



Volume 40, Number 1
Spring 2026

Grand Lodge
International Ship Masters' Association

ISMALetter

Grand President's Report

After a very cold and snowy winter, the Great Lakes shipping season is off and running. Throughout the winter, ISMA lodges across the region have made a splash with a variety of events ranging from Industry Day to Blessing of the Fleet events, to dinner dances and more. Thanks to the media work of Matt Zaleski (Toledo Lodge #9), news of these events had a much greater reach to the public. My work with the annual Great Lakes License Advancement Program (LAP) at the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) prevented me from attending most of these engaging functions, although I was able to make it to the Detroit Lodge's 134th annual Dinner Dance on March 7.

Mentoring the next generation of deck officers is a hallmark of the ISMA organization. To that extent, I am proud to have led the Great Lakes LAP at MITAGS since 2009. Many of today's Mates and Captains who "hawspiped" their way up have passed through this program. This winter's class was unique in that among my students was the first Grand River Navigation Maritime Apprentice Program (MAP) group. These apprentices are at the tail end of their two-year journey to obtaining their license credential. It is worth mentioning that our 2025 Hawsepipe scholarship recipient, Tyler Giblin, is one of these apprentices. Apart from academy or hawsepipe routes, the MAP and similar programs provide an alternative pathway to becoming a ship's officer, and such programs should be considered by those wishing to enter the industry.

ISMA's presence on social media continues to grow, thanks to the efforts of members who take the time to "like", "share", and otherwise promote our posts. Much credit is due to Mike Loescher (Milwaukee Lodge #6) for his work on our social media platforms as well as with this newsletter.

Since convention time, the ISMA Scholarship Committee has produced a new poster (created by Peggy O'Connell, Green Bay Lodge #18) to advertise our scholarship program to potential applicants. Seann O'Donoghue (Georgian Bay - Huronia Lodge #15) has taken the lead on printing and distribution for the Canadian side, while Twin Ports Lodge #12 paid for an initial round of printing and shipping of the posters to all U.S. lodges who requested such. Lodge #12 also paid for the creation of an ISMA banner (not lodge specific) which can be passed around for use at local events.

I was able to represent the ISMA and AMMV organizations at the inaugural Mariners for America conference, held at MITAGS near Baltimore/BWI, which focused on the recruitment, retainment, and training of

U.S. mariners. This was a landmark conference that is expected to be an annual event. Please see my separate report.

One last thought: While people will vary in opinion about the recent events in the Middle East, I think we can all agree that the global maritime industry has been "front page news". On the homefront, any prolonged military crisis is likely to expose shortcomings in U.S. maritime, namely the need for more ships and mariners. We on the Great Lakes are an important piece of this larger puzzle, and as members of ISMA we can vocally offer support for a stronger U.S.-fleet and base of manpower.

Wishing everyone a great start to the shipping season!

Fraternally,

Capt. Chris Edyvean

2026 Grand Lodge President



2026 Great Lakes LAP class at MITAGS (L to R): Tyler Giblin (Grand River Navigation Apprentice Program & 2025 recipient of ISMA Hawsepipe Scholarship), Sonora "Sunny" Rooney (Grand River Navigation Apprentice Program), Reed Hopper (Grand River Navigation), Konstantin Morris (Grand River Navigation), Rob Cardinal (Grand River Navigation), David Butler (Alaska Marine Highway), Heath Hahr (Interlake Steamship Company), Brad Hursh (Interlake Steamship Company), Owen Franco (Grand River Navigation Apprentice Program), Chris Edyvean (MITAGS Instructor & 2026 ISMA Grand President). Photo credit: MMP/Lisa Rosenthal



Final Bells

Gary E. Mielke	10090	Toledo Lodge 9 (53 Years)
Norman T. Sieloff	11463	Detroit Lodge 7
Pete M. Clure	A-11771	Twin Ports Lodge 12
Sandra J. Beard		Wife of Past President Patrick Beard

From the Lodges

Port Huron Lodge No. 2

Port Huron Lodge 2 Holds its 132nd Annual Dinner Dance

With historic company flags hung around the hall, Port Huron Lodge No. 2 held its 132nd Dinner Dance on February 28th at the Blue Water Convention Center on the St. Clair River. The attendance was great with about 70 guests. Eight Past Grand Presidents arrived and 7 lodges in the ISMA were represented. The Grand Lodge was represented by Secretary/Treasurer Capt. Tom Foster and NELC Chairman Capt. Scott Skrzypczak. New Lodge No. 2 President, Capt. Cary Ketelhut was M.C. and everyone enjoyed good conversation and dancing to DJ music. Port Huron Lodge wishes to thank all those who attended and traveled for making the event a success.



Port Huron Lodge Members



Capt. George Haynes, Serenina Ferrara, Jonene Eliasson, Capt. Roger Hewlett.



Past Grand Presidents (L to R) Joe Ruch (2020 & 2021), Luke Clyburn (2023), Harry Dusseau (2018), George Haynes (2003), Lee Barnhill (2017), Joe Walters (2015), Seann O'Donoghue (2012), Bob Lund (2016)



Capt. Harry Dusseau, Barbara Kennedy, Capt. Lee Barnhill, Capt. Joe Walters



(L to R) Tracey Ruch, Capt. Cary Ketelhut, Capt. Joe Ruch



(L to R) Capt. Trevor and Tori Schick, Capt. Dan and Tessa Towner

Chicago Lodge No. 3

Lodge 3 Hosts 28th Annual Maritime Industry Day

Lodge 3 proudly hosted its 28th Annual Maritime Industry Day, bringing together maritime professionals from all sectors of our industry for a full morning of programming and afternoon sector breakouts. Regrettably, this marked the second consecutive year without U.S. Coast Guard participation — last year due to shifting agency priorities under the new administration, and this year because of the partial government shutdown. Their absence was noted, and their involvement remains a priority for future events.

Program Highlights

- The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** waterways project team provided updates on ongoing and upcoming infrastructure work throughout the Chicago area.
- The **Chicago Department of Transportation** presented progress updates on

the Lake Street Bridge project and other projects on the Chicago Area Waterways.

- The **Chicago Harbor Safety Committee** outlined their recreational boater education efforts, an upcoming bareboat operator workshop, and a forthcoming multi-agency field exercise simulating a fire aboard a large passenger vessel.
- **MARAD Great Lakes Gateway Director Travis Black** spoke to the agency's role in administering port infrastructure grants and other work his agency is a part of across the region.
- **We Work the Waterways** presented their workforce development program, which engages youth in maritime career opportunities through hands-on interaction days now expanding into Great Lakes states.
- **Maritime Women Making Waves** is a new group forming in Chicago that will run through Lodge 3. They are a few events in and building up a lot of steam, we look forward to supporting their efforts.
- As always, **Chuck Kakuska** kept attendees current on the latest maritime licensing updates from the USCG.

