the M.E.B.A.!

On Watch In Peace And War Since 1875

www.mebaunion.org

WINTER 2025 FORT SCHUYLER

THE MAGAZINE FOR MARITIME COLLEGE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

CONTENTS



4

FROM ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT
Steve Carbery '80 2

FROM MARITIME COLLEGE PRESIDENT
John A. Okon '91 3

Campus News 4

Regimental News 13

Athletic News 18



19

FEATURE
Aboard Empire State VII Awaits a New Era -
An Interview with John & Val 20

FEATURE
Favorite Stories, Memories and Photos
From Our Alumni 22

ADVANCEMENT NEWS
2024 Admiral Scholarship Dinner 26



20

FROM MARITIME FOUNDATION CHAIR
John Bree '78 28

Homecoming 2024 30

FEATURE
McAllister Towing Celebrated 160 Years
& Names Tug Simulator 34



34

ALUMNI
Class Notes 36

FEATURE
From the Sea to the Executive Suite
Dr. Bob Roncska '91 39

Where in the World 42

Chapter Gatherings 43

Ebb Tide 47

Upcoming Events 48



ON THE COVER:

Welcoming RADM John A. Okon '91
as President and Valerie Okon '92, as
First Lady of the College at the 2024
Admiral's Dinner.

EDITORS

Pamela Jones
Director, Marketing & Communications
Maritime College

Tamara Bonet-Cardona
Associate Director, Marketing &
Communications
Maritime College

Don Gale
Editor, Maritime College Alumni
Association

PHOTOGRAPHY

RADM John A. Okon
Don Gale
Tamara Bonet-Cardona
Cadet Matthew Bindas
Virna Wong

DESIGN

Virna Wong

CORRESPONDENCE IS WELCOME

Send your class notes to:
Fort Schuyler Magazine
Office of Marketing & Communications
SUNY Maritime College
6 Pennyfield Avenue
Throggs Neck, NY 10465

Email:
• communications@sunymaritime.edu
• editor@maritimecollegeaa.org

Fort Schuyler is the official magazine
of SUNY Maritime College (est. 1874)
and its Alumni Association
(est. 1903).

LETTER FROM STEVE CARBERY '80

President, Maritime College Alumni Association



MARITIME COLLEGE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

Stephen J. Carbery '80
President

Gregory Tuthill '86
1st Vice President

Leonard Imperial '01
2nd Vice President

Samuel Reilly '95
Treasurer

George Gacser '87
Assistant Treasurer

Justin Dela Cruz '20
Secretary

Board of Directors:

Ted Mason '57
Earl Baim '80
Jim McEnteggart '91
Mike Trotta '99
Seth Lucas '01
Vinod Melwani '02
Kevin Albertson '10
Richard (Rick) McClain '13
Michael Paturas '13

Dear Fellow Alumni and Maritime College Community,

It's deep into winter as I sit down to write my letter for the magazine. As I reflect on the last few months navigating your Alumni Association and being part of our great College, I am feeling confident about where we are as a community. Working with Admiral Okon has been nothing short of inspiring. His drive and determination to enhance our school's success, while prioritizing the well-being and success of the students have provided a valuable leadership lesson for all of us. He has delved into the College's finances, which has led him to make a few hard decisions; the good news is that we appear to be trending in the right direction. He has observed the Regiment firsthand and shown a strong interest in the success of students in both the Regiment of Cadets and the traditional curriculum pathways. The manner in which he sets a standard and then enforces it with a very personal and insightful touch, without being overbearing, is a leadership lesson in itself. His pride in his and our alma mater is outstanding. His firsthand involvement with me and Danielle Robinson, Dean of Admissions, with our PROP Program in helping alumni learn how to coach and advise potential students has been steadfast. As you can tell, I'm feeling pretty good about the forward direction in which we are all moving.

Our Alumni Association is growing, and we continue to enhance our services to our members. We had a very successful Ancient Mariner Golf Outing on Friday October 18th, 2024, attended by 127 golfers who enjoyed a beautiful day on the links, followed by a great luncheon and some terrific auction prizes. We then had a lot of fun at Homecoming on Saturday, October 19th, at the College. We celebrated anniversaries with our alumni whose Class years ended in '4 and '9 and especially honored our 50th Anniversary class, the great Class of 1974, who looked sharp marching into St. Mary's Pentagon. We are committed to expanding our Association's reach, and I'm pleased to report that our chapters are energized under the strong and unifying leadership of Seth Lucas '01. Our chapters in Tampa, South Florida, North Florida, Houston, Hampton Roads, and Greece are thriving, with our New Orleans chapter launching very soon. Additionally, our legacy chapters in the Delaware Valley, Philadelphia region, New Jersey, and Long Island are strong and active.

Bravo Zulu to all our chapter leaders and volunteers who continue to make this progress possible!

I would also like to thank all who showed their support at the 150th Anniversary Sesquicentennial Gala, where we celebrated the founding of the New York Nautical School in 1874 and the first cadets boarding the NYNS "St. Mary's" training ship on January 11th, 1875, at the foot of East 23rd Street in Manhattan. I would also like to note that our three speakers were well-received, and their speeches were enlightening. Thank you RADM Philip E. Sobeck, USN, Dr. Salvatore R. Mercogliano '89 and RADM John A. Okon '91. We look forward to seeing you all again at future events, which can be found on our website.

As always -

"Steaming ahead smartly and checking compasses frequently."

(Joe Gerson '47)

Faternally,

Stephen J. Carbery

Stephen J. Carbery '80
President, Maritime College Alumni Association



LETTER FROM JOHN A. OKON '91

President, SUNY Maritime College

Dear Maritime College Family,

After serving over three decades in the Navy, it is great to be back home at Maritime College! Valerie and I met at school and are excited to be back leading our alma mater and influencing the young lives that will carry on the 150 years of New York Maritime tradition we all know and love.

Appointed by the Board of Trustees on June 4th and now eight months back at Fort Schuyler, my passion is to forge adaptive and critical-thinking leaders ready for the evolving global maritime industry and ensure our institutional reputation remains first and foremost every day. It's our mission and our commitment to the entire Maritime Nation.

I remain firm in my resolve and focus on the priorities for the school, outlined in my first-day letter:

- Ensure our school's academic and applied learning programs are postured to develop leaders
- Grow enrollment
- Increase retention, graduation and license pass rates
- Increase fundraising to ensure we have the resources necessary to strengthen the college
- Ensure the school is fiscally sound and postured for the future
- Build a respectful culture that is open and safe for all

The first eight months we have seen some incredible highlights including; the return of Empire State VII from her maiden Summer Sea Term, our annual scholarship dinner raising a record high 1.25 million dollars, inducting Kevin Tokarski '84 and Dick Burke '72 into Heritage Hall, launching "Pay it Forward," our football team winning the 2024 Fusion Bowl, the beginning of a Regimental Reset, and the 150th celebration of USS St. Mary's entering New York Harbor on December 10, 1874 and arrival of our first 26 MUGs on January 11, 1875.

The next six months and the following years will come with new highlights that chart the course for the next 150 years, which will honor the past and build a legacy for the future, balancing innovation with tradition. In the spring semester, we will reinstitute a winter commencement and Athletics Hall of Fame, complete the full rebranding of the college with a new website, implement a Voyage Plan (strategic plan), and see Empire State VII off on Summer Sea Term 2025, which will take our school to New Orleans, Azores, and Norway. These are exciting times and the future seems bright.

Many experts have written about the bleak forecast of the landscape of higher education. I don't believe it. We are different, our industry is growing, and the call for our graduates has never been higher. We must deliver the future of Maritime, and our success relies on all of us working collectively. Please find time to give back to Maritime with your time, talent, and/or treasure. The students and I need your help.

Words cannot adequately express my deep and sincere appreciation for this opportunity and how humbled I am to be leading our College.

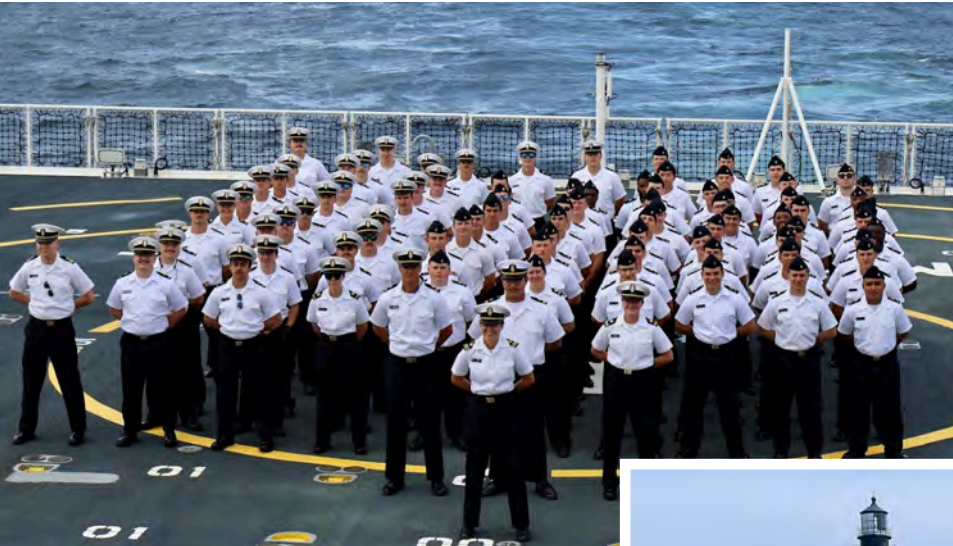
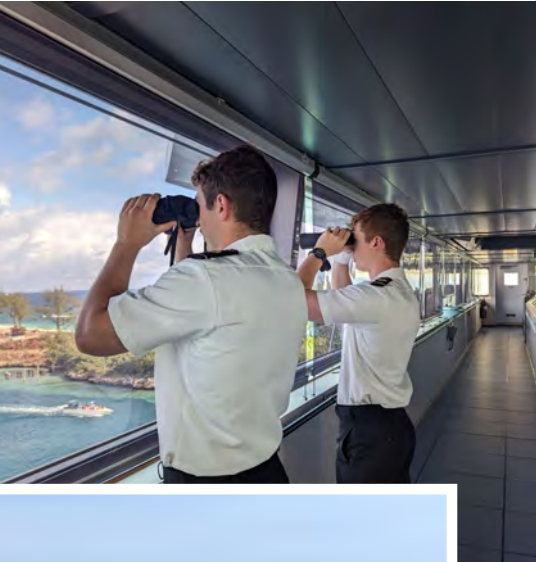
With Utmost Respect,

Rear Admiral John A. Okon USN (Ret.), USMS

CAMPUS NEWS

Summer Sea Term onboard Training Ship Empire State VII

The inaugural Summer Sea Term aboard the Training Ship Empire State VII, with 468 cadets on board, was a success! A comprehensive maritime learning experience naturally came with some challenges, including delays, rerouting, and port cancellations. Captain Morgan McManus, a member of the class of '92, prioritized the safety of his cadets above all else. This Summer Sea Term was the first time all ship systems were tested to their limits. When issues arose, the crew worked diligently to resolve them. Unfortunately, not all problems had easy solutions, which led to the cancellation of highly anticipated stops in Ponta Delgada, Azores; Portsmouth, UK; and Bergen, Norway. However, Maritime College and Captain McManus worked hard to secure alternative ports, allowing the ship to visit Nassau, Bahamas; Port Canaveral, Florida; Portland, Maine; and St. George, Bermuda. Throughout the day, the cadets remained busy, rotating through various roles, standing watch, and attending classes. At night, they gathered their camping chairs to relax on the flight deck at the stern of the ship. ■



Summer Sea Term Highlights

With advancements in technology and industry standards aboard the Empire State VII, students had ample opportunities to enhance their learning experience. They engaged in activities such as operating cranes, chipping and painting, and using state-of-the-art simulators, making the learning process continuous and dynamic. The Empire State VII made its first foreign port of call in Nassau, Bahamas, which is home to eight Maritime cadets. During the visit, the ship was open for public tours, giving young Bahamians the chance to see a maritime training vessel up close,

interact with cadets, and ask questions to help them consider their professional career paths. The Bahamas Minister of Energy and Transport, JoBeth Coleby-Davis, toured the vessel and met with the “well-disciplined and knowledgeable cadets” on board. She encouraged them in their pursuits within the maritime industry and urged them to “make the best of this significant opportunity.” This initiative was made possible through the support of the Organization of Black Maritime Graduates (OBMG) and the SUNY Maritime College Alumni Association. ■



Commemorating 150th Anniversary of the Commissioning of the St. Mary's

The Maritime community gathered on December 10, 2024, to celebrate an extraordinary milestone – **the 150th Anniversary of the commissioning of the St. Mary's**, a beacon of hope and tradition that would transpire into the legacy we know today as Maritime College.

Our hearts filled with pride during this year's celebration, where the Regiment of Cadets and the Maritime community, including elected officials, alumni, family, and friends, gathered for a heartfelt pier formation, honoring the rich legacy of our beloved first training ship. Students joined alumni from all generations, united in reverence and admiration, admiring the beauty of the Empire State VII, adorned in a tribute to the TS St. Mary's. This was a beautiful reminder of our shared journey and the dreams that continue to inspire us all. ■



This is MUG-O-Ween

MUG-O-Ween 2024 was a vibrant celebration made possible by the enthusiastic participation of the six sections of MUGs, alongside the dedicated support of the Maritime Activities and Programs (MAP) Club. Each section showcased its creativity by collaborating to create unique themes, resulting in eye-catching costumes and transforming their respective residential halls into lively, themed environments.

The diverse themes included the whimsical world of "Shrek," the adventurous universe

of "Toy Story," the rugged charm of the Wild West, the mysterious depths of the Deep Sea, the glitz and glamour of Casino Night, and even the prehistoric era. These imaginative concepts helped create a colorful and lively atmosphere that impressed the IDO leadership attending the festivities.

To enhance the excitement, MAP organized a Costume Contest, where participants proudly displayed their elaborate outfits in a bid for recognition and prizes. The event

also featured a delightful crepe station serving delicious treats and a massive 115-foot inflatable obstacle course that added an element of adventure for everyone. Additionally, a pie-eating contest provided a fun and messy challenge, resulting in laughter and cheers from the crowd.

