

**From Fort Schuyler & Beyond: YOUR Alumni Newsletter**  
**February 4, 2026**

### **From the President**

Good day, Maritime Nation,

As I sit down to write this introductory note for our first newsletter of 2026, we are just coming off a wonderful Annual Distinguished Alumni Honors Dinner, where we had the privilege of recognizing two truly distinguished alumni: **John Valvo '83** and **Charlie Munsch '73**.

Although they graduated a decade apart, both John and Charlie are exemplars of outstanding lifelong service to Maritime College – each contributing in meaningful and complementary ways. Both are past Presidents of the Alumni Association, exemplifying the spirit of Time and Talent. Charlie has dedicated himself to teaching, mentoring, and coaching—sharing his knowledge and experience with the next generation. John has led our SST Scholarship Committee and set a powerful example of philanthropy, embodying Time, Talent, and Treasure. It was an outstanding evening filled with great stories, camaraderie, and pride—reminding us exactly why this Association exists.

January also marked the completion of our annual election cycle. I would like to sincerely thank **Mike Trotta '99** and **Justin Dela Cruz '20** for their service and dedication to the Board. We are pleased to welcome **Dennis Hanley '20**, who will serve as Secretary, and **Kathleen Tart '02** as a Board Member. Congratulations as well to **Ted Mason '57** and **Vin Melwani '02** on their re-election to the Board, Class of 2029.

By now, sustaining members should have received the latest issue of *Fort Schuyler* magazine in their mailbox. A tremendous amount of work goes into producing this publication which highlights the many achievements, stories, and initiatives across Maritime Nation. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoy bringing it to you. Please remember that this is YOUR magazine covering YOUR stories, so please contact our editor, Don Gale, at [Editor@maritimecollegeaa.org](mailto:Editor@maritimecollegeaa.org), with your stories and photos for content in the Class Notes, Industry Encounters, Where in the World, and Maritime College Memories categories for publication. Also, feel free to email Don with your thoughts and comments on our newsletters.

Please enjoy this newsletter, which includes more in-depth updates on the activities and accomplishments of our alumni across the country and around the world as we head onward into Spring Semester. I encourage you to visit our website, [MaritimeCollegeAA.org](http://MaritimeCollegeAA.org), sign up for a sustaining membership, and ensure we have your current contact information so we can stay connected.

Steaming ahead smartly and checking compasses frequently,

Sincerely,

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

### **Association News**

#### **Alumni Honored at Tribeca Rooftop**

A chilly Thursday, January 29th, saw 250 Maritime alumni, staff, friends, and cadets honoring **John F. Valvo '83 as Alumnus of the Year** and **Prof. Charles J. Munsch '73 for Lifetime Achievement** in the warm glow of Manhattan's Tribeca Rooftop. We'd like to thank all who turned out as well as our generous sponsors and seat donors!

Since earning a Bachelor of Engineering in Naval Architecture, **Charles Munsch** has served as Professor of Engineering, Privateers football coach, mentor, and exemplar of service with Maritime College since the mid-1970s. In class and on the field, Charlie brings his brand of discipline, excellence, and "tough love" to his students. Honored by the College in 2002 for his

teaching, coaching, and mentorship, Charlie was inducted into the Maritime College Athletics Hall of Fame in 2024.

The love lavished on Charlie by the alumni present, many of whom had benefited by his instruction, was palpable as he received his Lifetime Achievement honor. Charlie honored several past students including Capt. Robert Cook '80 and Capt. Howard Wyche '79 of the Organization of Black Maritime Graduates (OBMG), and Ken Kujala '85 who passed last December 29. Introducing his sisters, children, and grandchildren present, Charlie thanked them, together with his father and his mother, for their love and support.