We extend our sincere thanks to all who attended, both locally and from other member Lodges. Lodge 3 leadership will be convening to evaluate the future direction of this event — with USCG re-engagement as a central topic. Ensuring the most relevant and impactful programming possible each year remains our commitment, and the Coast Guard's participation is essential to achieving that goal.



Attendees listen to Capt. Ray Novak, Lodge 3 President



Lodge 3 Board – (L to R) Outgoing Pres, Gabe Argumedo, Pres Ray Novak, Secretary/Treasurer Kelli Kovach, 1st VP Diamond Gibbs, 2nd VP Marty Bernstein



MARAD Great Lakes Gateway Acting Director Travis Black



Maritime Women Making Waves group

PVA Annual MariTrends Conference

This year's conference was held February 22-25 in Covington, Kentucky on the south bank of the Ohio River. The PVA Annual Convention at MariTrends brings together leaders, key government officials, and influencers in the U.S. passenger vessel industry. From a variety of seminars, workshops, and roundtables, this highly anticipated annual convention provides cutting-edge information and ideas specifically tailored to your business and operational needs.

Industry Updates & Legislative Highlights

Coast Guard Mission Concerns Members have raised significant concerns regarding the U.S. Coast Guard's shifting priorities away from its core safety mission. Leadership is actively addressing this issue through multiple channels, including the upcoming Congressional Fly-In, the Quality Partnership meeting, and a planned direct engagement with the Commandant who was to speak at conference but withdrew with the partial shutdown in effect.

Regulatory & Safety Planning Updates The PVA Alternate Security Plan is being updated to incorporate all new cybersecurity regulations. There is a renewed emphasis on treating Safety Management Systems (SMS) and Crisis Plans as living documents that must evolve continuously. Operators are encouraged to conduct in-port exercises to test unified command structures and strengthen coordination with local emergency services before a crisis occurs. As a practical first step, operators should invite their local fire departments aboard to familiarize them with vessel layouts and operational limitations — helping to identify gaps and prioritize corrective action.

NTSB Engagement Threshold Update The NTSB will raise its investigation engagement threshold from \$500,000 to \$2,000,000, better reflecting current economic conditions and reducing unnecessary scrutiny for operators.

City Cruises DC Recognized for DCA Crash Response The NTSB recognized 39 members of the City Cruises DC team for their critical support role following the collision between an American Airlines aircraft and a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter near Reagan National Airport. Having just completed a charter at the time of the crash, the team was on scene within minutes and provided vital assistance to dive teams and recovery personnel over six days of operations.

Congressman Tom Massie Delivers Keynote U.S. Representative Tom Massie (R-KY) delivered the opening day keynote address, covering several priorities of direct relevance to the industry:

- **Coast Guard Funding:** Rep. Massie expressed concern over USCG budget entanglement with ICE funding and committed to working toward separating the two to protect waterway safety.
- **Jones Act:** He reaffirmed his support for the Jones Act as both a national security measure and a pillar of domestic maritime industry.



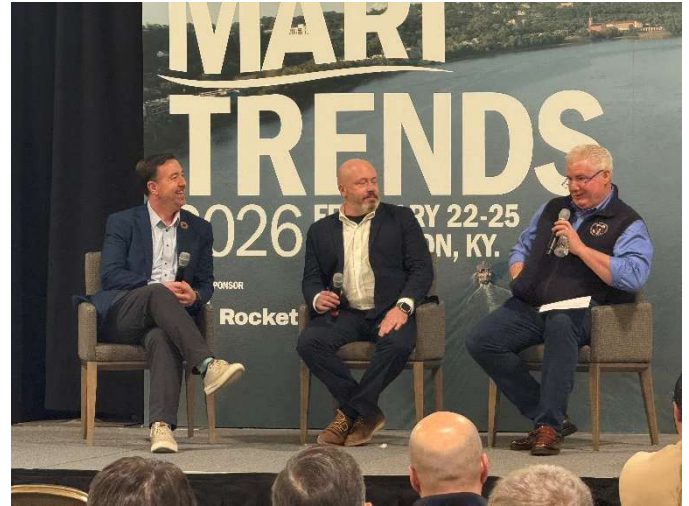


U.S. Representative Tom Massie (R-KY)

- **WRDA:** Rep. Massie continues to champion Water Resources Development Act provisions ensuring that operator-contributed funds are directed specifically to the locks those operators use, rather than being diverted to unrelated dam projects or other public works.



Photo of Great Lakes Region attendees



City Cruises GM, Director of Marine Ops and NTSB

Milwaukee Lodge No. 6

Lodge 6 Presents Donations to AMMV and ISMA Scholarship Fund

At the 136th Grand Lodge Convention in Duluth, MN, members of Lodge 6 presented a check to Capt. Chris Edyvean, American Merchant Marine Veterans National President and to Capt. Seann O'Donoghue, ISMA Scholarship Committee Chair at the Grand Ball. The checks were a result of surplus funds from tickets and sponsorships of the "29 Bells" event held on Nov. 10 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the loss of the EDMUND FITZGERALD and her crew. Both hosts-Milwaukee Lodge 6 and the Wisconsin Marine Historical Society pledged to donate any surplus funds from the event.



Members of Lodge No. 6 present a check to the ISMA Scholarship Fund on behalf of the Lodge 6 "29 Bells" Event Committee at the Duluth Convention Grand Ball

Ghost Ships Festival in Manitowoc, WI

The 2026 Ghost Ships Festival took place on *Friday, March 6, 2026, and Saturday, March 7, 2026*, at the Inn on Maritime Bay in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The Festival is a two-day gathering that brings Great Lakes maritime history to life through shipwreck presentations, hands-on technology demos, and community events. Hosted by the Wisconsin Underwater Archaeology Association, it draws divers, historians, explorers, and enthusiasts for an immersive look at the region’s lost vessels.



At Ghost Ships Festival (L to R) Members of Lodge No.18 - Peter Groh & Capt. Rocky Groh and Lodge No. 6 - Capt. Mike Loescher, Todd Gordon and Capt. Greg Stamatelakys

Visit to Burger Boat and Tour of R/V KIYI

On February 21, 2026, PGP Capt. Joe Walters conducted a tour of R/V KIYI for Lodge 6 Members at Burger Boat in Manitowoc, WI. Capt. Walters is Master of the U.S. Geological Survey research vessel that operates on Lake Superior. With a homeport of Bayfield, Wisconsin, its primary mission is fisheries science—specifically monitoring, assessing, and researching fish populations and lake habitat conditions.