Overall, MUG-O-Ween was a fantastic event that fostered community spirit and created lasting memories for all who participated or came out to support this wonderful celebration. ■



Hero Labradors and The Hero Academy Offer Fur Therapy

Finals week can be a stressful time for many students. To help alleviate this stress, Maritime College partnered with the Hero Academy and Hero Labrador to offer 'Fur Therapy.' Research from leading institutions and the American Heart Association has shown that therapy dogs can significantly enhance emotional and mental well-being by reducing stress hormones and blood pressure. Rear Admiral Okon, along with his wife,



Valerie Okon, Class of '92, faculty, and staff, joined our students for an afternoon of social interaction with several adorable puppies. ■

Toys For Tots - Semper Fi Society



The Sempre Fi Society joined forces with the Student Veterans Association to support the Toys For Tots program by launching a campus-wide toy collection initiative. They strategically placed drop-off boxes in the lobbies of all residential halls and in various common spaces throughout the campus. This accessible setup encouraged students, faculty, and staff to contribute by donating new, unwrapped toys. By participating in this effort, we helped brighten the holiday season for children in need and strengthened our commitment to community service. Together, we made a meaningful impact and helped ensure that children in our community had a gift to open during the holidays. ■






Proudly supporting
SUNY Maritime

Actively hiring all
positions!



Apply Here



Why Choose
Kirby

CAMPUS NEWS

Colors of the World Fashion Extravaganza Fashion Show

The SUNY Maritime College Cultural Club hosted its annual Fashion Show in November. This year's event was well-attended, despite the inclement weather. More than 200 guests filled Reisenberg Gym to watch their peers, friends, and family walk the runway while raising money for the Cultural Club.

The theme for this year's show was "Colors of the World Fashion Extravaganza," which highlighted a diverse array of fashions modeled by students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni. The Fall 2024 fashions were provided by various



local designers.

The event also featured RADM John Okon and Mrs. Valerie Okon, who were this year's showstoppers! RADM Okon donned his signature cardinal suit with Maritime College's logo displayed throughout the interior of his jacket, a tribute to his love and investment in Maritime College.

The Cultural Club's annual Fashion Show is organized under the guidance of Ms. Patricia Norman of Student Affairs and serves as the club's annual fundraiser. ■



Haugland Marine Service salutes the students and faculty of SUNY Maritime, and their dedication to our country and the maritime industry alike.

HMS HAUGLAND
MARINE SERVICE

A HAUGLAND company

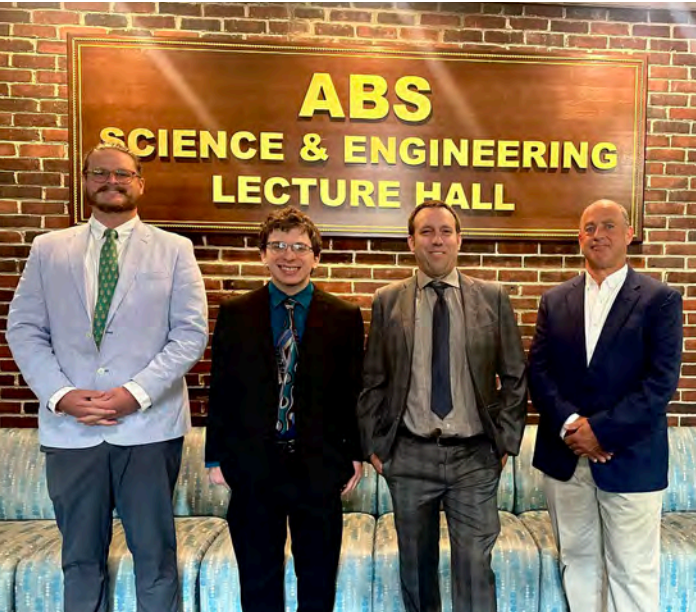
For employment opportunities, please visit hauglandgroup.us

info@hauglandllc.com | 516.336.6720
336 South Service Road, Melville, New York



Maritime College Naval Architecture Design Team wins 1st Place in International Ship Design Competition

The Maritime College Naval Architecture Amaryllis Design Team secured first place in the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers (SNAME) Lisnyk International Ship Design competition. The team, comprised of current students Thomas Giannuzzi and James Sullivan, and 2024 alumni Lukas Bridgeman and Jared Smith, received guidance from faculty advisor Professor Charles Munsch and unwavering support from Professors David Gerr, and former Professor Richard Burke, Hariharan Balasubramanian, and Joseph Breglia. A special Acknowledgment goes to Professor David Gerr for his proficiency in nautical computer design software and his willingness to impart his expertise generously.



SNAME's flagship event is the Lisnyk International Ship Design Competition, held annually to provide students and young professionals with the opportunity to present their innovative ship designs.

The award-winning design by the Maritime College team is a roll-on/roll-off passenger ferry specifically tailored for short trips without requiring staterooms. It can accommodate 650 passengers and offers 525 lane-meters of vehicle capacity. This versatile vessel is designed for various routes, with a proposed route between Port Angeles, Washington, and Victoria, British Columbia, and is currently served by the Black Ferry Line's MV Coho. One of its main objectives was to meet the International Maritime Organization's Phase III Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) without relying on less accessible fuels such as LNG or methanol. By optimizing hull design, propulsion systems, and

overall efficiency, the ferry aims to meet EEDI carbon reduction targets while using readily available marine diesel.

This design minimizes wave-making resistance at the intended speed, ensuring stability with lower displacement. It results in reduced frictional resistance and a lower Froude number, as opposed to traditional monohulls or high-speed catamarans. During docking, power from two of the four main engines is redirected to shaft generators to operate bow thrusters. Additionally, engine heat from exhaust and coolant is salvaged in waste heat chillers for passenger climate control. These innovative system designs enable the use of less powerful generators, contributing to a reduced EEDI index in line with Phase III targets.

On behalf of the Maritime College community, we extend our sincerest congratulations to the Amaryllis Design Team. This is a highly coveted recognition as emerging engineers. We look forward to seeing the incredible work you all do in your careers. ■

Steam Day

In November, the Maritime College Waterfront hosted its Fall STEAM Day of Exploration. Young scholars from the community engaged in activities centered on science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. As the STEM and STEAM curriculum expands, Maritime College continues to support prospective students and future mariners with hands-on learning experiences and extracurricular activities. The goal of these programs is to engage students through workshops and seminars, providing an additional layer of academic development through applied learning. ■



2025 and Beyond: Emerging Issues in the Maritime Industry
A Symposium on Digitalization, BBNJ Treaty and Arbitration

On October 25, 2024, Maritime College's School of Business, Science, and Humanities, along with the Association of Ship Brokers and Agents (ASBA), hosted an engaging symposium titled "2025 and Beyond: Emerging Issues in Maritime Business" at the Maritime Academic Center.

The audience learned about the increasing significance of AI in the maritime industry and supply chains from Prof. Surya Pathak and Ronaan Tomer. Ellen Pikitch and Prof. Jim Maloney eloquently discussed the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ) and its implications for shipping over the next decade. Additionally, Bob Meehan, Muge Anbar-Kontakis, and Jeff Weiss explored the nuances of emerging



trends in mediation and arbitration worldwide. The sessions were enlightening, featuring lively discussions and questions from the audience after each presentation. We would like to extend our gratitude to the speakers, panelists, and everyone who joined us at our event. ■

Maritime College Chapter For The National Society Black Engineers (NSBE) Hosts Regional Zone Conference

The NSBE (National Society of Black Engineers) Metro/Long Island Zone Conference held at Maritime College on Saturday, November 2, brought together engineering students and professionals to foster knowledge exchange, professional growth, and academic competition. Attendees included representatives from SUNY Farmingdale and Cooper Union.

A notable feature of the conference was a distinguished presentation delivered by Mr. Zephaniah Odidika, the Chair of the Metro/Long Island Zone.

During this session, he honored Admiral John Okon with a plaque, recognizing his significant support for the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) at Maritime and throughout the zone. The plaque served as a formal expression of gratitude for Admiral Okon's impactful contributions, reading:

"For Inspiring Maritime Innovation and Engineering Excellence with a deep appreciation for his distinguished service and commitment to advancing maritime technology and engineering. As a leader in naval operations, he has been a driving force behind innovations that safeguard our seas and support global naval initiatives."

Admiral Okon addressed attendees, highlighting the importance of resilience, excellence, and innovative problem-solving in maritime engineering and sciences. His remarks aimed to inspire

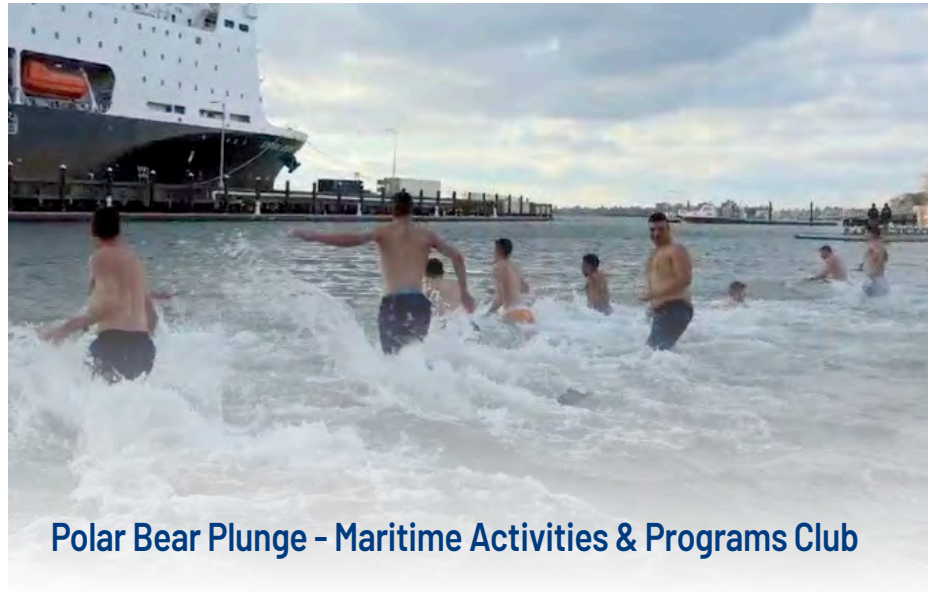
future engineers to push the boundaries of the field and strongly encourage them to consider Maritime College for their graduate studies.

The conference was led by Maritime College NSBE Chapter President Mr. Christopher Felder and Vice President Ms. Rachael Stephenson. It also featured a spirited Academic Tech Bowl, where Maritime College claimed a victory over SUNY Farmingdale. This win secures SUNY Maritime a "bye" to the Regional Academic Tech Bowl at the Fall Regional Conference in Stamford, Connecticut.

To promote professional development, workshops on topics like cybersecurity, financial literacy, Robert's Rules of Order, and marine engineering were held throughout the day. Attendees also toured Maritime's newest training vessel, the Empire State VII, providing a hands-on experience with the latest advancements in engineering training.

NSBE Professional members from Northern New Jersey and New York City also attended, enriching the conference by sharing their industry experience and expertise, which proved invaluable for students aspiring to excel in their fields. This event marked a successful gathering of aspiring engineers and leaders, strengthening the connections and skills essential for innovation in Maritime and engineering fields. ■

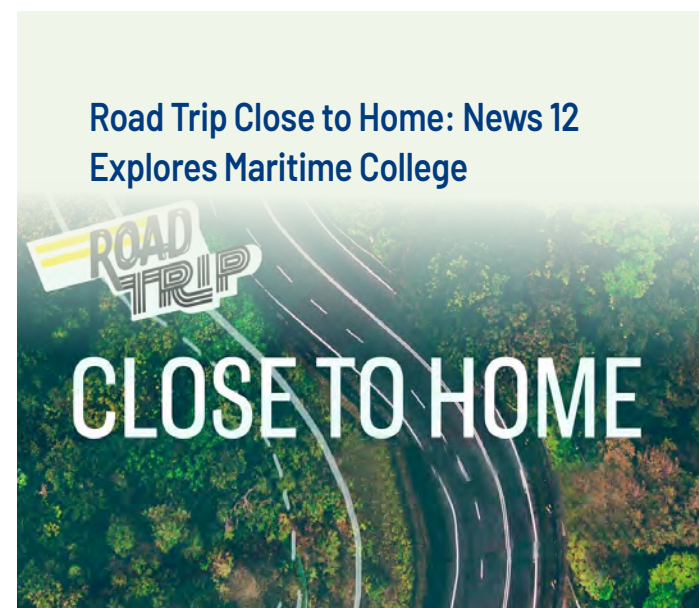




Polar Bear Plunge - Maritime Activities & Programs Club



The Maritime Activities and Programs (MAP) Club put on their annual polar bear plunge on December 3rd at the waterfront. The temperature was 40°F with 10 mph winds coming right off the water, which was 45°F. To celebrate a successful event, donuts and hot chocolate were provided by the Student Government Association. The club uses this event to sell sweatshirts with a unique design created every year to help fund events for the spring semester. During the academic semester, MAP puts on different events to help get students out of their rooms and take a break from studying by hosting trivia nights, bingo nights, backyard game competitions, spa days, food-eating competitions, etc. all for the benefit of Maritime College students. ■



The Bronx has many incredible sights, including the historic Maritime College Campus. This year, News 12 The Bronx visited our campus on their "Road Trip Close to Home" to learn about our campus, the College's offerings, and why we are the "Peninsula of Opportunity."

As a prestigious maritime institution, we take great pride in providing a robust experience for our students. Viewers from across the tri-state area had an opportunity to learn about Maritime College and meet RADM John Okon and Regimental Commander 1/C Cadet Erik Areklett.

In addition to hearing from RADM Okon and Cadet Areklett, viewers got an inside look at the Maritime Industry Museum. We are excited to see the impact Maritime College is making on our communities and look forward to seeing our hidden gem transform into the crowned jewel of New York City! ■

INDOC 2024 - Setting A New Standard



This year's INDOC Class and IDO Staff implemented a new standard set by Maritime College President RADM John Okon '91, emphasizing the importance of excelling in the basics, fostering self-discipline, and instilling pride. Under this leadership, the INDOC Training Program refined its processes to evaluate training methods rooted in tradition while ensuring that Mariners Under Guidance (MUGs) meet industry standards.