With a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Marine Engineering, **John Valvo** worked 15 years as a power generation consulting engineer before adopting leadership roles with ABB, Alstom Power, and APComPower. Vice President of Fresh Meadow Power (FMP) NE, LLC since 2010, John has served the MCAA as Treasurer, President, and SST Scholarship Committee Chair, driving the program to provide over \$578,000 to 155 Maritime cadets for Summer Sea Term last year. FMP is a stalwart supporter of

Maritime College, and John has been recognized by the OBMG for his ongoing philanthropic support and creation of opportunities for others in need.

After congratulating Charlie Munsch '73 on his award and thanking Annmarie Bhola '98 for her work developing the dinner video media presentations, John introduced his family present, including his 91-year-old mother and his wife, Tracey. On extolling the virtues and values of the Maritime community and education, John encouraged generous donations to the SST Scholarship program, instantly garnering positive responses from RADM John Okon '91 and others present. Appropriately, the evening embodied the full measure of camaraderie, connection, recognition, and student outreach for which our Alumni Association exists.

**Thank you to our Sponsors of the 2026 Distinguished Alumni Honors Dinner**

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*\*Denotes past MCAA Honoree*



**Welcome 2026 MCAA Officers and Board Members-Elect!**

Congratulations and welcome to our new elected Officers and Board Members for 2026.

**Officers**

- President: Stephen J. Carbery '80
- 1st Vice President: Seth Lucas '01
- 2nd Vice President: Richard McClain '14
- Secretary: Dennis Hanley '20
- Treasurer: Sam Reilly '95
- Assistant Treasurer: George Gacser '87

**Board of Directors, Class of 2029**

- Ted Mason '57
- Kathleen (Campbell) Tart '02
- Vinod "Vin" Melwani '02

Many thanks to all who were willing to throw their hat into the ring for service to the Association and to all of you valued alumni who voted!

**Join Us as a Privateer Recruiting Officer! PROP Training February 13**

Support the College's mission to educate licensed mariners and engineers. On-campus training will be offered once again on Friday, February 13, focused on engaging ambitious high school students and highlighting the opportunities a Maritime College education can unlock. The Association will cover meals for all trainees, and overnight accommodations aboard the Training Ship are available for out-of-town participants. Register your interest [HERE](#).





### **Tampa Bay Chapter Supports Inaugural Maritime Career Expo**

Mission-driven as they are toward informing young folks of maritime career opportunities, the **Tampa Bay Chapter**, led by Chapter President Ashley O'Brien '17 and Vice President Kerri Bancroft '05, went all-in on January 21 to promote and support the **First Annual Maritime Expo** jointly presented by **Port Tampa Bay (PTB)** and the **Port of Tampa Propeller Club**. Nearly 800 students from high schools across three counties as well as local college and continuing education students connected at PTB Cruise Terminal 6 with representatives of port tenant companies and other maritime employers, military services, and all six state maritime academies plus the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy! The event was hosted by 42 exhibitors and more than ten volunteers. PTB President and CEO Paul Anderson has declared that the Expo will be held annually going forward.

### **Bobby Davis '17 Launches Tampa Bay Maritime Society**

As an epicenter for maritime activity, Florida naturally draws marine professionals from across the nation. Leave it to a Domer, Bobby Davis '17, to kick off a group uniting graduates of all the state and national maritime academies in 2025! **The Tampa Bay Maritime Society** held their first gathering last November 6 at the Yard House Restaurant in Tampa's Channel District, hosting a robust group of fellow alumni and a strong turnout from other academies. A second event has already been held at The Getaway in St. Petersburg January 8. Alumni, friends, and mariners everywhere are welcome to check out a TBMS event whenever you are in town! Search for the Tampa Bay Maritime Society on Facebook, or contact Tampa Bay Chapter President Ashley O'Brien, [mcaatampabay@maritimecollegeaa.org](mailto:mcaatampabay@maritimecollegeaa.org), for information.