Members of Lodge No. 6 and PGP Capt. Joe Walters (Lodge No. 12) astern of R/V KIYI at Burger Boat in Manitowoc, WI

Lodge No. 6 LinkedIn Page



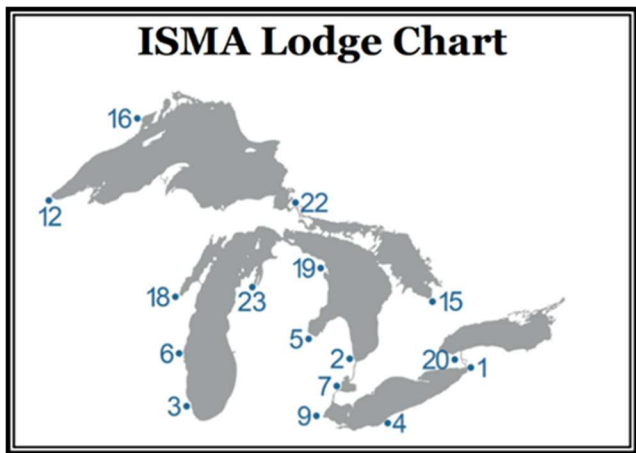
Please follow **Milwaukee Lodge 6 on LinkedIn** and “Like”, comment on, or repost our posts with your LinkedIn account. It will help with public awareness of ISMA and Milwaukee Lodge 6.

<https://linkedin.com/company/ismalodge6>

Detroit Lodge No. 7

Lodge 7 Meeting Includes NTSB Lead Investigator Speaker

On Monday, March 31, 2026, over thirty people attended the Detroit Lodge #7 luncheon with NTSB Lead Investigator, Captain Marcel Muise as guest speaker. Capt. Muise investigated high-profile marine accidents like the M/V Dali collision with Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, and the accident involving the Titan, the



submersible that imploded while diving on the M/V Titanic.

“In addition to his work at the NTSB, Captain Muise is a Master Mariner, the highest captain’s position that can be earned in the maritime hierarchy. That allows him to captain any size ship anywhere in the world,” said Captain Richard Scott / Event Coordinator & Past President, Detroit Lodge No. 7. “Capt. Muise told us about many of the aspects that go into investigating such accidents as the Dali collision, the Titan implosion, and other maritime accidents with which he has been involved.”



Captain Marcel Muise



Lodge 7 Meeting

The Detroit Lodge has two great speakers coming up for their meetings. On Tuesday, April 14, the lodge will host Melissa Kropfreiter P.E. and Deanna Fiedler, Meteorologist, on the expected water levels and weather-related information for the Great Lakes in 2026. On Saturday, May 2, the Detroit Lodge hopes to have Captain Richard P. Armstrong, Commander, USCG 9th District, update us on coast guard activities. His appearance is pending a resolution to the current government shutdown.

Blessing of the Fleet, Mariners’ Church

The 62nd annual Blessing of the Fleet took place at Mariners’ Church in downtown Detroit on Sunday, March 8, 2026, with numerous ISMA members in attendance, many of whom participated in various aspects of the service.

Several lodges were present at the service:

Lodge 2: Cary Ketelhut, Roger Hewlett

Lodge 5: Brian Eickel

Lodge 7: Scott Reynolds, Bill Griffore, Pat Beard, Luke Clyburn, John Mantyk, Jeff Haeseker, Ken Suddick, Randy Pagel, Ray Oset, Chris Stevens, Bill Hazel, Jim Severad, John Fanta, Tom Cieslinski, Dave Hohlfeldt

Lodge 9: Harry Dusseau, Phil Knetchel

Lodge 15: Thomas Foster, Marlyn Pellerin

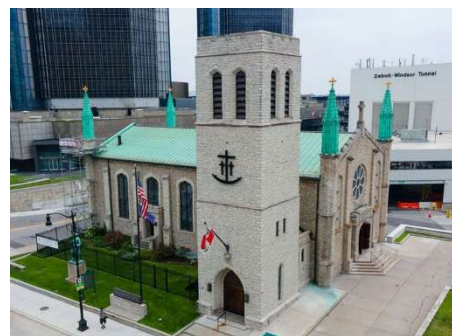
Lodge 19: John Biolchini

Lodge 23: Curt Kikkert

Rev. Todd Meyer, Rector of Mariners’ Church and a member of Lodge 7, officiated at the service. John Biolchini of the Great Lakes Maritime Academy and Lodge 19, read the Epistle. Bell ringers at the Octorara Bell were Capt. Maryln Pellerin of Lodge 15, and Captains Randy Pagel, Ray Oset and Dave Hohlfeldt of Lodge 7. The Necrologist, who read the names of departed mariners, was Curt Kikkert of Lodge 22. The final toll for military personnel, who sacrificed their lives in defense of the nation, was tolled by Roger Hewlett of Lodge 2.



At the altar, wreaths representing the dangers of Storm, Reef, Fire and Collision were presented by Capt. Harry Dusseau of Lodge 9, Capt. Luke Clyburn of Lodge 7, Capt. Thomas Foster of Lodge 15 and Capt. Patrick Beard of Lodge 7





The Receivers during the Presentation of Flags, Pennants and Burgees were Rev. Meyer and Paul Fishwick of Mariners" Church, Capt. Ray Oset of Lodge 7, Capt. Brian Eickel of Lodge 5 and Capt. Chris Stevens of Lodge 7.



The Presenters of the annual Capt. Lewis Ludington Award were Rev. Todd Meyer of Mariners' Church, Capt. Scott Reynold of Lodge 7 and Jeremiah Ludington III, who represented the Ludington Family. This year's recipient was Capt. Patrick Hart, Past Grand President and member of Lodge 19. Capt. Hart was unable to attend the service due to work commitments, so the award was accepted on his behalf by ISMA Grand Secretary Tom Foster.