Throughout the training, MUGs were introduced to various "Anchor Chains" —the key departments and offices on campus. This introduction ensured they became familiar with their

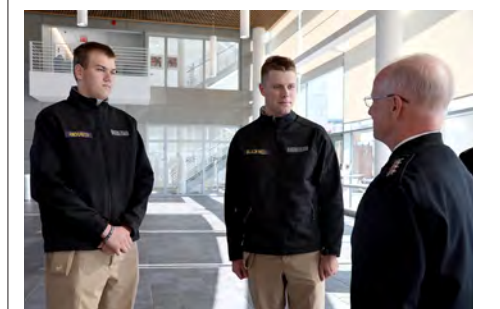
locations, key contacts, and the range of services provided by Maritime College to support them during their journey. This foundational knowledge is essential for helping MUGs stay grounded and connected to the campus community.

For the first time since the departure of the EMPIRE STATE VI, MUGs had the unique opportunity to live onboard the T.S. EMPIRE STATE VII for part of their INDOC experience. This exercise provided an invaluable introduction to life at sea, giving MUGs insight into some responsibilities they will shoulder during their future Summer Sea Term. In addition to the onboard experience, MUGs completed the Vessel Personnel with Designated Security Duties (VPDSD) training, which is essential for understanding and fulfilling the security responsibilities aboard the T.S. EMPIRE STATE VII. ■



Maritime Leaders: Military Sealift Command

Admiral Daryl Caudle, Commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command, visited Fort Schuyler to engage with students and leadership. Hosted by Chief of Staff CAPT Thomas Murphy, he toured Maritime's training simulators, engineering labs, and the training ship Empire State VII, which can accommodate up to 1,000 people in times of disaster. Admiral Caudle also met with the Regiment of Cadets to talk about the Military Sealift Command and various career opportunities available to them, highlighting the importance of such visits in shaping future mariners. ■



Epic Docking Maneuvers Bring TS Empire State VII to Olivet Pier as the Maritime College Alumni Association and the Maritime Family Greet Her Return From Summer Sea Term



L-r: Current and Past (1999-2001) MCAA President Steve Carbery, Past President (2019) Jennifer Barnes Hayes, and Maritime College Council President Tom Higgins, aboard the Empire State VII from New York Harbor to campus.



Jennifer Barnes Hayes accompanies Deborah Gallagher Kravchuk '78 aboard Empire State VII, along the East River.



L-r: Bob Weaver '69 and his son, Paul Weaver '92.

MCAA President Stephen Carbery '80 and College Council President Tom Higgins '80, along with other Maritime alumni and honored guests were invited aboard Training Ship Empire State VII as she returned from her first Summer Sea Term cruise on August 6, 2024. Having boarded at the Port of New York with the Sandy Hook Pilots, Steve recounts the experience of witnessing the expert ship handling by Training Ship Master Captain Morgan McManus '92:

"As our uniformed cadets manned her rails and with a small group of Sandy Hook Pilots and VIPs on her bridge, I couldn't help but feel pride in our Maritime traditions being carried forth. Capping off TSES VII's arrival was a masterful stern-around docking maneuver executed by our own Captain Morgan McManus '92 that was nothing

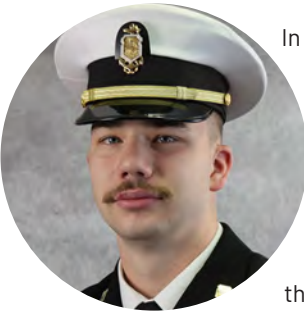
short of stellar. With Captain Tim Ferrie '78, President of Sandy Hook Pilots Association and eleven other Sandy Hook docking pilots, one McAllister pilot, Admiral Okon, and several VIPs on the bridge, plus two McAllister tugs shadowing to assist, Captain McManus brought the ship nose-on to the pier, swung the stern around to starboard, and brought her right up alongside the bulkhead with barely a shudder. It was a masterful thing to witness. Bravo Zulu, Skipper!"

Meanwhile, the MCAA strategically deployed our kiosk on campus with an osprey's eye view of Olivet Pier to observe TSES VII's arrival. We were pleased that many alumni who had turned out to greet the ship and her ambitious cadets took a few moments to stop by and exchange their goings-on with us! ■



L-r: MCAA Director of Operations Saira Yoo, MCAA Executive Director Maggy Williams Giunco, First Lady Valerie Gessner Okon '92, President RADM John Okon '91, MCAA Assistant Treasurer George Gacser '87, and MCAA Board Member and Magazine Committee Chair Ted Mason '57.

Meet the Regimental Commander 1/C Cadet Erik Areklett



In September, 1/C Deck **Cadet Erik Areklett** was appointed Regimental Commander, Regiment of Cadets for the 2024-2025 academic year. A

fierce leader that is no stranger to hard work, Areklett stepped into the position with a mission to not only be a leader among his Regimental peers, but a voice for students across the Maritime College campus.

Cadet Areklett hails from Redding, Connecticut, and is currently studying International Transportation and Trade while working towards obtaining a United States Coast Guard 3rd Mate Unlimited Deck License. His path to Maritime College was quite unconventional; he became

interested in the college after catching a glimpse of the T.S. Empire State VI while driving to visit family. After researching Maritime College's programs and their graduation outcomes, he pursued this unique opportunity.

"The Regiment of Cadets develops strong leaders and skilled mariners, playing a crucial role in shaping Cadets at Fort Schuyler. This continues the Maritime College legacy of being "First and Foremost" among all maritime institutions. It is a true honor to serve as the Regimental Commander alongside the incredible leadership team within the Regiment."

Upon graduation, Areklett looks forward to sailing along the West Coast and joining the United States Merchant Marine Fleet to carry out his obligation as a Strategic Sealift Officer. His ultimate career goal is to become a ship broker, which will lead him toward his aspiration of becoming a vessel

owner. He hopes to inspire others not only to be strong leaders, but good humans and mariners. He always remembers, "The Sea is Selective." ■



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SUNY MARITIME COLLEGE
ON 150 YEARS OF SERVICE

SMPE is an organization to develop cooperative spirit and friendship among members, to be of mutual assistance to each other, and to promote and protect the interest and welfare of the american Merchant Marine.

THE SOCIETY OF MARINE PORT ENGINEERS of New York, New York Inc.
PO BOX 369, EATONTOWN, NJ 07724
Phone (732) 389-2246
www.smpe.org

REGIMENTAL NEWS

Honoring Our Veterans

Maritime College takes great pride in honoring its veterans and active duty personnel, especially on Veterans Day. This year, the Regiment of Cadets participated in various activities to honor our nation's heroes, including marching in the New York City Veterans Day Parade. On campus, our Cadets and students honor our veterans through longstanding traditions, including the Veterans Day Formation and the Annual Car Show, hosted by the Automotive Club.



The Maritime community has a unique way of celebrating and preserving our history, and we are thankful to see our younger generations continue the legacies established by our esteemed alumni. We are, first and foremost, a community anchored in tradition and led by leaders. ■



This Day In History

Nearly 34 years ago, the Maritime College NROTC Unit joined the late Nassau County Executive, Tom Gulotta, marching alongside veterans in the Nassau County Salute to Veterans Parade. Proudly leading the Midshipman Battalion was MIDN 1/C John A. Okon, who is now Rear Admiral John Okon, USN (Ret.), and the current President of Maritime College. Maritime College Chief of Staff, CAPT Thomas Murphy '93 also marched alongside RADM Okon and Mr. Gulotta, making this year's march in NYC a full-circle moment. ■



MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND WANTS YOUR SKILLS

Your years at SUNY Maritime College and your time at sea have honed your skills, making you a perfect fit for Military Sealift Command. We offer both full-time and part-time job opportunities for our licensed CIVMARs. Build your resume sailing on varied platforms and continue to serve your country. It's time to Take Command of Your Career®.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR OPEN POSITIONS AND JOB BENEFITS.

- CAREER ADVANCEMENT
- JOB SECURITY
- PAID LEAVE
- WORLD TRAVEL

MSC, a department of the Navy, is crucial to U.S. military operations worldwide. MSC provides on-time logistics, strategic sealift, as well as specialized missions anywhere in the world, in contested or uncontested environments. We hire civil service mariners—CIVMARs as we call them—for at-sea positions on the ships in our growing fleet.



MSC is an equal opportunity employer and a drug-free workplace.

SEALIFTCOMMAND.COM · 1-877-JOBS-MSC · CIVMAR@SEALIFTCOMMAND.COM

Fall 2024 Athletic Highlights

- Women's soccer player Kiera Ford tied for the conference lead with 14 goals and was named First Team All-Skyline.
- The men's soccer team went unbeaten at home for the first time in program history, tallied its most wins since 2021, and finished with a winning record for the first time since 2019.
- The women's cross-country squad placed second at the Skyline Championships and had four runners selected Second Team All-Skyline.
- Rowers Jack Pavelka & Vladislav Moulds won the men's double sculls at the Frostbite Regatta on Mercer Lake in New Jersey.
- Domenick Ribaudo (men's cross country), Aisling Donnelly (women's cross country), Jude Callan (men's soccer), Annaliese Etienne (women's soccer) and Mikaela Thiel (women's volleyball) represented their sports on the Fall 2024 Skyline All-Sportsmanship Team.
- Dmarco Barnes was introduced as the Interim Head Coach of men's basketball. ■



Coach Jamel Ramsay Leads Maritime Football to All-NEWMAC Recognition in First Season as Head Coach



Jamel Ramsay was named Head Coach of the Maritime College football program in March 2024. He joined the Privateers after a successful seven-year stint at Nassau Community College, where he never had a losing season and led the Lions to three postseason appearances. Ramsay compiled a 37-23 record during his tenure at Nassau. More than 300 student-athletes who played for Ramsay at Nassau moved on to NCAA Division I, II, or III programs. He also mentored five coaches who continued their careers at the NCAA Division I level. A 2008 graduate of Long Island University-C.W. Post campus, Ramsay began his college career as a wide receiver before moving to the defensive side of the ball, where he became a starting cornerback and team captain. He appeared in two NCAA Division II Tournaments with the Pioneers and was a second-team all-conference selection as a senior in 2007. Ramsay then played two seasons of arena football with the Albany Firebirds.

After his first season at the helm of the Privateers, Coach Ramsay and his staff were voted NEWMAC Football Coaching Staff of the Year. He led the team to an 8-3 overall record, defeating schools like

Massachusetts Maritime, the US Coast Guard Academy, Norwich University, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He also led the team to a 5-2 record in conference play, won the third straight Chowder Bowl against Massachusetts Maritime, and earned a bid to the inaugural Fusion Bowl, where the Privateers beat out the Husson University Eagles in a thrilling 21-14 victory. Coach Ramsay has changed the culture that surrounds the Privateers football team, resulting in 8 of his players receiving All-NEWMAC recognition (Steven Stassi, Devin Cline, Luke Caliendo, Vinny Fundaro, Ian Derda, Kevin Walter, Jack Kellner, and Kevin Wu). Congratulations, Coach Ramsay and team, on the outstanding season! ■



Maritime College Privateers Host Inaugural Fusion Bowl, Beating Husson Eagles 21-14

The Maritime College football team is officially the 2024 Fusion Bowl Champions! In a thrilling comeback, the Privateers (8-3) overcame a 14-7 halftime deficit to claim their first-ever postseason victory, toppling Husson University (6-5) 21-14 at Reinhart Field on Saturday, November 23, 2024. Devin Cline (Miller Place, NY) earned "Most Valuable Player" honors after rushing for a school-record 233 yards on 33 carries, leading his team to an unforgettable victory.

Maritime wasted no time, striking first with a 75-yard, 10-play drive that ended with Mario Agyen (Bronx, NY) scoring the first-ever touchdown in Fusion Bowl history, a 12-yard run that set the tone for the game.

The wind was fierce in the third quarter, but Maritime's defense stood strong, stifling Husson's momentum. A crucial 16-play, 78-yard drive ended with a 15-yard touchdown pass from Steven Stassi (East Islip, NY) to Luke Caliendo (North Babylon, NY), tying the game at 14-14.

In the fourth quarter, with the game on the

line, Jack Kellner (Seaford, NY) stepped up with an interception that set up the game-winning drive. Stassi then found Ian Derda (Guilford, CT) for a six-yard touchdown, marking his 53rd career touchdown pass—a new program record.



Husson tried to rally in the final moments, but their drive stalled at the Maritime 46-yard line. Cline sealed the win with two powerful runs, intentionally stopping just short of the end zone to allow Stassi to run out the clock. Stassi finished 14-for-29 passing for 132 yards and two touchdowns. Caliendo hauled in five catches for 45 yards, while Derda contributed four catches for 43 yards and the game-winning touchdown. Cline's record-breaking performance made history for the

Privateers, further cementing his place in the program's legacy.

Maritime dominated time of possession, controlling the ball for over 38 minutes and running 79 total offensive plays to Husson's 44. Defensively, Dennis Matich (Floral Park, NY) led the charge with nine tackles, while Timothy added four solo stops and a crucial fumble recovery.

This championship win is a monumental moment for Maritime, marking their first bowl appearance in six years, their first postseason home game, and the eighth win of the season—tying their best record since a 9-2 finish in 2017.

Under Head Coach Jamel Ramsay, the team has shown incredible growth, fueled by a shift in mindset and leadership from both coaches and players. This unforgettable season sets the stage for an even more thrilling 2025 campaign, and we can't wait to see what's next for the Privateers! ■

Maritime Privateers Featured in College Football Hall of Fame Exhibit: "From the Gridiron to the Battlefield"

The College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta, GA has reopened, featuring its newest exhibit: "From the Gridiron to the Battlefield." The exhibit showcases artifacts from the five US Service Academies, the five Senior Military Colleges that play football, and the three US Maritime Academies - including Maritime College!

As a piece of American history, a SUNY Maritime helmet has been donated to this display. As the first maritime school in the country, it is an honor to be a part of this historical moment. ■



THE PENINSULA OF OPPORTUNITY AWAITS A NEW ERA FOR MARITIME COLLEGE

An interview with

John and Val

RADM John Okon and his wife Valerie sat down with Pamela Jones, Director of Marketing & Communications to talk about their return to Fort Schuyler, RADM Okon's vision for Maritime College, and living "First and Foremost"



PAMELA JONES

What was it about the position of President of Maritime College that made you want to apply and how did Val feel about it?