### **Summer Sea Term Appeal 2026 – help our Cadets Climb Aboard!**

Summer Sea Term not only comprises many Domers' fondest Maritime memories – it's a key hallmark of Maritime College's hands-on learning! Our Summer Sea Term Appeal is your opportunity to pay it forward and to help ease the struggle of cadets and their families to meet escalating SST costs on top of academic tuition. With 2026 student applications in, now's a great time to help everyone who wants to get up that gangway get up that gangway! Your generous donation is gratefully accepted [HERE](#).

### **SUNY Maritime Parents Association Anniversary March 28 – YOUR Input Wanted**

The SUNY Maritime Parents Association Corp. has set the date of Saturday, **March 28, 2026** for their **74th Anniversary celebration!** This event is still in the planning stage, so any alumni or friends who are parents of current students or otherwise connected with the Parents Association are encouraged to touch base with Jeannine Timpone, [parents@sunymaritime.org](mailto:parents@sunymaritime.org), to provide input and ideas as she is working toward issuing an official invitation shortly!

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## **College News**

### **SST 2026 Instructors Needed!**

**Licensed and unlicensed instructors** are needed for Summer Sea Term 2026. Positions are available for Cruise A (April 30-June 9), Cruise B (June 10-July 20) or for the full duration.

Requirements include U.S. passport, Transportation Worker Identification Credentials (TWIC), Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC), and current Medical Certificate. **The Marine Engineering Department can assist with paperwork required for any credentials.** The full position offering and description is available [HERE](#). Contact Catherine Strez, Associate Professor – Marine Engineering, [cstrez@sunymaritime.edu](mailto:cstrez@sunymaritime.edu) or Dan Fridline, Chair, Engineering Department, [dfridline@sunymaritime.edu](mailto:dfridline@sunymaritime.edu), for more information.

**Upcoming Events at the Maritime Industry Museum**

This spring, the Maritime Industry Museum will host **Hidden Canvases**, an exhibition by artist Cathryn Jirlds running March 20–April 24, featuring works that explore the global shipping fleet as accidental art, with opening and closing receptions on March 20 and April 24. On Friday, April 24, the Museum will also host the **Shipbuilding in America Conference**, bringing together industry professionals for discussions and networking focused on the resurgence and future of American shipbuilding and repair. Details and tickets for both events are available online. For additional information, contact Matt Bonvento '01, [maritimeindustrymuseum@gmail.com](mailto:maritimeindustrymuseum@gmail.com).

**Upcoming Events**

Click [HERE](#) to view all events on the MCAA Calendar.

Friday, February 13 – **Privateer Recruiting Officer Program (PROP) Training**, SUNY Maritime College Campus. Meals provided, on-campus overnight accommodations available. Register [HERE](#).

Thursday, February 19, 6:00 PM - **The Villages (Florida) Inaugural Meeting** at Palmer Legends Country Club in The Villages, FL. Open to alumni and friends within The Villages and nearby! Contact Chris Johnson '82, [hemlockledge85@gmail.com](mailto:hemlockledge85@gmail.com) for more informationDetails & Registration [HERE](#).

Wednesday, February 25, 2026 – **Baltimore Chapter Social** at Nick's Fish House in Baltimore, MD. Event information [HERE](#).

Tuesday, March 10 – **Tomb Lecture Series Event**, Maritime Academic Center Multi-Purpose Room (MAC MPR), Maritime College. College Activity Hour event between 3:00PM-4:00PM; Book signing 4:00PM-5:00PM; Evening Community Event between 7:00PM-8:00PM. Featured event TBD; for information, contact Capt. Adam Grohman, Dean of Students, [agrohman@sunymaritime.edu](mailto:agrohman@sunymaritime.edu).

Wednesday and Thursday, March 11-12, 12:00-4:00PM – **Maritime College Spring Career Fair**, Riesenbergs Gymnasium, Maritime College. For information and to register, contact Michelle Reina, Director of Career Services, [Mreina@sunymaritime.edu](mailto:Mreina@sunymaritime.edu).