Many ISMA Members in attendance at Mariners' Church

Toledo Lodge No. 9

137th Annual Grand Lodge Convention

SAVE THE DATE! Lodge 9 is hosting the ISMA Grand Lodge Convention in 2027. The 137th International Ship Masters' Association Grand Lodge Convention will be held January 28 – 31, 2027 in Toledo, Ohio. Toledo Lodge 9 will host the Convention the **Renaissance Toledo Downtown Hotel** – Those who attended the last convention in Toledo in 2018 for Captain Harry Dusseau will recall this venue as being excellent. The theme for the Saturday night party will be the TV Show M*A*S*H. Thanks to Capt. Seann O'Donoughue, Lodge 15, for his excellent suggestion. This is a perfect theme for the Toledo convention. If you remember, Jamie Farr, who played Cpl. Maxwell Q. Klinger --- He is in real life a Toledo native. He spoke frequently about Toledo in the show, along with his beloved Toledo Mud Hens and Tony Packo's. ISMA men dressing in dresses that night will not be questioned. Betty Zaleski, a Mary Kay Beauty Consultant & Toledo Lodge #9 Associate Member, will be available for proper application of make-up, where necessary or where it might make a difference. We will notify Toledo Police and the vice squad to leave us alone. We don't want any Section Eights! 😊

Pricing for the convention will be released soon on www.shipmaster.org

Freighter Cruise Raffle

In the meantime, Toledo Lodge 9 is selling Freighter Cruise Raffle Tickets for a trip on the M/V Honorable James L. Oberstar. The trip is good for the 2027 season. Guests must be at least 18 years old and adhere to all company policies and procedures. The winner must be flexible concerning ports of departure and return. The cost is \$10 per ticket or six for \$50.

To purchase tickets, mail a check made payable to ISMA Toledo Lodge 9, P.O. Box 5218, Toledo, OH 43611. For



questions or concerns please email: ISMALodge9@gmail.com or call 419-345-5206.

There are three additional prizes. They include a round trip for two aboard the historic car ferry S.S. Badger; Pilot boat ride to touch a freighter. This is good for four people and was made possible by the Lake Pilots' Association. The final prize is a trip on the legendary mailboat J.W. Westcott.

Paul LaMarre III, ISMA Grand 1st Vice-President, in the News

Lodge #9 member and ISMA Vice President, Paul LaMarre III, was featured in Marine Link and in a Facebook post by the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority.

Marine Link had an excellent story on Capt. LaMarre, his leadership, and upbringing in the maritime industry.

Greg Trauthwein, editor, who has covered the global maritime market for more than 25 years, wrote an excellent article on Capt. LaMarre and his family's background in the maritime industry.

He wrote, "for Capt. Paul C. LaMarre III, the maritime industry isn't a career choice as much as it is a family inheritance — and, in his words, "all I've known my entire life." In a recent interview with Maritime Reporter TV, Captain LaMarre gives unique insights on the operating efficiently, effectively and safely on the Great Lakes system — the United States' 'Fourth Sea' — and with passion, intellect and purpose advocates for a strong U.S. maritime industry."

Here is the link to the entire article.

<https://www.marinelink.com/news/lakes-lakes-lakes-captain-paul-c-lamarre-537074>

Meanwhile, on March 30th, the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority posted a story on Facebook about the Federal Nakagawa being the first ocean vessel of the season at the Port of Toledo. The vessel loaded grain at the ADM terminal. The post was accompanied by two photos of the ship being towed by a tug. It was noted that Captain Paul LaMarre was towing and that he took the photos.

Twin Ports Lodge No. 12

Lodge 12 is having a well-deserved rest after hosting a successful and enjoyable Convention!

Georgian Bay-Huronina Lodge No. 15

Owen Sound Celebrates Maritime Heritage at 2026 Mariners' Service

Owen Sound's deep maritime roots were honored on February 23, 2026, as mariners, cadets, families, and community leaders gathered at St. George's Anglican Church for the 33rd annual Mariners' Service and Blessing of the Great Lakes Fleet. Hosted by the International Ship Masters' Association (ISMA) Georgian Bay-Huronina Lodge 15, the service marked the upcoming

opening of the Great Lakes shipping season and paid tribute to generations of sailors who have worked the lakes under often hazardous conditions.



The Procession of Mariners takes place at the start of the 33rd annual Mariners' Service and Blessing of the Great Lakes Fleet at St. George's Anglican Church in Owen Sound on Sunday, February 23, 2026. (Photo: Rob Gowan The Sun Times /Postmedia Network)

The ceremony featured a traditional procession of mariners, readings, hymns, and prayers, including the Mariner's Prayer read by graduating Georgian College navigation cadet Brooke Herrington. Herrington was also presented with the 2026 ISMA Grand Lodge Scholarship. The church was adorned with marine flags, and the fleet was formally blessed ahead of the March 22 opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway. The service concluded with community reflections, music, and a reception, reinforcing the strong bonds within Owen Sound's maritime community.



Graduating Navigation Cadet Brooke Herrington being presented the 2026 ISMA Scholarship by Capt. Lillian Kluka & PGP Capt. Seann O'Donoghue

Marine Speakers' Day 2026

On March 11, 2026, ISMA Lodge 15 participated in the annual Marine Speakers Day at Georgian College, Owen Sound Campus. The event was organized by the Georgian Mariners Association and College faculty. The day featured an outstanding lineup of speakers, Navigation and Engineering cadets, Alumni, Industry and

government speakers. Members from ISMA, Company of Master Mariners of Canada and the Canadian Institute of Marine Engineering attended, gave presentations to, and interacted with cadets.

Greatest of All Time Fleet Training Captain

CONGRATULATIONS

To Captain Mike Rodaway, 1st VP of ISMA Lodge 15, and Master of the M.V. EVANS SPIRIT, for being recognized by McKeil Marine as the Greatest Of All Time Fleet Training Captain in 2025.



Capt. Mike Rodaway – 1st Vice President ISMA Lodge 15

Congratulations to Annual Marine Award Winners

The annual Marine Awards ceremonies at Georgian College Centre for Marine Training in Owen Sound, Ontario was recently celebrated. The scholarships awarded ranged between \$750 and \$4000. The following ISMA lodge 15 cadets have shown dedication and commitment to their marine career development, and we are very proud of them:

- Aaron Archer 2026 Great Lakes Pilotage Authority Award
- Aaron Archer 2026 Marine Club MNAV 3rd year Most Deserving
- Aaron Archer 2025 Great Lakes Pilotage Authority Award
- Aaron Archer 2025 Marine Club Awards - Most Deserving 2nd year Navigation Cadet
- Sewon Ban 2025 Algoma Central Corp. Award for Marine Technology -Navigation