J It was about giving back and leading the institution that brought us together and gave us the opportunities to do something bigger than I could ever imagine. As I finished up three decades with the Navy I thought hard about how I want to spend the next 5-10 years and it quickly came down to finding my purpose. Something that would continue to energize me and get me out of bed. The thing that gave me a deep sense of purpose in the Navy was leading and mentoring Sailor and civilians, lifting up those around me to be better people for having served together. So, as I contemplated 'what would I do after the Navy?' I kept coming back to Maritime and shaping young hearts and minds, just as Admiral Miller, Captain Desimone and Harold Parnham did for us when we were here. That's why we wanted to come home, and I am so thankful for the Board of Trustees, Chancellors and entire Maritime Family's trust and confidence as we lead Maritime into the next 150 years.

V Honestly, I was a little nervous about such a big change in our life, but we're excited to be

back at Fort Schuyler. This is where our story began and we are excited to be able to give back to the campus community and the students.

You are both Maritime College alum. Tell us about how you made the decision to attend the college.

J As you know I wasn't the best student in high school and only knew about Maritime because my brother Stan, class of 1988 was attending when I was in High School. I wanted to study Meteorology in college, and it just so happened Maritime had a Meteorology and Oceanography degree back then. In the end, I found Maritime by accident and am incredibly grateful I did.

V I love being on the water. I wanted to study Oceanography and thought I might become the next Jaques Cousteau. I had applied to the Naval Academy but didn't receive a nomination. Things might not work out the way you plan it, but it always works out okay in the end. In this case, I think things worked out very well!

Who has inspired each of you in your life?

J My Dad. He was the hardest working and most loyal person. He taught me so many lessons, many I didn't understand or fully grasp

until later in life. One thing my Dad lived by was "If you have time to do it twice, you have time to do it right the first time." I miss him dearly and hope he is looking down from heaven proud of who I have become.

V I have two very strong women as my role models - my Mom and my Nana. Both women have a deep faith, a strong work ethic and great sense of humor. They both taught me that if you work hard, believe in yourself and apply yourself, anything is possible.

How do you plan to keep student success central to your efforts?

J That's easy. I told the students on day one, "every decision I make will have their best interests at heart" to develop them into critical-thinking and character-based leaders. The students are why we are here, the students are why we came back home. The energy they give me in their pursuit of graduating from Maritime is incredible.

V That's easy. As Team Okon, we were once students here, we were once in their shoes. We have the same shared experiences, so we are with them in every step they take. We want to listen to them, cheer for them and help them along their journey.

What are the most pressing challenges the college is facing?

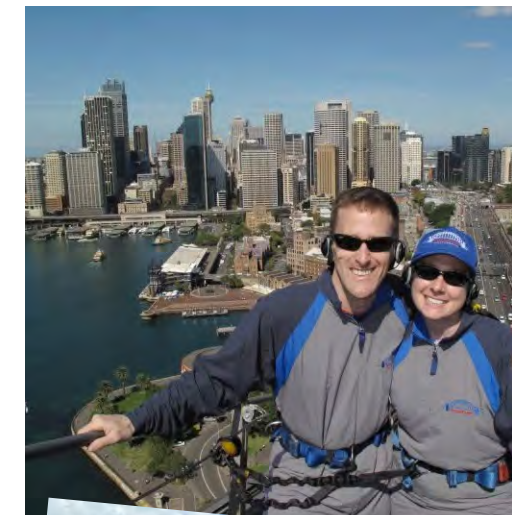
J Enrollment and culture. First, we need increase enrollment and retention so we can grow the college both in academics and applied learning, aligned with the trends of the global maritime industry. This starts with educating the nation on the undeniable value of a Maritime Education. Second, we are a small school. The school's culture and strategic alignment to vision, mission, core values, goals, and objectives are critical to our success. We must have everyone rowing in the same direction and founded on the same Why, What and How.

V Ditto, what he said!

What are each of your expectations?

J For New York Maritime to be First and Foremost, and to live our core values in every thought, word and action. If we do that, our institutional reputation will be strong and our students will be successful here at Fort Schuyler and in life, wherever their degree and license take them.

V Same. John and I have the same vision. And to also have a little fun along the way! ■



Maritime Memories: Alumni Reflect on the Magic of Maritime

Crossing the Time Portal

By: Charles Cosgriff '16

Graduation is a historic event in the life of every alumnus. On Commencement Day, Friday, May 6, 2016, Maritime College itself made history by graduating more than 230 students – its largest class to that date. Charles Cosgriff '16, in this poignant image captured that day by his father, Christopher, is seen passing through historic Fort Schuyler's sally port after receiving his diploma. As if crossing a time portal between his academic journey and the first steps of his career, Charles is ready and prepared to make history of his own.



Empire State IV Dormitory Life!

By: Joe Gustafson '65

Many Domers' most prominent Maritime memories include those of the Summer Sea Term. But when new dormitories were under construction during the early 1960s, students lived aboard the training ship Empire State IV right here on campus!

Joe Gustafson '65 recalls TSES IV dorm life in 1961: "I believe there were about 65 cadets in the #1 hold rack area. Not generally a quiet study area. However, I remember occasionally studying in my rack – as did others. Just aft of #2 hold on the same deck was the mess area. Most of us studied there or in the library at the Fort. I believe the cadet shown (center) is Gerhardt Muller '65. Gail is, and has been, very active in alumni activities." Note the stash of 45-rpm vinyl records near Muller's left hand – decades before Spotify!

The Five Man Lift!

By Stephen Carbery '80

As humble as my '70s-vintage Kodak Instamatic 126 camera was with its basic lens and disposable "flash cube" for dark-space lighting – it captured this memorable "exercise" we as MUGs may have engaged with our classmates during our 1977 summer MUG cruise.

Living in No. 2 Hold aboard TSES V on ceiling-hung, three-high metal racks, we quickly got to know who our friends were. Despite a busy schedule of watch standing, M&R, and classes, we needed to be entertained within the ship's close quarters. So, every so often, a savvy shipmate would challenge an unsuspecting MUG classmate to a "strength test", betting him that he couldn't lift "five men" off the deck. The challenge obligated the target to lie flat on his back on the deck, crisscrossed by four of his classmates whose weight, plus his own, of course, he was to lift off the deck for an award.

Of course, once everyone involved was strategically locked into place, the hapless MUG couldn't move, much less lift anyone. He received his "prize", though – in the form of a can of shaving cream being injected right down his work dungarees!

Fun times "Learning at Sea" in No. 2 Hold!

'54 Cruise: Dress Whites – and Time Travel: Naples and Beyond

By Ted Mason '57

When in Naples, visit Pompei – as a group of maybe ten or fifteen of us did. During our group tour, a short, roly-poly man, seeing our uniforms, approached us indicating he had a business associate that had a grandson attending a maritime college and then asked "who were we?" After a brief exchange, it became clear this man was Joe Levy and I was the "grandson" – as my grandfather was Levy's business associate. Joe Levy was extremely wealthy. He owned Crawford Clothes – then advertised on a huge sign in Times Square – , a major Manhattan hotel adjacent to Penn Station, and more. After returning from cruise, my grandfather and I attended dinner at Joe's Fifth Avenue apartment overlooking Central Park. Our utensils were gold – and was I ever impressed! It does not end there: about 2019, Dick Bracken '56 and I, returning from an Association board meeting on Metro North Railroad, were telling military "Sea stories" when a well-dressed man nearby interrupted, asking if we were ex-military. We learned that he was a West Point alumnus, and his name was Levy. I said I knew one Levy, that was Joe – and he said, "That's my grand-uncle!" How is that for bridging a 60-year time gap? If not for our Dress Whites on liberty, neither the Santander nor the Naples incident would have happened.

Continued on next page

Maritime Memories *Continued*

'54 Cruise – Missing Dinner at Santander

By Ted Mason '57

During our '54 cruise, Gabe DeVito '57, myself, and another of us, were strolling down the main drag in Santander, Spain, in our Dress Whites – whereupon we were intercepted, invited into a winery, and offered a glass of wine. Having virtually no money – or Spanish language skills for that matter – we hesitated and only accepted after understanding the wine offer was a courtesy. The courtesy was extended – and we were invited to dinner at a very posh tennis club. Upon arrival we were seated with our host, his wife, and two very attractive daughters – tennis balls were swishing back and forth and light piano music played in the background. We had arrived!! I said to Gabe, “You know how to play; ask,” and Gabe complied – with some very sassy “rock & roll” tunes! The place exploded – they just loved it! End of good news: we hardly got to know the daughters, and we had to return to the ship before dinner was served! And so, that’s how we learned that the Spanish dine late!

'56 Cruise: A Hierarchic “Faux Pas” Brings Future SST Scholarship Funds!

By Ted Mason '57

RADM Frank Gallo, USN, '57, who was 2nd Class Gallo at the time, of course, and I were standing the 0000-0400 watch in the Empire State II engine room on returning from our 1956 Summer Sea Term when a scrappy MUG, Don Krom '59, “rudely” asked us about our end-of-summer plans. We considered this “rude” as MUGs were not expected to inquire into private affairs of upper-class cadets. Yet, he asked again, leading with, “How would you like to work on a farm, bringing in the corn?” To us ‘City boys’, this sounded fabulous! So, Frank and I enjoyed two weeks of blazing sun, hard work, and nights of drinking beer and chasing girls at every roadhouse in Cortland County, NY. We had a ball, and we earned \$5.00 per day to boot!

I never saw or heard of Don Krom again until ten years ago. I took a call one Sunday night. The caller, identifying himself as an alumnus, wanted to leave a farm to the MCAA in his will. He

turned out to be none other than that “rude” MUG from the Class of '59. Long story short, Don left us money instead of a farm, which today exceeds \$550,000, and, by an updated MOU as of December 2023, permits the MCAA to use these funds toward Summer Sea Term Scholarships! No trifle, with SST costs to cadets now running over \$14,000. Moral: dispense with the traditional cadet hierarchical decorum – and always, ALWAYS, hear a “rude” MUG out!

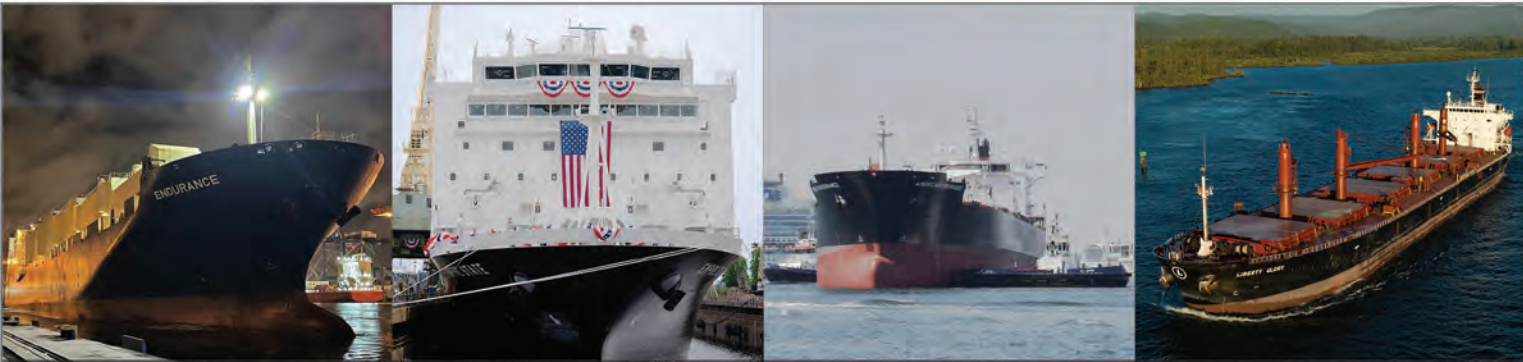
'56 Cruise: Summer Sea Swimming!

By Ted Mason '57

As a member of Maritime’s first Swimming Team, I remember cold nights being driven to some high school pool in the Bronx; both the bus and the pool were COLD! Of course, we had no pool at the Fort then. But during our 1956 cruise, we had the opportunity to compete in Holland. Our battle cry: “Need to get in and out fast, this water is COLD, we will WIN!”. Of course, we lost! On to Gothenburg, Sweden, with the same mantra; and, of course, we lost, again! Along with myself, team members included John Turnbull, Randy Michaelson, Bill Hefner, Tony Criso, Ed Baccaglini, maybe others. I probably had the “duty” for this one, but Bill Hefner and Tony Criso recall a meet in Seville or Cadiz, Spain, against a local college. Ok, so we lost again. But the post-event reception, the wine, and the señoritas were memorable!



SUNY Maritime College’s inaugural Swimming Team included Class of '57 team members Ted Mason, John Turnbull, Randy Michaelson, Bill Hefner, Tony Criso, Ed Baccaglini, and others.



Roll-On/Roll-Off, Multi-Purpose Cargo, National Security Multi-Mission Vessels, Product and Oil Tankers, Bulk Carriers, Military Sealift, Special Mission



YOUR FUTURE. YOUR CHOICE.

AMO has the largest variety of commercial and government vessels under contract of any U.S. officers’ union. Choose your path for an exciting career in maritime. Choose AMO.
www.amo-union.org | (800) 362-0513 | ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System, Certificate No. 33975



Heavy-Lift, Great Lakes Freighters, LMSRs, Containerships, Ready Reserve Force, Articulated Tug/Barges, LNG-Powered Cargo Vessels, LNG Carriers

STAR Center

Simulation, Training, Assessment & Research
A Division of the AMO Safety & Education Plan
www.star-center.com



- ★ STCW License Upgrading and Professional Development: Deck and Engine
- ★ Full Mission Simulation: Bridge, Engine, ECDIS, Liquid Cargo
- ★ Comprehensive Dynamic Positioning Training Programs
- ★ Watchstanding Skills Standardization and Assessment Program: Deck and Engine
- ★ IGF Code/LNG Fuel and Marine High Voltage Courses

2024 ADMIRAL'S DINNER RAISES \$1.2 Million FOR STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

On Tuesday, September 17, 2024, over 450 alumni and friends gathered for the annual Admiral's Dinner to welcome the inaugural Master of Ceremonies, Admiral John Okon '91. Honorees Jamie Nawojchik '87, Head of Marine & US Energy Property for Zurich North America, and representative Rick McClain '13 of Fiserv joined guests at Marina del Rey, overlooking the NYC skyline to the west and the Training Ship Empire State VII, docked at Olivet Pier, to the east.