Wednesday, March 18, 6:00 PM - **Space Coast Spring Social** at George & Dragon Tavern in Cocoa, FL. Details [HERE](#). Registration coming soon.

Friday, March 20, 5:00-8:00PM – **Maritime Museum Opening Reception: Hidden Canvases by Cathryn Jirlds**, Maritime Industry Museum at Fort Schuyler, Bronx, NY. Event information and tickets available [HERE](#).

Tuesday, March 24, 6:00 PM - **Tampa Bay Chapter St. Patrick's Trivia Night** at O'Tooles Irish Pub in Brandon, FL. Details [HERE](#). Registration coming soon.

Friday, April 24, 2026 – **Shipbuilding in America Conference**, Maritime Industry Museum at Fort Schuyler. SPONSORSHIPS are available. Information and tickets are available [HERE](#). For additional information, contact Executive Director Matt Bonvento, [maritimeindustrymuseum@gmail.com](mailto:maritimeindustrymuseum@gmail.com).

Friday, April 24, 7:00 AM - **Tampa Bay Chapter Supports the Port Tampa Bay 12th Annual Golf Tournament** in Odessa, FL. Details [HERE](#).

Friday, April 24, 5:00PM-8:00PM – **Maritime Museum Closing Reception: Hidden Canvases** by Cathryn Jirlds, Maritime Industry Museum at Fort Schuyler, Bronx, NY. Event information and tickets available [HERE](#).

Spring 2026 – **MCAA New Alumni Night** and **MCAA Spring Networking Night**. Dates and locations pending – Stay Tuned!

Friday, May 8 – **May Commencement**

Tuesday, May 12 – **TS Empire State VII departure** – Olivet Pier

Monday, June 8 – **37th Annual MCAA Golf Classic**, Plainfield Country Club, Edison, NJ. Save the Date!

Thursday, July 16 – **TS Empire State VII return** – Olivet Pier

**Ebb Tide**

Fair winds & following seas  
to fellow Alumni who have most recently crossed the bar.

John Messersmith '48  
Robert Martin '58  
Carl Merz '61  
Paul Schmidt '61  
Robert “Schweigs” Schweiger '64  
Charles “Skip” Shattuck '66  
Robert Santonocito '70  
Thomas Capone III '71  
John Kiever '75  
Stephen Schoenster '77  
Michael Theodoseau '77  
Robert Binder '81  
Charles Cook '81  
Sinclair Ekekeubor '81  
Brian Fuller '81  
Kenneth “Ken” Kujala '85  
Paul Gilmour '88  
Anthony “Tony” Sidlauskas '92  
Luke Serkanic '14  
Joseph “Joe” Cucchiaro '25 USN  
Christopher “Chris” Moscatello '25

**TO JOIN, OR TO RENEW YOUR MCAA SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP:**

Please access the Membership Form [HERE](#).

**Signal Flags**

In case you need to get ahold of us, please reach out to the following individuals:

**President, Steve Carbery '80**

[president@maritimecollegeaa.org](mailto:president@maritimecollegeaa.org)

**Exec. Director, Maggy Williams Giunco**

[director@maritimecollegeaa.org](mailto:director@maritimecollegeaa.org)

**Dir. Operations, Saira Yoo**

[syoo@maritimecollegeaa.org](mailto:syoo@maritimecollegeaa.org)

**Dir. Communications, Taylor Netchert**

[communications@maritimecollegeaa.org](mailto:communications@maritimecollegeaa.org)

**Editor, Don Gale**

[editor@maritimecollegeaa.org](mailto:editor@maritimecollegeaa.org)

**Alumni Relations Associate, Denise Tiernan**

[Denise@maritimecollegeaa.org](mailto:Denise@maritimecollegeaa.org)

**Board Members' and Chapter Presidents' contact info available at:**

<https://www.maritimecollegeaa.org/about/>

From Your Friends at the Maritime College Alumni Association



Maritime College Alumni Association | 6 Pennyfield Avenue | Bronx, NY 10465 US

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