- Cody Becker 2025 Marine Club Awards - Most Deserving 3rd Year Navigation Cadet
- Sean Brys 2025 Georgian Yacht Club Scholarship
- Erin Carey 2025 Grand Lodge Scholarship award
- Erin Carey 2025 Captain Robert Hull Memorial Scholarship 3rd Year
- Erin Carey 2025 Canada Steamship Lines: Perseverance and Academic Excellence
- Ishai Forget Mason 2026 Marine Club Awards for First Year Navigation Cadets
- Emily Gardner 2026 Marine Club MNAV 1st year Most Deserving
- Arjun Govil 2026 Canada Steamship Lines: Perseverance and Academic Excellence
- Brooke Herrington 2026 ISMA Grand Lodge Scholarship Award
- Ben Jones 2026 The Robert Hull Memorial Award by Great Lakes Pilotage Authority
- Sarah Judson 2026 Marine Club MNAV 2nd year Most Deserving
- Sarah Judson 2025 Pike Marine Merit Scholarship
- Lucian Lechmeniuc 2025 Ali Atrach Memorial Award
- Marin Roach-Leclair 2026 Marine Club Awards Most Improved 3rd Year Navigation Cadet
- Marin Roach-Leclair 2026 Algoma Central Corporation Award
- Joseph Linegar 2026 Georgian Yacht Club Scholarship
- Victory Omo 2026 Canadian Merchant Service Guild Award
- Emmet Sherbourne 2026 Pike Marine Merit Scholarship
- Robin Tan 2026 Captain Robert Hull Memorial Scholarship



- Robin Tan 2026 Best Navigation Logbook,
ISMA Lodge 15 Award
- Xavier Thalhammer 2025 ISMA Lodge 20 Ronald
W. Fordyce Scholarship for
Meteorology
- Derek Whitney 2025 Corporation of
Professional Great Lakes Pilots
Award

Lodge 15 Member Transiting the Panama Canal

Congratulations to ISMA member Alexander Murtha, Electrical Officer of the Canadian Coast Guard's Offshore Oceanographic Science Vessel (OOSV), the Canadian Coast Guard Ship (CCGS) Naalak Nappaaluk. Alexa is the 2023 Grand Lodge Hawsepipe award winner, and a member of Lodge 15.



(CCGS) Naalak Nappaaluk

The ship is the next generation of Canada's ocean science capability. Built by Vancouver Shipyards, this state-of-the-art ship will serve as the primary ocean science platform on Canada's East Coast for the next 30 years and beyond. It has an LOA of 88m (289 ft.) and a capacity of 34 crew members and 26 scientists.



(CCGS) Naalak Nappaaluk in the Panama Canal Locks

The ship is currently making her transit from Vancouver Shipyards through the Panama Canal to its home port at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, where it will enter into service this year.

The vessel is named in honor of Naalak Nappaaluk (1928–2010), a respected Inuk Elder, teacher, and knowledge keeper from Kangiqsujaq, Nunavik.

Grand Traverse Bay Lodge No. 23

Officer Cadet Ed Lefebvre Receives ISMA Cadet Scholarship Award

State of Michigan Great Lakes Maritime Academy Traverse City, Michigan Captain Dan Towner presents GLMA engineering cadet Ed Lefebvre with the 2025 International Shipmasters Association scholarship at an ISMA pub night meet and greet.



Officer Cadet Ed Lefebvre with Capt. Dan Towner

2026 ISMA Scholarship Award Winners

United States Cadet

Cadet **Ed Lefebvre**

STATE OF MICHIGAN

Great Lakes Maritime Academy

Traverse City, Michigan

Member of Traverse City Lodge 23

Canadian Cadet

Cadet **Brooke Herrington**

ALGOMA CENTRAL CORP.

Georgian Centre for Marine Training

Owen Sound, Ontario

Member Georgian Bay Huronia Lodge 15

Hawsepipe Scholarship

Seaman **Marc Sells**

HOLIDAY CHARTERS



Mantua, Ohio
Member Cleveland Lodge 4

How to Contribute to the ISMA Scholarship Fund

For any members, lodges, shipping companies, or other individuals/entities who would like to donate to the ISMA Grand Lodge Scholarship Fund, below are the addresses (depending on if mailing from U.S. or Canada) to send your check. A thank you note will be mailed upon receiving any donation, and the names of all donors and amounts will be listed in the following ISMA newsletter.

Please make the cheque/checks payable to:

"ISMA Scholarship Fund"

For Canadian Lodges/ mailing **from Canada**, please send to:

Capt. Thomas Foster
ISMA Grand Lodge Secretary Treasurer
508-26 Leroy Grant Dr.
Kingston ON K7K 6X3 CANADA

For U.S. Lodges/ mailing **from United States**, please send to:

Capt. Thomas Foster
ISMA Grand Lodge Secretary Treasurer
P.O. Box 298
Clayton, NY 13624

New Members for Q1 2026

NAME	NO.	LODGE
Angela Ketelhut	A-13485	Lodge 2
Thomas W. Norman	134896	Lodge 4
Micheal Lavrenchik	A-13487	Lodge 4
Bill Kloss	A-13488	Lodge 4
Emily Rabatsky	Honorary	Lodge 4
Thomas Joyce	13489	Lodge 4
Anthony Koterbski	13495	Lodge 6
Todd Gordon	A-13496	Lodge 6
Tim Dittloff	13497	Lodge 6
Brent Holmes	13498	Lodge 6
Erich Lippert	13500	Lodge 6
Lloyd Seawright II	A-13529	Lodge 6
Cristine Staats	13455	Lodge 7
Ronald W. Dober Jr.	13458	Lodge 7
Andrew Williams	A-13490	Lodge 7
Marc Blatnik	13501	Lodge 12
John Phelan	13502	Lodge 12
Tyler Benson	A-13503	Lodge 12
Collen Smith	A-13504	Lodge 12
Amen Chad	OC-13505	Lodge 15
Robert Johnson	OC-13506	Lodge 15

New Members for Q1 2026

Angela Abaigar	OC-13507	Lodge 15
Puneet Bhardwaj	OC-13508	Lodge 15
Dougal Routley	OC-13509	Lodge 15
Andrej Obradovic	OC-13510	Lodge 15
Eyiara Goodluck	OC-13511	Lodge 15
Ethan Froats	OC-13512	Lodge 15
Christopher Sayah	OC-13513	Lodge 15
Mathew Barney	OC-13514	Lodge 15
Derek Whitney	OC-13515	Lodge 15
Carter LeBlanc	OC-13516	Lodge 15
Emmett Sherbourne	OC-13517	Lodge 15
Quinton Blake	OC-13518	Lodge 15
Victory Izilien Omo	OC-13519	Lodge 15
Kyle Sequeira	OC-13520	Lodge 15
Cassie Carroll	OC-13521	Lodge 15
Jeffery Kooch	OC-13522	Lodge 15
Nicholas Kooch	OC-13523	Lodge 15
Julio Ramanutti	OC-13524	Lodge 15
Joseph Lineger	OC-13525	Lodge 15
Emily Gardener	OC-13526	Lodge 15
Sean Brys	OC-13527	Lodge 15
Andrew Ellenberger	13499	Lodge 19
Jeffery Chabot	13528	Lodge 19
Brian Stoyhoff	13491	Lodge 22
Peter Kinsey	13493	Lodge 23
Samuel Mackie	13493	Lodge 23
Edward LeFabvre	OC-13494	Lodge 23

Welcome one and all to the
Voice of the Great Lakes!