During his welcome, Admiral Okon reflected on his first 79 days in office, highlighting increased enrollment in the MUG class, the launch of the Privateer Recruiting Officer Program (PROP), and the establishment of the 1974 Class Fund as a "link in the legacy" of our Sesquicentennial celebration. The Admiral emphasized the importance of the Maritime College family remaining united, including the SUNY Maritime Foundation board, Alumni Association, Organization of Black Maritime Graduates, and the Parents Association. Leaders of each group stood united, powering the "engine of upward mobility" for students.

Representing Maritime students was Regimental Commander and Student Body President, Cadet 1/C Erik Areklett from Redding, CT. Addressing the audience, Erik reflected on his feelings as the oldest of five siblings,

"I was 13 years old when my little sister was born. Her birth meant that I had to step up to help my parents. I soon found myself taking on more and more responsibility, which in turn, prepared me for leadership roles at Maritime."

Erik recalled his 'proudest moment' thus far in his Maritime journey when he found out he received a Summer Sea Term scholarship,



"I began to smile, telling my mom that my education would be more affordable. The hug that followed was truly the proudest I have ever felt. These are the moments that make scholarships life changing."

Erik, on behalf of the entire student body, appealed to the audience to share their time, talent, and treasure, including Admiral Okon, who led the charge with a \$50,000 pledge. His

announcement sparked a lively and robust paddle raise resulting in \$1.2M in pledges and gifts, setting yet another record in individual and industry charitable giving!

As the evening wrapped, attendees shared in Admiral Okon's parting sentiments that their collective "partnership and dedication provide the strength and confidence to keep moving forward in our mission of putting students first, and Maritime always."

The Admiral's Dinner is hosted by the SUNY Maritime Foundation and made possible by our generous sponsors. ■



Honoree Jamie Nawojchik, Head of Marine and US Energy Property at Zurich North America with RADM Okon.



Honoree Rick McClain '13, SVP of Global Real Estate at Fiserv with RADM Okon.



L-r: Chris Angerame, Richard Angerame, Tim Angerame, and Peter Angerame of uiltiVisor.



Maritime College Honor Guard post the colors and stand at attention during the singing of the National Anthem.



Representatives from Freehill, Hogan & Mahar join esteemed members of The American Club at the 2024 Admiral's Dinner.



Proud members of the Parents' Association are pictured (L-R), including Liz Harnos, President Jeannine Timpone, and fellow parent JoAnn Davila, alongside our inspiring cadets.



Guests at the Organization of Black Maritime Graduates table.



First Lady Valerie Gessner Okon '92, RADM John Okon '91, and Tom Higgins '80, College Council President aboard Empire State VII.



John Bree '78, Chair, SUNY Maritime Foundation, RADM John Okon '91 and Capt Robert Johnston '69, previous Chair, SUNY Maritime Foundation.

LETTER FROM JOHN M. BREE '78

Chairman, SUNY Maritime Foundation



SUNY MARITIME FOUNDATION

Board of Directors

John Bree '78, Chair

Michael Chalos '70, Vice Chair

Members

Alexandra Anagnostis-Irons

William F. Austen '80

William C. Gallo '70

Capt. Robert Johnson '69

John Krousouloudis '76

A.J. McAllister '80

Bruce S. Rosenblatt

Ex-Officio

RADM John Okon '91

Roxanne Thompson

Jennifer Mahoney

Stephen J. Carbery '80

Dear Maritime College Alumni and Friends,

As we welcome the new year 2025, the vibrancy on campus is exhilarating—one cannot help but feel energized with the new training ship Empire State VII at the pier, a new building on campus—the William Austen Marine Education Seamanship Center, a new administration with an Alumnus at the helm and an impressive 90 additional cadets enrolled in the Regiment compared to last year.

I hope that you share with me great optimism about the future of Maritime College and a deep sense of gratitude for being a part of its legacy. In this moment of reflection, I want to highlight a critical yet exciting opportunity for us to come together and make a transformative impact through strengthening our culture of giving.

This year's Admiral's Dinner was a testament to the power of collective generosity. Together, we raised a record-setting \$1.25 million for the Foundation to support scholarships for Maritime students. This is a remarkable achievement, and I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed. The momentum we have established cannot stop here—it must grow. Now is the time for all alumni and friends of the College to unite in supporting our students.

As many of you know, Maritime College is facing significant financial challenges. The new administration, under the leadership of RADM John Okon '91, is committed to steering us toward financial sustainability while maintaining our educational excellence. However, their efforts require the full support of the Maritime community. By giving back, we empower students, enhance the college's future, and honor the legacy of the institution that has shaped so many of us into the leaders we are today.

Research consistently shows that giving is a powerful force—not just for those who receive, but for those who give. Studies reveal that generosity can boost health, happiness, and overall well-being. When you support Maritime College, you are not only investing in the future of our students; you are enriching your own life in the process. Together, let us make a culture of giving contagious throughout our community. Small actions, when multiplied collectively, can have a monumental impact.

I urge you to join us in building a stronger, more resilient Maritime College. Please consider making a one-time or recurring gift to the College. Your commitment sends a powerful message: we are a community that supports its own and stands united in the face of adversity.

Let's continue the momentum of generosity sparked at the Admiral's Dinner. Together, we can chart a brighter future for Maritime College and its students.

Sincerely,

John Bree '78
Chairman, SUNY Maritime Foundation

FEATURE

SAILING THROUGH THE WINDS OF CHANGE OF MARITIME TECHNOLOGY & TRAINING



Since 1874, Maritime College has been educating and training leaders across the maritime industry. As America's first maritime academy, Fort Schuyler has maintained a proud tradition of meeting the dynamic needs of the workforce that it serves. In addition to the license and non-license and degree-earning courses that it's well known for, Maritime College continues to provide lifelong learning and training through its continuing adult education initiative in the Professional Mariner Training Department. This array of technical courses allows mariners to maintain or enhance their licenses through STCW courses and expand their skills and knowledge through new initiatives, such as offshore wind, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) handling, and (soon) Dynamic Positioning!

Industry professionals across the maritime sector are dedicated to continuous education, recognizing its vital role in enhancing their skills and knowledge as merchant mariners. Engaging in ongoing training helps mariners maintain their credentials and paves the way for career advancement. Maritime College actively collaborates with various organizations, including the New York City Police Department and the Fire Department of New York City, successfully training hundreds of merchant mariners. Their curriculum includes critical courses such as Fire Fighting, Radar Training, Lifeboatman Training, and more.

The importance of continuous education for professional mariners cannot be overstated; it significantly enhances individual competency and bolsters overall maritime safety. As technology advances and regulations evolve, Maritime College remains committed to providing relevant training that equips mariners to navigate the latest challenges facing the industry. This dedication to lifelong learning fosters a culture of safety, empowering mariners and industry professionals to respond effectively to emergencies and unexpected situations—particularly crucial in the hazardous environments they often encounter at sea.

In the coming decades, the Northeast will likely continue integrating cleaner energy sources to meet the tri-challenge of securing reliable and affordable power generation, meeting increases in net energy demand, and fulfilling the societal mandate of system decarbonization. Offshore wind will likely play a crucial role in a pathway toward a more resilient future, and Maritime College is excited to be collaboratively leading New York State's energy transition through its offshore wind programs. Maritime College is currently the only training provider in New York City to offer all modules in the Global Wind Organization (GWO)-certified Basic Safety Training (BST) and Basic Technical Training (BTT) set, and it remains committed to creating opportunities for the workforce of tomorrow.

Without a doubt, continuous education nurtures professionalism and boosts morale among maritime workers, leading to higher job satisfaction and better retention rates within the industry. As dedicated professionals, it's our responsibility to invest in ongoing education to enhance our capabilities and contribute to a safer and more efficient maritime industry, benefiting all stakeholders involved.

As Maritime College celebrates its sesquicentennial, PMT is proud that its evolving, integrated suite of complementary training programs will ensure that the College remains at the forefront of 21st-century maritime training. ■

HOMEcomings 2024: Remembering Our Past and Honoring Our Legacy

In October, Fort Schuyler welcomed home thousands of Privateers, just in time for Homecoming weekend. As a part of the two-day celebration, the Alumni Association held its annual Ancient Mariner Golf Classic at Pelham Bay - Split Rock Golf Course. A cool, sunny day welcomed Maritime College alumni, both young and old, for an incredible experience. This year's Homecoming also welcomed home Maritime alumnus and Maritime College President Rear Admiral John A. Okon '91 and his wife, Valerie, '92.

The morning of October 19 was filled with cool and crisp air as the Class of 1974 celebrated their 50th Reunion in the Stephen B. Luce Library. MUGs later took the stage at St. Mary's Pentagon, embracing the warm sun before performing the traditional Pass-In-Review.

Two esteemed alumni, Richard Burke '72 and Kevin Tokarski '84, were inducted into Heritage Hall for their contributions to the maritime industry and Maritime College. Joined by family and friends, it was an occasion to remember, especially as we continue to honor our legacy at Maritime College. This heartfelt experience reminded us that Maritime College is the "Peninsula of Opportunity."



Upper photo: RADM John Okon, Deborah Burke, and Dr. Richard Burke '72

Lower photo: RADM John Okon, Kevin Tokarski '84, and Deborah Tokarski.



Homecoming Highlights

A testament to the impact of hard work, sportsmanship, and compassion, the Maritime Privateers took on Worcester Polytechnic Institute, winning 42-35! To say this game was thrilling is simply not enough - our players gave it their all. But none of this would have been possible without the guidance of Coach Jamel Ramsay and his coaching staff. In their first season with Coach Ramsay, the Privateers have taken on new heights, and we are excited about what all is in store next season.

This year's Homecoming Weekend was a moment of gratitude as our alumni and current students gathered. During halftime, the Maritime Parents Association presented a \$5,000 donation to the SEA Center for Academic Student Support, graciously accepted by RADM Okon. This investment will enhance tutoring, test preparation, and academic support services, helping our students succeed at Maritime College. Thank you for believing in our youth, and we look forward to seeing you at Homecoming 2025 on October 18!



ADVANCING THE ART, SCIENCE, AND PRACTICE OF NAVAL ARCHITECTURE AND MARINE ENGINEERING.



Join today to take advantage of our exclusive benefits!

www.sname.org

99 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 500, Alexandria, VA 22314

Invest in Yourself
Increase Your Knowledge Base
United States Merchant Marine Academy
Master of Science Degree in Marine Engineering



Online Based, Distance-Learning Engineering Education

A blend of application and theory at the graduate level focused on advanced concepts in marine engineering. This 36-credit program is designed for working professionals and can be completed without the need to take a leave of absence from a job or relocate. It consists of seven required courses and five electives. A suitable thesis or design project may be substituted for one or two electives.

For additional information visit our website:
www.usmma.edu/academics/graduate-program

35th Annual Maritime College Alumni Association (MCAA) GOLF CLASSIC

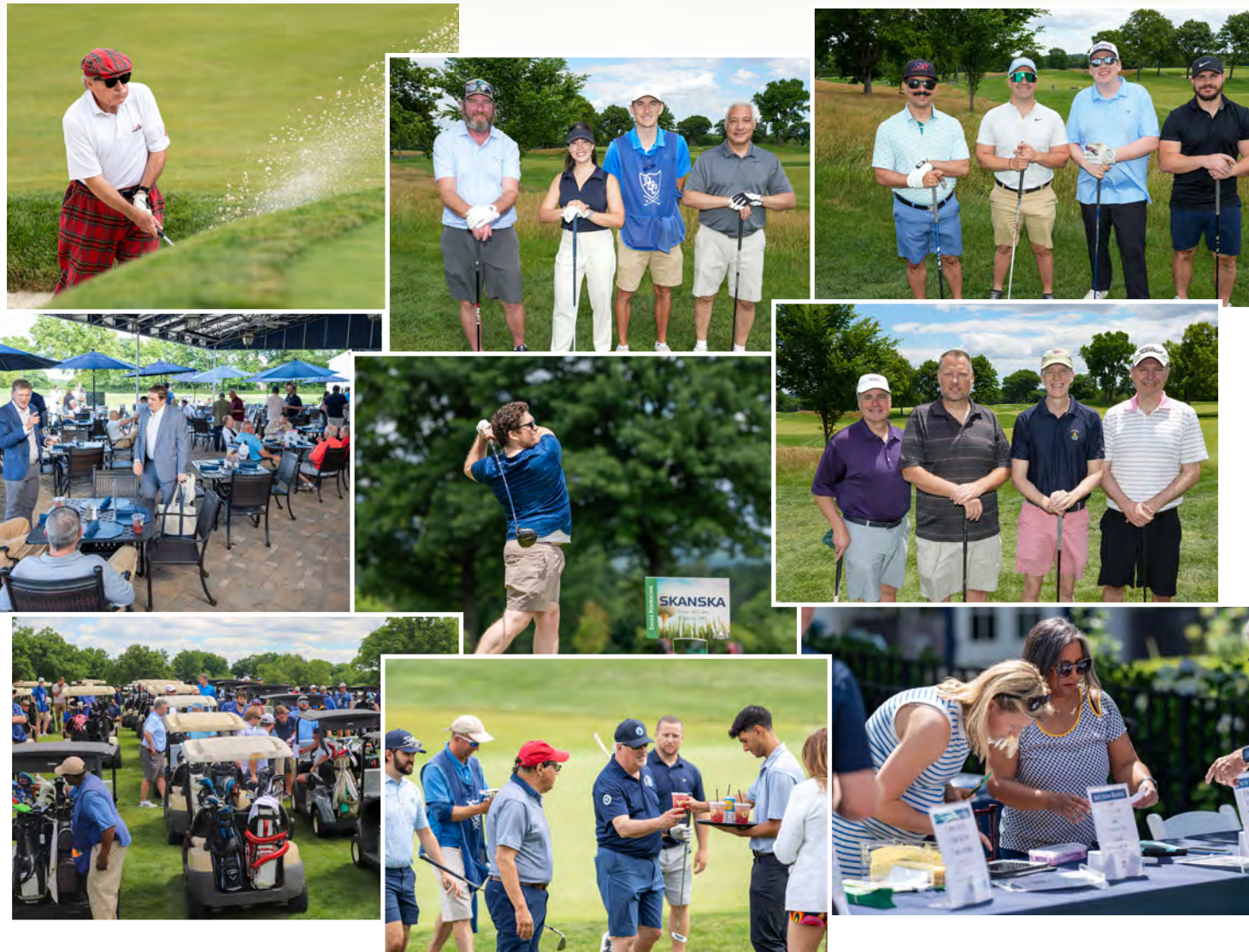
The 35th Annual Maritime College Alumni Association (MCAA) Golf Classic, held on June 10, 2024, at the prestigious Plainfield Country Club in Edison, NJ, was one for the books! The event brought together alumni, friends, and supporters of the college for a day of golf, networking, and camaraderie.

This was the first time that the event was hosted in New Jersey and the beautiful Plainfield Country Club couldn't have been a better host location for the event.

The MCAA extends its heartfelt gratitude to the sponsors who made the event possible. Special thanks to our Admiral Sponsor, Capt. AJ McAllister '80 of McAllister Towing and Transportation Co., Inc., and Master Sponsor, John Valvo '83 of Fresh Meadow Power

NE, LLC, for their generous support. Other key sponsors included Golf Cart Sponsor Richard Tully Jr. of Interstate Mechanical Services Inc. and Brian Vogdes '04 of True North Chartering, along with Photography Sponsor Robert Rose '85 of AZ Corp, and Golf Ball Sponsor Dave Walters '71 of Wilmington Tug.

Following the golf tournament, the event featured a lively reception, where attendees enjoyed food, drinks, and awards, and both a silent auction and raffle. All funds from the event go towards vital funding for Maritime College students and promotes MCAA's educational, networking, and scholarship initiatives. Thank you to all who participated and made this event one to remember. Please save the date for next year's 36th Annual Golf Classic, we will return to Plainfield Country Club on June 9, 2025.



ANCIENT MARINER GOLF OUTING 2024

The Ancient Mariner Golf Outing, held during Homecoming Weekend, was a sounding success. Hosted at the scenic Pelham Bay and Split Rock Golf Courses, the event provided an ideal backdrop for alumni and friends to reconnect while enjoying a day on the links.

As always, the golf outing was more than just a game—it was an opportunity to celebrate the shared experiences of the

Maritime community. The smiles, stories, and laughter shared between alumni and friends served as a reminder of the strong bonds formed during their time at Maritime.

Thanks to all who participated and made this event a highlight of Homecoming weekend. We look forward to seeing everyone again!



L-r: Mike Stellato '74, Don Vesperman '74, Jim Arduis '74, Art Sulzer '74, and Rich Newman '74



L-r: Michael Carnazza (Parent '18), Alexander Duqmaq '19, Liam Mullins, Michael Carnazza '18, Meredith Hayes '19, Rachel Johnson '18, Zachary Azria '16, James Conway '19



*Navigating Success for 125 Years:
Our Commitment to unparalleled
customer service sets us apart.*



Photo credit: Matt Landon

With 40 tugs across 14 Great Lakes ports, a shipyard, and machine shop in Cleveland, we're your one-stop solution for harbor towing, ship assistance, project cargo, vessel repair & construction, and expert linehandling services.

Your voyage to excellence begins with us!

www.greatlakesgroup.com
(216) 621-4854

THE EXPERTS Robson Forensic

Maritime grads have investigated more than 500 forensic cases as technical experts with Robson Forensic.

Robson Forensic is a national firm of forensic professionals in engineering, architecture and scientific disciplines. We provide investigations, testing, reports, and testimony to resolve disputes and litigation. Our technical standards are high, and our projects are impressive.

We currently seek experienced maritime industry professionals.

To Apply:

If you are a seasoned professional and respected as an expert in your field, please submit your resume to Algernon Williams at recruiting@robsonforensic.com.
www.robsonforensic.com/careers

McALLISTER TOWING
CELEBRATES

160
YEARS

& NAMES TUG
SIMULATOR

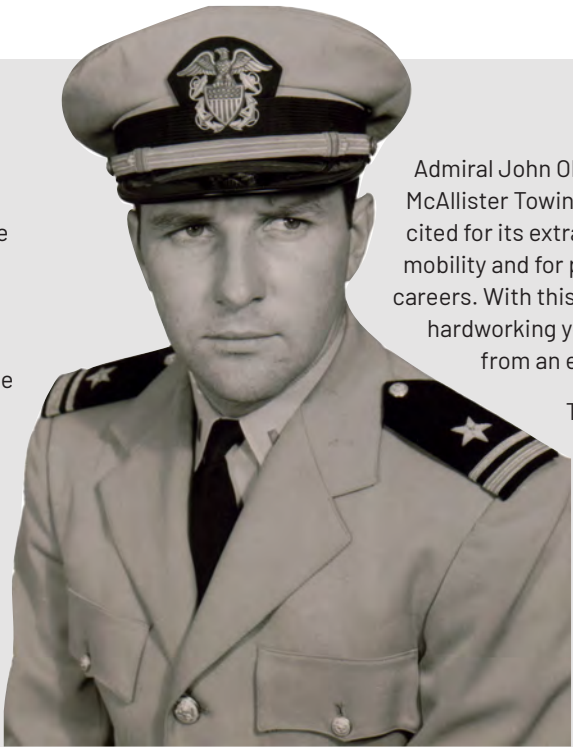


BY DON GALE

As McAllister Towing celebrates its 160th anniversary, President Buckley McAllister announced a \$2.5 million pledge to Maritime College to permanently endow the Tug and Towing program and to name the “Captain Brian A. McAllister ‘56 Tug Simulator.”

In addition to their longstanding support of the Maritime College Alumni Association and the Foundation’s Admiral’s Dinner, Mr. McAllister shared that the company will establish the “Captain Brian A. ‘56 and Rosemary McAllister Fund for Towing Education.” The Fund, in memory of his father and in honor of his mother, will permanently underwrite the costs of operating the College’s simulator, ensuring the program continues to flourish. He explained, “Given my father’s love of Fort Schuyler, and my family’s commitment to the maritime industry, this gift is follow through on a long-term relationship. It is an investment in the future of Maritime College and the next generation of mariners.”

With the nation facing a shortage of trained, licensed mariners, Mr. McAllister has taken a personal interest in building paths for NYC youth. As he remarked, “The ‘American Dream’ still thrives in the maritime industry, and our nation’s vitality is rooted in the strength of our workforce.” Putting words into action, the company has been underwriting the costs for Urban Assembly New York Harbor School seniors to get their merchant mariner credentials and is establishing a scholarship program for Maritime’s limited-tonnage license program.



Brian A. McAllister graduated in 1956 from the SUNY Maritime College at Fort Schuyler with a degree in marine engineering and a 3rd Assistant Engineer’s license. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War as Lieutenant Junior Grade and was Executive Officer on the USS Lake County.

Admiral John Okon ’91, president of the College, applauded McAllister Towing’s engagement. “Maritime College is frequently cited for its extraordinary role as a springboard for upward mobility and for providing graduates with access to great careers. With this partnership, we will be changing lives as hardworking youth from across the five boroughs will benefit from an education here on the Peninsula of Opportunity.”

The “Captain Brian A. McAllister ‘56 Tug Simulator” offers a virtual reality experience as teams of cadets work on a simulated bridge with 360-degree projected views of U.S. harbors and waterways. The training platform allows students to recreate real-world situations and to be confronted with the split-second decision making that will be required from them throughout their careers.

After their humble beginnings in NYC, McAllister Towing now operates a fleet of more than 60 tugboats, crew boats, barges, and ferries in 17 locations between Maine and Puerto Rico. They provide ship docking to more than 1,000 steamship companies, including the Empire State VII, as well as general harbor towing, coastal towing, windfarm support, and bulk transportation. The company employs hundreds of U.S. seafarers, including 55 graduates of Maritime College. Captain Brian A. McAllister himself graduated with a Maritime Engineering degree in 1956 and received an honorary PhD from SUNY Maritime in 2017. He then switched to deck and earned an Unlimited Tonnage Masters License with pilotage in most of the major ports on the East Coast of the United States. ■

The McAllister/Schuyler partnership has been a century and a half in the making. McAllister Towing was launched 160 years ago when Captain James McAllister began ferrying goods between Brooklyn and Manhattan with a sail lighter. Ten years later the New York Nautical School was formed when the St. Mary’s sailed the harbor. Five generations of McAllisters have led and worked at the Company, and today McAllister Towing employs 55 Fort Schuyler graduates. The company has employed hundreds of Maritime graduates over the years, including numerous family members.



Captain Brian McAllister and his wife, Rosemary McAllister.



Capt. McAllister received an Honorary Doctorate of Science from SUNY Maritime in 2017.



Dick Bracken '56 Celebrates 90th Birthday

Saturday, June 8, 2024 found Dick Bracken '56 celebrating 90 voyages around the sun, together with his wife Gerry and several alumni at the Nyack Boat Club in Nyack, NY, where Dick is the Senior Member and former Chair of the Race Committee in Valley Cottage, NY. After graduating, Dick served eleven years as a U.S. Navy aviator, toward the end of which he also launched his civil aviation career. He flew with American Airlines, beginning in 1964 until he retired in 1994. Though a Captain in the air rather than at sea, Dick nonetheless has been a sailing enthusiast since 1953 and has served as the president of the Hudson River Yacht Racing Association. He has also kept close ties with his alma mater.

For example, he was appointed in 2002 as Executive Director of Maritime College's Sailing Foundation by then-President VADM John Ryan. An MCAA Past President in 2008-

09, and former Board Member, Dick began a tradition of addressing new Maritime graduates in January 2018, representing the Association at Commencement and



Seated: Dick Bracken '56 with his wife, Gerry Standing: (l-r) MCAA 1999-2001 Past President and current President Stephen Carbery '80, Dick's classmate and Steve's father Joe Carbery '56, and MCAA Past President and current Board Member Ted Mason '57.

furthering the union between the College and the Association under the auspices of President RADM Mike Alfultis.



A vintage American Airlines ad featuring a customer's testimonial to Captain Dick Bracken's concern for communications with passengers during a weatherchallenged flight. The ad closes with, "Thanks to Captain Dick Bracken, many people will continue to fly American."

Celebrating 80th Birthday with Members of the Class of '66

On October 26, several members of the Class of '66 attended a surprise 80th birthday party for Bill and Carol Hall, organized by their four children; in attendance were other family and friends. The party was held at the Redding Roadhouse in Redding, CT and all enjoyed the food and company.



L-r: Sharon and Steve Sabo, Elaine and Joe Trainor, Carol and Bill Hall, Mike and Mary Cross, and Patti and Mick McGuire.

Wedding of Giselle Heitzner and Joe Colella '79

The Huguenot Yacht Club in New Rochelle, NY was bathed in the warm glow of spring sunshine May 19, 2024 as **Joe Colella '79** and his loving bride Giselle Heitzner celebrated their wedding and stepped into their life together. Domers witnessing the matrimonial vows are, left to right, starting along the back row: Joe Lorino '87, Joe Breglia '80, Ben Ciferri '72, Lenny Mellusi '72, Christin Zdep '85, Meredith Barnes-Hayes '19 (green dress), Professor Cezary Recko. To the front of Prof. Recko are bride Giselle Heitzner (deep blue print gown) and groom Joe Colella '79 (bow tie); continuing L-R behind Joe are, Dennis Cooney '79 (Best Man), Tom Breglia '80, Brian Kelly '80, Chris Poje '80, and Vincent Breglia '17. Forward, L - R are Heidi Benedikt '85 (officiant, black dress), Jennifer Barnes Hayes '80 (floral dress), Bill Kreppein '80, Steve Gulotta '80, Father John Corbett '80.



Class of '57 Reunion at Mystic Seaport

Mystic Seaport, in Mystic, CT, proved a salty gathering venue for the Class of '57 to celebrate their 67th Reunion last October 8 - 10. Staying at Hyatt Place Mystic, the group toured the beautiful Mystic Seaport Museum village, boarding and inspecting, in true Domer fashion, the Charles W. Morgan, America's oldest surviving commercial ship. Wednesday evening, the 9th, saw the classmates at the historic Captain Daniel Packer Inne, built in 1756, for their traditional Memorial

Dinner. "Eight Bells" were tolled on the Alumni Association bell for recently deceased classmates, followed by tolling of the bell for all classmates and spouses deceased since graduation. The memorial concluded with some old sea shanties and a brief prayer. Weather, food, and accommodations were all top-notch. Also, by tradition, excess funds from '57's deposits will go to the Class of 1957 Scholarship funds.

Finding safe harbor at Mystic: Seated at foreground: Edward Villella and Ed Shepherd. Standing L-r: Gil Williamson, Art Loefstedt, Jim McGovern, Ted Mason, Ralph Sirico, Jack Burns, Ray Ehlers, and John Turnbull.



Several spouses, children, and friends also attended, including Ed Shepherd's wife Kathy and daughters Pam and Lisa, Ed Villella's wife Linda, John Turnbull's wife Anne, and Ray Ehlers's friend Carol Whitener. For those who couldn't travel to Mystic, the Class held a Zoom Meeting Tuesday the 8th, attended by Steve Hertz, Tony Criso, Bill Hefner, Ted Mason, and Harry Skelly.

'13 Seeking a change of lifestyle, **Michael Vanadia '13** and his wife, Amanda, have not only found themselves new career opportunities, but are helping others to work toward their own.

Since 2005, the Nautical School of Maritime Licensing in Lindenhurst, NY, has been providing a variety of training courses and marine license programs to commercial mariners. Maritime alumni and New York area TowBoatUS captains Frank Roseto '15 and Lucas Cavaluzzi '16, featured in the Spring 2024 Fort Schuyler magazine, both earned their first six-passenger and 100-ton licenses at the school as teenagers even before entering Maritime College. When the school's owner, William Rivera, saw necessary to sell his business in 2023 due to health reasons, Mike and Amanda, in the midst of their own career transitions, jumped at the chance to adopt their own business and to continue the school's legacy.