Great Lakes & Maritime News

White House Releases Maritime Action Plan

As a follow-up to last year's Executive Order #14269 (Restoring America's Maritime Dominance), the White House released the Maritime Action Plan on February 13. The Executive Order called for the creation of this Plan, which is divided into four pillars: Pillar I: Rebuild U.S. Shipbuilding Capacity and Capabilities; Pillar II: Reform Workforce Education and Training; Pillar III: Protect the Maritime Industrial Base; and Pillar IV: National Security, Economic Security, and Industrial Resilience; with the additional sections of Derregulatory Actions and the Implementation of Potential Legislative Proposals. The latter includes mention of the existing Shipbuilding and Harbor Infrastructure for Prosperity and Security Act of 2025 (SHIPS Act) legislation. The Maritime Action Plan may be downloaded at:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/maritimemight>.



Sault Ste. Marie Revives \$200M Plan for a Modern Great Lakes Port

After more than five decades of false starts, Sault Ste. Marie is pushing forward with a \$200-million plan to build a multi-modal deep-water port on Algoma Steel property—an effort city leaders say finally aligns with federal and provincial priorities.

Port of Algoma, developed with the Hamilton–Oshawa Port Authority (HOPA), would create a double-slip port, major rail upgrades, and nearly 950 acres of industrial capacity, positioning the Sault as a north–south logistics hub linking mining, forestry, steel, and manufacturing sectors across Northern Ontario. The new dock would be entirely on Algoma Steel’s waterfront property, on the St. Marys River, directly south of the main steel mill complex

Federal Transportation Minister Steve MacKinnon toured the proposed site in March and called the concept “emblematic of what Canada needs right now,” signaling strong interest as the city prepares its formal application to the national Trade Corridors Fund.

The updated business case projects:

- 1,400–1,800 construction jobs
- 2,488 jobs by Year 5 of operations
- 156% cargo growth
- Major reductions in long-haul trucking for minerals, aggregates, and forestry products
- Significant opportunities for steel, energy, and advanced manufacturing tenants

If funded, construction would take roughly two years, with the port expected to become a key node in strengthening Great Lakes supply chains and diversifying the regional economy.

Great Lakes Shipbuilding Alliance Formed to Bid on Coast Guard Icebreaker Project

Three major Great Lakes shipbuilders — Fincantieri Marine Group, Fraser Shipyards in Superior, Wisconsin, and Donjon Marine in Erie, Pennsylvania — have announced the creation of the Fourth Coast Shipbuilding Alliance to boost domestic shipbuilding capacity and compete for a U.S. Coast Guard contract.

The alliance aims to:

- Compete for a contract to build seven new light icebreakers for the Coast Guard.
- Leverage combined capabilities to address the U.S.’s need to strengthen shipbuilding after China surpassed the U.S. as the world’s largest shipbuilder.

- Accelerate collaboration among Great Lakes shipyards and maritime companies, adopting new shipbuilding technologies.
- Serve as a model for linking multiple production sites and revitalizing the domestic supply chain across the “Fourth Coast”.

Fincantieri Marine Group, which operates three shipyards in northeast Wisconsin, will lead the effort alongside its partners, with an open invitation for other Great Lakes companies with maritime technology and manufacturing expertise to join.

If selected, each yard would take on a portion of the seven vessels, with the goal of demonstrating the Great Lakes’ viability, talent, and capability for national shipbuilding programs National Day Today. The alliance plans to respond to the Coast Guard’s Request for Information on the icebreaker project and move toward pre-approval for the next bidding stage.

The initiative aligns with the Trump administration’s Maritime Prosperity Zones proposal, which seeks to expand industrial capacity beyond traditional coastal shipbuilding hubs. U.S. Senators from Great Lakes states have also urged the administration to implement these zones to revitalize the region’s shipbuilding and maritime manufacturing industries.

Winning the contract could bring:

- Economic growth and job creation in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and the broader Great Lakes region.
- Technological advancement through adoption of new shipbuilding methods.
- National security benefits by strengthening U.S. maritime capabilities.

The alliance’s next steps involve submitting detailed capabilities to the Coast Guard, with the hope of securing the bid and launching the project.

Split Rock Lighthouse on Lake Superior to Undergo Restoration

Crews from the Minnesota Historical Society have begun a three-month restoration project at Split Rock Lighthouse, aiming to protect the iconic structure from Lake Superior’s punishing freeze-thaw cycles. The work includes replacing damaged bricks and mortar and installing humidity sensors linked to a new HVAC system to prevent internal condensation — a common issue in historic lighthouses.

Site manager Hayes Scriven notes the project mirrors a successful restoration at a New York lighthouse and resembles work done at Split Rock in 2008–09. Visitors this spring will see scaffolding and can join “Hard Hat Tours” for a close-up look at the process.



Regular tours resume in May, with completion expected by late June. The lighthouse remains a hub of maritime heritage: last November, over 2,000 people gathered to honor the 50th anniversary of the Edmund Fitzgerald sinking, and archaeologists recently uncovered remnants of a historic tram during nearby trail restoration work.



Split Rock Lighthouse pictured during the 2008 restoration project (Photo: Minnesota Historical Society)

US Coast Guard Now Accepting Credential Submissions via Download

As of January 26, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) National Maritime Center (NMC) began accepting Merchant Mariner Credential applications via download from their recently redesigned website. The USCG calls this function “ASAP” for “Application Submission & Additional Information Portal”, describing it as “a faster, secure way to submit new application and upload requested documents in one place.” The website is: https://www.dco.uscg.mil/national_maritime_center. Meanwhile, the USCG NMC continues to develop NAVITA, a web-based mariner credentialing portal, “which will allow merchant mariner applicants and others to apply for, track status of, and otherwise manage their merchant mariner credentials and medical certificates.” NAVITA is Latin for ‘mariner’

Great Lakes Shipping for 2025

Lake Carriers’ Association on February 4 released that U.S.-flagged Great Lakes freighters (lakers) carried 71.3 million tons of cargo in 2025, an 8.9 percent decrease from a year ago. 2025 cargo movement on the Great Lakes was 8.1 percent below the fleet’s 5-year average.

Except for salt shipments, which increased by 4.1 percent, all commodity shipments decreased in 2025. Iron ore shipments were down 10.8 percent from 2024 to 39.1 million tons. Coal cargos declined to 6.5 million tons, a decrease of 12 percent. Limestone shipments of 20.1 million tons were below last year’s shipments by 4.7 percent. Cement cargos saw a decrease of 1 percent, while sand and grain shipments were down 26.5 percent and 13.1 percent, respectively, in 2025.