Says Amanda, "It seemed like the right opportunity Mike and I were looking and hoping for." Mike and Amanda have been augmenting the school's licensing products for captains of six-passenger charters and small passenger ferries and work boats to include licenses for larger vessels such as tankers and larger passenger vessels.



Amanda and Mike Vanadia '13, celebrating their closing on The Nautical School earlier this year.

'95 On May 23, 2024, **Admiral John Hewitt '95** USN was assigned as Commander, Navy Region Southeast (CNRSE), Jacksonville, FL during a ceremony at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. The Smithtown, NY, native traces his naval career to 1987, receiving his commission in his Maritime College graduation



year of 1995 through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC). Having later graduated from the U.S. Naval War College and the Joint Forces Staff College, Hewitt had been promoted last March from

Captain to Rear Admiral. In the photo, Vice Admiral Christopher Scott "Scotty" Gray, Commander, Navy Installations Command, congratulates Rear Admiral Hewitt '95, right, on his new command.

'80 "Surf and turf" is more than fine dining fare. For the Class of 1980, who enjoy many exciting get-togethers throughout the year, it describes the variety of their summertime activities.

On August 10, a group of '80 classmates headed to the lush, rolling hills of Vermont for fun, fellowship, and a round of golf in honor of classmate Doug McKay, who sailed over the horizon June 4, 2022. Pictured in the left photo at this year's Annual Doug McKay Memorial Golf Outing, held at the Green Mountain National Golf Course in Killington, VT, are, left to right: Randy Johnson, Andy Werner, MCAA President (since 2023) and Past President (1999-2001) Stephen Carbery, and Past President (2019) Jennifer Barnes Hayes.

Trading the links for the wind and waves, Sunday, September 8 found a crew of '80 alumni in their Maritime element aboard Josh Hazelwood's Cal 33 sailing yacht, S/V Trilogy, racing in the Thames Yacht Club Commodore's Trophy Race on Long Island Sound in the waters off New London, CT. In the photo, l-r, are 1980 classmates Dan Morgan, John Wentz, Josh Hazelwood, MCAA Past President (2019) Jennifer Barnes Hayes, and Jack Whitney.



'15 On April 30, 2024, Captain **Joseph Reinbold '15** reached a significant milestone in his career by being sworn in as a fully licensed Sandy Hook Pilot by the Board of Commissioners of Pilots of the State of New York (BCPNY). By joining the Sandy Hook Pilots Association (SHPA), which was incorporated in December 1895, Joseph joins around fifty other pilots in continuing a long-standing tradition and vital maritime service that dates back to a 1694 directive from the British Colony of New York, which appointed local seafarers as "Sandy Hook Pilots."

To commemorate Captain Reinbold's career milestone, he was joined by his family. L-r: BCPNY Commissioner Richard Hendrick, BCPNY Commissioner William Rowland (USMMA), BCPNY Executive Director Andrew Garger, President SHPA Captain James Mahlmann (USMMA), Captain Joseph Reinbold '15, Joseph's father Frank Reinbold, his mother Cathi Reinbold, BCPNY Pres. & Commissioner James Mercante (USMMA), BCPNY Commissioner Joseph Ahlstrom '82, and BCPNY Commissioner Lucienne Bulow.



Captain Joseph Reinbold '15, left, accompanies BCPNY Commissioner and Maritime College Marine Transportation Dept. Prof. Joseph Ahlstrom '82.



Leading with Love: From the Sea to the Executive Suite DR. BOB RONCSKA '91

BY DON GALE

What is the hallmark of an effective leader? CAPT Dr. Robert "Navy Bob" Roncska '91 USN (Ret.), who released his debut book "Beyond the Sea" last June, unambiguously answers: "Love. Leading with love not only makes you a legendary leader but enables you to build a legendary culture. And the reason I wrote the book is because I want to make the world a better place by teaching leaders to lead with love."

A native of Dunkirk, New York, Roncska worked on a family farm with his father and attended Dunkirk High School as a teenager. He credits his mother, Eileen, who showered love and generosity upon her family and colleagues, inspiring him to "attend closely and lovingly to my coworkers and others around me in the same way Eileen Roncska did." His father, orphaned as a child, likewise exuded self-sacrificial love, working hours at a power plant to provide for his family, in addition to his exhausting daily farm chores.

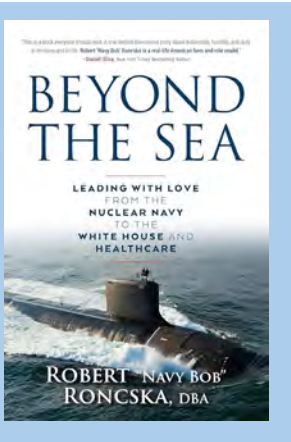


Roncska entertained becoming a fighter pilot but was deterred by a vision problem. His enthusiasm was rekindled by a Dunkirk High alumnus' suggestion of the merchant marine, to which his mom suggested SUNY Maritime College. Elated on his acceptance, Roncska confesses to the culture shock he faced in 1987 as a MUG during INDOC and his first weeks as a cadet. Pursuing a marine engineering degree with a focus on nuclear technology, Roncska adapted to Maritime's culture of leadership, accountability, and peer support.

"My two most life-changing moments happened at Maritime. First, and most importantly, was meeting Stephanie Vinciguerra, my wife of thirty-two years," says Roncska. "The other happened junior year when Navy recruiter Lieutenant Andrea Jabuski walked into my nuclear engineering class to speak of the U.S. Navy Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate, or NUPOC, program." A NUPOC joins the U.S. Navy as an officer, with a full-time paid salary, while completing college, committing to five years of active duty as a Naval Nuclear Officer on graduation.

Despite prodding from classmate Eric Stolzenberg '91, Roncska had no interest in joining the Navy, let alone serving on a submarine. A visit to a nuclear submarine at Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia changed his mind. Accepted as a NUPOC in his final year at Maritime, he headed to Orlando, Florida, in 1991 for six months of training at Naval Nuclear Power Training Command (NNPTC). Six months at the Nuclear Power Training Unit (NPTU) in Ballston Spa, New York, was followed by twelve weeks of Submarine Officer Basic Course (SOBC) in New London, Connecticut.

Continued on next page



After serving aboard the ballistic submarine USS West Virginia (SSBN-736), Roncska instructed at NNPTC while earning his Master of Science in Engineering and Industrial Management at the University of Central Florida by 1997.

Over the next ten years, Roncska served as Operations Navigation Officer aboard USS Asheville (SSN-758), Squadron Seven Operations Officer at Naval Station Pearl Harbor, and as Executive Officer aboard USS La Jolla (SSN-701). Experiencing a range of command styles, from toxic to supportive, he recognized the significant impact of leadership on crew performance. Committed to his development, Roncska vowed to lead with protection, empathy, and respect throughout his career.

In 2006, Roncska was selected as Military Aide to President George W. Bush, earning the nickname “Navy Bob.” His role included “carrying the nuclear football” and managing classified codes for activation in a nuclear crisis. In his book “Beyond the Sea,” Roncska shares touching experiences of President Bush’s genuine care and concern as he served both George and Laura Bush on public and clandestine missions.

In 2009, Roncska took command of the USS Texas, the second nuclear attack sub of the Virginia Class. Charged by Squadron Command to elevate the crew’s subpar performance for a Class certification voyage beneath Arctic ice, Roncska faced a crew environment of apathy and chronic

errors. “It was like a game of whack-a-mole,” Roncska says of the missed maintenance, equipment problems, and bungled drills that were virtually routine. When the Texas nearly failed a crucial operational test weeks before the certification sail, Roncska discovered that the ship’s prior command had fostered a punitive atmosphere rather than supportive correction, damaging sailors’ morale. Recalling his association between command attitude and crew culture, Roncska thrust himself into his first act of leading with love.

In one-on-one meetings, Roncska presented his “command philosophy” described in his book,



At the ‘08 Beijing Olympics, Roncska, (second left), is accompanied by President Bush, far left, and two other aides after Roncska sustained an injury during a bicycle ride with the President on the Olympic race trails.

establishing clear expectations for mutual conduct, performance, support, and accountability between himself and his crew. Then, he conducted a “Crew Top Three” where crew members identified the three biggest problems impacting their service.

He acted immediately on glaring issues, such as the lack of onboard computers that forced the crew to work additional hours to complete reports. Within two months, crew morale and performance showed significant improvement. “In two years, Texas’ crew went from the worst to the best performance out of ten ships in the squadron, with the highest retention in the Pacific Fleet,” says Roncska.

From 2012 until retiring from the Navy in 2018, Roncska’s leadership and talent management skills found him serving as Prospective Commanding Officer Instructor at Pearl Harbor, assigning commanding officers for the Chief of Naval Personnel, and as Squadron Commander over ten Los Angeles Class nuclear attack submarines.

Through Dr. Jeffrey Kuhlman, a physician of President Bush during Roncska’s Military Aide service, Roncska connected with AdventHealth, one of the United States’ largest healthcare systems. Appointed Executive Director for Safety and High Reliability, Roncska formed a leadership team to tackle lackluster adherence to procedures and the resultant patient care catastrophes. Employing the Five Pillars of High Reliability, developed by Admiral Hyman Rickover, he brought safety protocols and review practices used in the nuclear navy to work in the healthcare environment.

Further recognizing variations in healthcare staff culture among facilities that paralleled those of

“Leadership is not about the leader. It’s about how they love and care for others.”

submarine crews, Roncska applied the benevolent leadership practices he had adopted at sea to AdventHealth. In addition to slipshod practices replaced by clear-cut procedures with transparent lessons learned, “Beyond the Sea” recounts toxic relations between physicians and staff transformed into healthy cultures with positive leadership, employee cohesiveness, constructive interactions, and reduced stress.

While pursuing his doctorate at Rollins College, Roncska wrote his dissertation on a workplace social media tool, or WSMT, that had been adopted by AdventHealth. This interactive platform facilitates communication between staff and management. Roncska likens the WSMT in the extended corporate environment to his shipboard Crew Top Three sessions, whereby employees can be heard and know they matter. Additionally, Roncska studied the Leader-Member Exchange, or LMX, Theory, which maximizes the quality of the relationship between a leader and each team member. He instantly recognized this as the essence of what he had come to know – and practice – as leading with love.

Roncska has served as Senior Vice President of the Florida Chamber Health Council, with the goal “to make Florida the safest, most sustainable, and healthiest State in the country.” Today, Roncska is an adjunct professor at the University of Central Florida’s School of Global Health Management & Informatics, teaching healthcare leaders to lead with love.

Roncska consults under his moniker “Navy Bob”, offering training, coaching, and speaking engagements focused on transformative leadership that prioritizes people over metrics. In his book, Roncska shares his journey and insights on leading with love through personal experiences. He has noted the lack of a unified syllabus for leadership training and success after college, which he believes contributes to performance disparities in the Navy and business settings.

Roncska says, “Coming from high school, I didn’t aspire to be a leader. Leadership was instilled in me at Maritime College. Students have their best leadership training right here at the school.”

Roncska’s advice to Maritime students? “Maritime is more than academics. This is your assessment phase as a leader, where you can learn your greatest leadership gift. As a cadet in the Regiment, you’re given practical leadership tools combined with shipboard experience.” To fellow alumni, he adds: “It’s time that we, as alumni, pay back this great institution for what it has given us, the innumerable career opportunities and earnings stature that translates through our careers. By paying back, we pay it forward to future generations of students. I’m thankful that we have a leader, a fellow alumnus, John Okon ’91, protecting the legacy of this institution and carrying it forward into the future.”

Roncska summarizes his leadership journey and Maritime College’s influence: “Leadership is not about the leader. It’s about how they love and care for others. John has that, and so do many alumni who have become great leaders by applying the leadership traits instilled here. I would never have been captain of a \$2 billion Virginia Class submarine, nor would I have carried the nuclear codes for President Bush, nor would I have been chosen to lead the safety culture of over twenty Florida hospitals, if I weren’t instilled with the leadership principles that I learned at Maritime.” ■

Author’s Note: On December 3, 2024, “High Reliability Healthcare”, co-authored by Dr. Robert “Navy Bob” Roncska ’91 and Dr. Jeffrey Kuhlman, was also released.



CAPT Roncska commanded the USS Texas from 2009 to 2012. To the right of “Santa Claus,” he is seen accompanying his crew during an Arctic certification voyage aboard Texas for the Virginia Class.

WHERE IN THE WORLD

EAST MEETS WEST

MCAA 2nd Vice President and Bylaws Committee Chair Leo Imperial '01, left, and Southern California Chapter President Dennis Brennan '64 had never met face to face despite years of virtual MCAA Board meetings and Bylaws Committee meetings. So, when Leo, Assistant Vice President for Mediterranean Shipping Company (USA) Inc., flew from New York to attend the Intermodal Association of North America (IANA) Expo in Long Beach, CA this September, he arranged a meetup with the venerable "Hurricane Class" grad in the Golden State. Corona, CA, served as a mutually convenient meeting spot between Leo's destination and Dennis's home in Temecula. Dennis himself relocated from east to west coast in 2015 after retiring from his work as Deputy Associate Administrator, Cargo and Commercial Sealift at the Maritime Administration in Washington, D.C. to be close to his children. Thus met these two Domers from the east and the west, with the Stars and Stripes flying just beyond.



L-r: alumni Stephen Kelleher '20, Capt. Paul Ginnane '95 and LT. Glib Kaplunov '16 in Souda Bay, Crete, serving Military Sealift Command (MSC) aboard USNS GYSGT Fred W. Stockham (T-AK-3017) during her 4-month humanitarian aid deployment to Gaza last April through August.

When an international "One Hand!" cry rises – Domers answer!