Soo Locks New Lock Update

The Detroit Engineer District opened the Poe Lock, part of the Soo Locks, in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., to all marine traffic at 12:01 a.m. EST on March 25, marking the start of the 2026 Great Lakes shipping season. The locks officially closed after the last vessel of the season transited the Poe Lock on January 15, to undergo critical repairs and maintenance during the 10-week-long winter shutdown. The MacArthur Lock, located south of the Poe, remains closed for maintenance until additional repairs are complete.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) continues construction of the **New Lock at the Soo**, a critical addition to Great Lakes shipping infrastructure

Ship Master Spotlight

Capt. David Robb (#10332)



Captain David Robb has had a life-long passion and curiosity for the water. When asked, he will tell you that all clouds were once a lake. It can be found in four states as a liquid, ice, vapor (cloud or fog) and sometimes, plasma. It covers three quarters of the earth and life cannot exist without it. It is the ultimate recyclable. This passion only became obvious after a circuitous route through life.

In 1950 at the age of 7, David hopped in a 14-foot resort boat with a Johnson 5 hp outboard motor and disappeared for nearly 6 hours that lead to a whooping and no dinner. The next day with a sore butt, he was back in the boat waiting for his dad to take him out. Growing up on an inland lake in Minneapolis, MN logically led him to a local sailing club where he learned X, C, E and A scow sailboats by the age of 16 while taking flying lessons at a small nearby airfield. Unfortunately, he suffered from occasional vertigo and opted not to sign his private pilot’s license, which he has never regretted. At 17 he was running his uncle’s 28-foot houseboat on the upper Mississippi and wheeling cruising sail and power boats on Lake Superior. At 18, he spent 2 ½ years attending the University of Minnesota where his family intended for him to become an attorney. Ha! At the same time, he became infatuated with SCCA sports car racing with a fine collection of gold, silver and bronze trophies until he enlisted in the Coast Guard at the old age of 21 where he declined an OCS offer.

Having attended an ROTC school for 4 years and knowing how to sail, he assisted in teaching ‘boots’ to sail a heavy 28 ft lug rigged Monomoy Surf Boat at Cape May when the rest of his company was learning to parade march. His first assignment was in January of ‘65 at the age of 21 to Two Rivers and then on to Plum Island, WI Rear Range



Light and lifeboat station for a year. There, he perfected his single and twin-engine skill on a lighthouse tender and 40 ft twin screw lifeboat. The following year got him a slot on the 110ft WYTM 93 RARITAN lying in Milwaukee, WI where he spent the next 2 years and 8 months as Leading Seaman (E3) and Special Sea detail. The captain humorously chided his rate as SN, YN, QM, BM and CS because he covered all the deck billets while others were on leave. His specialty was ice breaking where he perfected a technique on the wheel that had very good results and often took exhausting multiple watches just because it was fun. To this day, he gets sea fever every January and February.

After 4 years and 3800 hours of staring at the sea, his curiosity about the way a boat works in the water drove him into yacht design as an apprentice under the noted Westin Farmer who did large aluminum yachts for Burger Yachts in Manitowoc, WI and Palmer Johnson at Sturgeon Bay, WI where he apprenticed in their drafting lofts. When he wasn't drafting, he was on the shop floor learning everything he could from the old masters.

Marriage came and so did his 3 accomplished boys. He realized that boat designing was not going to provide a steady living and 'accidently' ended up in the large web, long magazine printing business for the next 33 years having worked from customer service to regional sales manager and finally, the hospital with double pneumonia and ulcers. During his time in printing, he had owned several of his own boats from 51 feet to 18 feet with carefully kept sea logs. He still feels that smaller is better because "your focus is on the water and not the boat". Seeking a less stressful lifestyle, he worked in the audio/visual design business. Because his family can trace 5 generations of jazz and classical musicians in his family, David settled on big band drums at the age of 12 where he was considered fast and flashy. He says it soothed his inherent A.D.D. His mother concurred by stating he never walked; he crawled and then he ran. Two of his 3 sons are now professional musicians and through them, he developed his digital sound recording skills by volunteering at the local fine arts high school. Out of the blue, an old friend from the Coast Guard suggested he get back on the water and get his 100-ton license. At the age of 62 with a heart full of doubt, he passed the grueling CG exam and commenced a 5-year career with Chicago with Shoreline Sightseeing on their T and K class harbor boats and water taxis. His specialty was as a relief captain on 11 different boats and taking charge of the COI's where he got a perfect score on each of his boats.

Time was passing and so was his dad back in his hometown of Minneapolis, MN. Peacefully separating from his long-time marriage, he moved to take care of his dad and joined Paradise Charter Cruises at the head of navigation at St. Anthony Falls and Locks where he took over as Senior Captain of two 100-foot boats; one a Skipperliner Dinner Boat and the other a Skipperliner Faux Paddle Sightseeing Boat. For the next 7 years, life was at its best where he was able to refine not only his boat handling skills but exercise his teaching and management

skills. To this day, he and former owner Dave Lawrance remain close friends although many miles separate them as he moved to Tennessee and a new challenge as a writer of historical fiction.

He currently has a novel on Amazon called Cryptic Resolve that is a fun romantic adventure story with another in the works titled Nakita's Gambit that is a Clancy type thriller that should be released in 2027. Meanwhile, David remains dedicated to ISMA and his home Twin Ports Lodge 12 where he has been a delegate to the annual convention 6 times. In his words, "the honor is not only flattering but just plain humbling as I walk among seamen who have accomplished what I have only been able to dream about. I can't express the gratitude I have for the support and friendship these fine men have shown me."



Grand Lodge Financial Report

Secretary Treasurer Thomas Foster gave a financial statement showing the Lodge in very good standing. Two lodge had paid half their assessment, and the budget items were read showing that only one Committee will be over budget to date and that was due to the expenses of a past committee chair. Those expenses were allowed by constitution. The scholarship Fund is in excellent shape following the largest donation year in recent years, four recipients have cashed their cheques, and the fund is still very good for the addition of another scholarship in 2027.

The 501(c)(3) application was updated. Forms and additional information were forwarded to the IRS at the request of the adjudicator. That information was sent both by Fax and by courier to ensure the material arrived within the prescribed deadline. All information was received on time. Now it is a waiting game.

Membership statistics for the first three months was presented. The Lodge has 618 members; another 30 members were being added following the meeting. None of the Lodges have reported the roster changes which will have an impact on the actual numbers. The Georgian Bay Huronia Lodge 15 was able to utilize the generous donation from Port of Monroe to cover the Lodge First year cadets' enrollments.