ALUMNI SERVED ABOARD USNS STOCKHAM, AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND STATESIDE, FOR GAZA

Piloted from Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Earle, NJ, by Sandy Hook Pilot Capt. Thomas Ferrie '98, Stockham sailed to Mayport Naval Base at Jacksonville, FL, from where she departed under pilotage by Capt. Timothy McGill '89 of the St. Johns Bar Pilot Association. Stockham stopped at U.S. Naval Station Rota, Spain inbound and outbound, and at Souda Bay, Crete and Larnaca, Cyprus, where she loaded pallets of humanitarian aid from around the world destined for Gaza. MSC Representative Hugo Polanco '87 served at Rota, while Tactical Advisor (TACAD) CDR Ray Donnelly '06 served aboard MSC's USNS Benavidez, also deployed to Gaza. For Stephen Kelleher '20, it was his first trip as Second Mate, having received his license the day before departure. Third Mate Donnie Frazier '20 joined Stockham for the final Jacksonville-to-NWS-Earle leg on return from Gaza. The photo of Stockham off Sandy Hook, NJ, was taken by Kelleher's fiancée Madison Burbol '20.

CHAPTER GATHERINGS

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER IS ONLINE!

COPPERTAIL BREWING | AUGUST 20

Given its opportunities, climate, and quality of life for individuals, families, and retirees, as well as its unlimited shipping and maritime career outlets, it's small wonder that Domers of all ages are attracted to Florida. Hence, there's an abundance of MCAA Chapters: Northeast Florida, South Florida – and now, the newly-inaugurated Tampa Bay Chapter!

Following a "soft start" gathering at Shuffle in The Heights of Tampa last June 18th – drawing around two dozen Maritime alumni and friends – Tampa Bay had their first "official" Chapter gathering Tuesday, August 20th, at Tampa's Coppertail Brewery. Part of the Chapter's mission is to accommodate alumni across the broad areas of Florida distant from the other two Chapters in the state. That motivation was met – 35 alumni attended, 30 of whom are shown in the photo – representing Class years 1952 through 2024, according to Chapter President Ashley O'Brien '17. Around 20 more attendees from Overseas Shipholding Group (OSG) – who sponsored the gathering – , Port Tampa Bay, Orion Marine Construction, and other alumni friends, brought attendance close to 60.

A highlight of the evening was the presence of Gerhard "Gary" Mueller – surviving Class of '52 Member – and his wife, Edith, who, due to driving restrictions had been unable to attend the June event but were accommodated aboard a luxury party coach provided by an anonymous donor, with complimentary champagne, courtesy of Bryan Zapf '85! As if all this weren't enough, the event also proved a recruitment touch point for the College: four students from Jefferson High School's Maritime and Marine Environmental Science Academy mixed with alumni of all ages, learning about the opportunities of a Maritime College education and the rewarding careers made available thereby.

Special acknowledgments to Chapter President Ashley O'Brien '17, Chapter VP Kerri Bancroft '05, MCAA Membership Committee Chair and Chapters Ambassador Seth Lucas '01, MCAA Executive Director Maggy Williams Giunco, MCAA Director of Operations Saira Yoo, and to all who made this inaugural gathering a smashing success!



CHAPTER GATHERINGS

DEL-VAL PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

55TH ANNUAL POPMS CRAB FEAST

A warm late-summer sun shone on historic Fort Mifflin at Philadelphia, PA, Friday, September 13, for the 55th Annual Crab Feast, presented by the Ports of Philadelphia Maritime Society (PoPMS) together with the MCAA Delaware Valley Philadelphia Chapter. Alumni from Classes of 1968 through 2013 came together for fellowship and to enjoy a crab dinner with cold beer.



The feast was followed by the Del Val Philadelphia Chapter's Annual Whiskey and Cigar Event, held at the home of one of the Chapter Members. Last January, Ryan McBride and son Liam, recently accepted to Maritime College at the time, met with Art and SUNY Maritime 2/C cadet William Eden '25 through an earlier meeting with whom Liam had become acquainted with Maritime and the College's offerings. In addition to sharing events with the PoPMS's area maritime-oriented societies, the Del Val Chapter shares events with alumni chapters of other State maritime academies plus the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy to enhance fellowship and distribute event work load. Del Val also includes parents of Maritime students in Chapter events. In the left photo, Ryan and Art are accompanied by Whitney Taylor '13.



Dave Chalson '74 and Steve Richter '81 enjoy whiskey and cigars on the back deck of the host home of the Whiskey and Cigar Event.



L-r: Dave Mackey '79, Ryan McBride, parent of SUNY Maritime Class of '28 student Liam McBride, Charlie McCammon '87, and Del Val Chapter President Dr. Art Sulzer '74.

LONG ISLAND CHAPTER

SUMMER PARTY AT RALPH'S FISHING STATION

The Long Island MCAA Chapter held their annual summer party Saturday, August 17, 2024 at Ralph's Fishing Station in Mount Sinai, NY. Billed as an "Alumni Event" by Amie Carter '00 on the Chapter's Facebook page – see what she did there? – All Maritime alumni who were in the area were invited to attend this event, hosted for the fourth year in a row at the marina operated by Jill Davenport '13 – carrying her father's name – and her family. The weather was beautifully mild, the band was great, the beer was flowing, and alumni from the Classes of 1965 through 2023 gathered to share sea stories, making this a memorable event on the serene shores of Mount Sinai Harbor just off Long Island Sound.



L-r: Vic Corso '83, Justin Gathard '05, Harry Stumme '65, Brett Ashley '81, Jim Yahner '86, Mark Kazemi '78, Mike Hamilton '83, Wesley Pase '23, and Jill Davenport '13.

CHAPTER GATHERINGS

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

SUPPORTS LIBERTY NAUTICAL EDUCATION CENTER (LiNE) | OCTOBER 17, 2024

The Second Annual Dinner for the Liberty Nautical Education Center (LiNE) was held Thursday, October 17, 2024 at The View in Jersey City, NJ, to help raise funds for LiNE programs and the Liberty Sea Scout Squadron. MCAA New Jersey Chapter Members and other maritime industry partners, Sea Scout leaders, and community supporters turned out in force to support LiNE's maritime educational outreach to teens involved in Sea Scouting. Awards were presented to Bayonne Drydock & Repair, the Society of Marine Port Engineers, the Virginia Maitland-Sachs Foundation, Training Ship Empire State VII Master Capt. Morgan McManus '92, Vinik Marine Services Inc., Maritime College Adjunct Instructor Capt. Chris Begley '82, and Capt. Pat Geiger for their achievements and support to LiNE through the past year.



L-r: Paulina Trzepacz '05, Capt. Mike Vinik '03, Cal Hausheer '79, Martin Szypulski '22, LiNE President Capt. James Zatwarnicki, Jr. '02, Capt. Jeff Spillane '02, Capt. Tim Ferrie '78, Capt. Chris Begley '82, Amie Carter '00, Capt. Jamie McNamara '94, and Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Sector New York and Captain of the Port CAPT Jonathan Andrechik (USCGA).

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

AUTUMN BEACH PARTY AT THE SANDBOX AT SEA STREAK

On Thursday, October 3, folks in the New Jersey Chapter enjoyed a mild autumn evening at The Sandbox at Sea Streak, a waterfront bar and entertainment venue in Highlands, NJ, for a meet-up. Overlooking the mouth of the Shrewsbury River where

it empties into Sandy Hook Bay, the Sandbox is just about three miles southeast of the 2.5-mile-long Navy pier at Naval Weapons Station Earle. Alumni of many generations were on hand to enjoy the camaraderie and conviviality.



L-r: Todd Stevens '93, Lisa Hudson '93, Charlie Hudson '90, Paulina Trzepacz '05, Capt. Jamie McNamara '94, Brian Kopka '03, Nick Orfanidis '72, Carlo Ruggiero '73, Charles Hoffman '60, Shane Tutass '15, Raj Panda '01, Steve Werse '79, Greg Smith '91, Capt. Chris Begley '82, Capt. Paul Ginnane '95, and Donnie Frazier '19.

CHAPTER GATHERINGS



GREEK CHAPTER

14 MEET AT FLISVOS MARINA, ATHENS | OCTOBER 9

A vision that began in 2006 is now becoming a reality. Productive discussions among College President RADM John Craine, the Greek Ministry of Merchant Marine, and various Greek merchant marine academies culminated in a Summer Sea Term visit by TSES VI to the Greek island of Andros and the Port of Piraeus in 2010, an event graciously hosted by a group of esteemed Greek Maritime alumni. Over the past 18 years, four College Presidents have played a pivotal role in strengthening the

relationship between the College and the MCAA. Thanks to the unwavering dedication of our alumni, the foundation for establishing a Greek MCAA chapter is beginning to take root.

During Homecoming 2023, Captain Dimitrios Kokkinis '03 engaged in discussions with MCAA President Steve Carbery '80 to establish a Greek Chapter. On January 25, coinciding with the MCAA Distinguished Alumni Honors Dinner, Captain Kokkinis hosted a meet-

up with alumni in Greece, which you can read more about in the Spring '24 issue of Fort Schuyler. Following this, on October 9, a gathering took place with fourteen Greek alumni at TGI Fridays, located at Flisvos Marina in Athens, Greece.

"Our next gathering is November 27, just before Thanksgiving," said Captain Kokkinis, as this went to press. He adds that his outreach efforts have identified just over 30 Greek alumni, including some living outside Greece. "I still have more to go," he noted.



Greek Domers are a mix of undergrad and graduate alumni with most working in shipping. Shown at the Oct. 9 event, left to right, are Alex Georgiadis '08, Sofia Athanasatos '03, Michael Papalis '01, Capt. Dimitrios Kokkinis '03, Neofytos Kourtesis '09, Achilleas Harokopos '14, Efstratios Voukidis '16, Evangelos Kefalas '12, Ioannis Vasileiadis '09, Makis Hatzimihalis '03, Anna Tsabanakis '09, and Yuri Theodoridis '00. Also attending but not pictured were Andreas Matthaios '05 and Nikolaos Matthaios '14.

EBB TIDE

Charles French	1944	Francis "Frank" Gallo	1964
Alan Friedland	1950	William "Bill" Auger III	1966
George Hill	1950	Peter Bartkowiak	1967
Marcus Temkin	1950	John Vare	1967
John "Mischief" Macina	1953	Dennis Jason	1969
Robert "Bob" Bedell	1954	Greg Thorvaldsen	1970
CDR David Birdsall	1955	Ronald Baron	1971
John Hickey III	1956	Michael "Mike" Meyer	1971
Capt. Rosario "Roy" Melita	1957	Stephen "Steve" Cernik	1971
Henry "Hank" Schober	1957	Gerald "Gerry" Ross	1971
James McDiarmid	1960	Thomas "Tom" or "TP" Miller	1973
Gary Shulenburg	1960	Robert Gucwa	1982
CAPT John "Jack" Ringelberg	1961	Michael Mansfield	1983
Donald "Don" Treat	1961	Kristian "Kris" Van Derzee	1990
Philip "Phil" Morvillo	1962	Austin Skerritt	2014
Richard Albers	1963	Bryan Alix	MS 2017
Alan Ross	1963		



UPCOMING EVENTS

FOR MARITIME COLLEGE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

Spring 2025

Maritime College Alumni Association – New Alumni Night

Visit the MCAA website and social media for further information

April 22-24

Maritime College Birthday Week

TBA

April 25

Inauguration of President John A. Okon

TBA

May 23

May Commencement

Fort Schuyler, SUNY Maritime College, Bronx, NY

May 25

Summer Sea Term Departure

Olivet Pier, SUNY Maritime College, Bronx, NY

June 9

Maritime College Alumni Association –36th Annual Golf Classic

Plainfield Country Club, Edison, New Jersey

July 29

Summer Sea Term Arrival

Olivet Pier, SUNY Maritime College, Bronx, NY

September 16

Admiral's Dinner

Visit the SUNY Maritime College website and social media for further information

October 17-18

Homecoming Weekend

October 17

Maritime College Alumni Association – Ancient Mariner Golf Outing at Pelham Bay & Split Rock Golf Courses, Bronx, NY

October 18

- Maritime College Alumni Association Annual Membership Meeting
- Class Reunion events, Pass-in-Review
- Heritage Hall Induction
- Tailgate and Football Game with Reunion Class Parade/Regimental March On
- Alumni Post-Game Celebration at Paddy's on the Bay





Fall 2025

Fall Networking and Nominations Meeting


Visit the MCAA website and social media for further information

Stay connected with us by checking our websites and following us on social media!

SUNY Maritime College

-  www.sunymaritime.edu
-  [@maritimecollege](https://www.instagram.com/maritimecollege)
-  [sunymaritimecollege](https://www.facebook.com/sunymaritimecollege)
-  [@MaritimeCollege](https://twitter.com/MaritimeCollege)

Maritime College Alumni Association

-  www.maritimecollegeaa.org
-  [@Maritimecollegeaa](https://www.instagram.com/Maritimecollegeaa)
-  [Maritime College Alumni Assoc.](https://www.facebook.com/MaritimeCollegeAlumniAssoc)
-  [@Maritimealumni](https://twitter.com/Maritimealumni)

utiliVisor

Where accuracy delivers efficiency

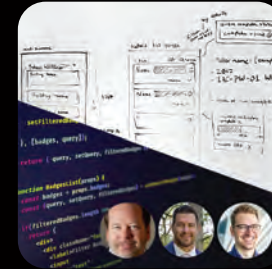


submetering & energy plant monitoring

Our comprehensive metering and plant services enable cost savings and improve utility cost allocation. All utiliVisor clients get professional tenant billing packages and access to meter, systems & energy experts.

SERVICES INCLUDE

- Central plant monitoring with dedicated engineering support
- Actionable analytics in plain language from energy analysts and engineers
- Remote & onsite meter reading
- Implementation of scalable, non-proprietary remote metering & monitoring systems
- Monthly tenant energy billing packages
- Foolproof online platform & mobile applications
- Meter accuracy testing and more!





6 Pennyfield Avenue | Throggs Neck, NY 10465
www.sunymaritime.edu | 718.409.7200

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
WHITE PLAINS, NY
PERMIT #825



**KEEP an EYE OUT
for the return of
The ONLINE Directory!**



**The MCAA is excited to
bring you a more interactive
online experience in 2025.
Stay tuned for
progress updates.**

Oh What a Night!

A HUGE

Thank YOU!

To all alumni, corporations,
friends of Maritime;
Rear Admiral Sobeck
Dr. Sal Mercogliano '89
Rear Admiral Okon '91
& Steve Carbery '80
for their contributions to the
success of the

**150th
Gala
Celebration**



SAVE the DATE!

**36th Annual
MCAA Golf Classic
June 9, 2025**



**Plainfield Country Club
Edison, New Jersey**