NELC Report

The first quarter saw the release of the Maritime Action Plan by the White House and Michigan releasing their Maritime Strategy document. Neither document have supporting legislation introduced yet.

White House America's Maritime Action Plan (MAP)

The MAP is a federal policy blueprint, not a law. It outlines shipbuilding, workforce, and industrial-base priorities, but it requires congressional action for anything with legal force.

This is stated directly in analysis of the plan, which notes that "congressional action is needed to effectuate much of the proposed blueprint." The plan itself (February 2026) is an executive-branch strategy document, not legislation.

Michigan Maritime Strategy

Michigan's Maritime Strategy is a state-level 10-year plan, not a legislative package. It is described as a roadmap for economic development, environmental protection, and workforce growth.

Check for updates in the member section of:

www.shipmaster.org

MOW Chairman Report

Chairman **Matt Zaleski** reports that the **Membership, Outreach, and Web Site Committee (MOW)**. Mr. Zaleski has been an associate member of the ISMA Toledo Lodge 9 since 2018, when he worked to help plan the 128th Annual Grand Lodge Convention in Toledo for Past President Harry Dusseau. In addition to assisting with ISMA's social media platforms and web site, Mr. Zaleski will work with all ISMA lodges to help promote local events. He will work to develop news releases including creating a media distribution network for each lodge. He will also work to help plan the ISMA Grand Lodge Conventions. All this is being done with the support of the delegates to help showcase ISMA's relevance in the maritime community, and to hopefully increase ISMA membership.

Over the past four months, Matt worked with the Toledo and Milwaukee lodges to help promote events surrounding the 50th Anniversary of the Edmund Fitzgerald tragedy. He arranged for State of Ohio and City of Toledo Resolutions honoring the crew. Additionally, he worked with the Twin Ports lodge helping to promote this year's convention.

Matt has over 30 years' experience working in public relations, marketing, and event planning. As the Vice President of Marketing for Hubbub Marketing, LLC, he has worked to help raise money for non-profits. Since 2009 he has worked at event planning and media relations for numerous political candidates in Northwest

Ohio. Prior to Hubbub Marketing, Matt worked in broadcasting in radio and TV newsrooms. He has experience working with variety of clients in sports marketing, retail, and business-to-business. He has served on several boards including Family House which worked to help homeless families.

If you have any questions, have a story idea, or need help with promoting your event, please feel free to contact Matt Zaleski directly:

Matt Zaleski

matt@hubbubmarketing.com

419-345-5206 (text or voice)

Change of Course Committee

The Change of Course (CoC) committee holds Zoom video calls and has 8 active members, and the Grand President, 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents. There are the numerous Goals and Ideas that the committee has discussed and strongly recommends to the leadership.

Mission Statement

The Change of Course Committee is tasked with creating policies and strategies in accordance with the ISMA Constitution that moves the Grand Lodge forward.

CoC Committee Goals

- Addition of new members and retention of existing members
- To assist with furthering maritime awareness and maritime education on all age levels
- Become a more complete professional maritime organization recognized by other maritime concerns and agencies as well as the public as subject matter experts

CoC Ideas

- Use the brochure that Lodge 9 redesigned and sent out in PDF format
- The ISMA Newsletter needs to be published on a regular basis, and editions should be sent out to local, state and federal maritime agencies and Port Authorities
- Create and send out Position Papers that support other agencies.
- Promote networking and outreach amongst all Lodges
- Create a position for a sales and fund raising professional
- All committees should create a report for the newsletter



- Anyone paid by ISMA should create a report for the newsletter
- The Scholarship fund should be expanded to include maritime focused high schools and needed equipment, by the creation of a 501(c)(3) that would allow endowments as well as donations
- Create recognition for National Maritime Day (US Lodges) and Day of the Seafarer (Canada) on the local level to promote the industry, both past, present and future as well as the benefits of ISMA membership

Leadership

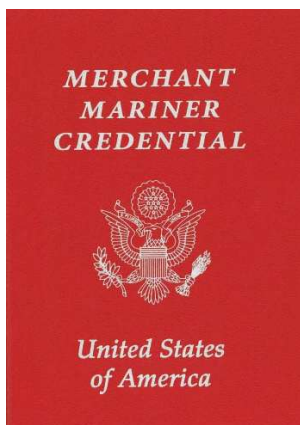
- The incoming Grand Lodge President needs to create a formal ONE-Year plan to follow for his term.
- Grand Lodge leadership needs to create a formal FIVE-Year plan to create consistency in leadership for the annual change of command. The FIVE-Year plan should be updated annually.
- The immediate past, present, and future Grand Lodge Presidents as well as the 1st and 2nd vice presidents should meet before the Grand Lodge caucus to plan the formal 5-YEAR plan. The 1 year and 5-YEAR plan should be introduced to the caucus delegates.

Credentialing Corner

Great Lakes Mariners don't get second chances — if your MMC or renewal or application stalls, you can lose the whole season. Most delays come from the same issues:

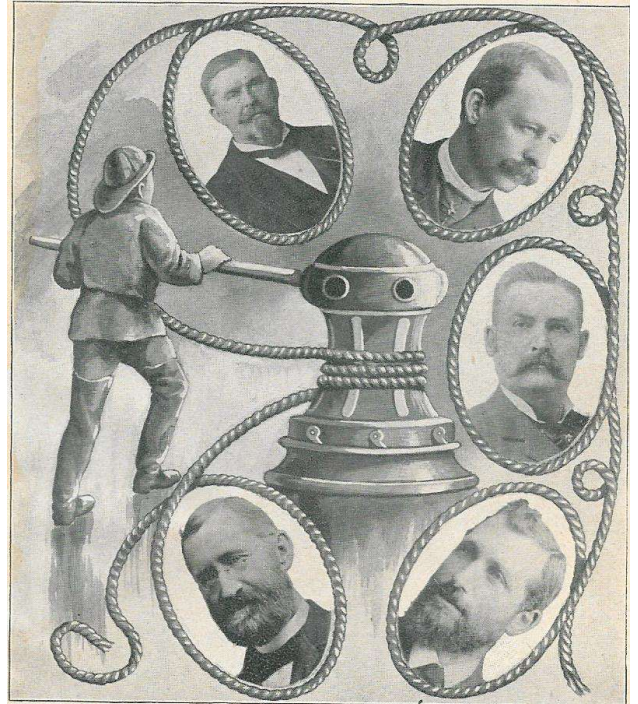
- incomplete sea-service letters
- missing medical documentation
- expired TWICs
- slow spring processing at NMC.

Start renewals and applications early, submit clean paperwork, and you'll be on the water when the shipping season starts instead of waiting on shore.



ISMA History

Historian Paul Jagenow provided the follow Past Grand President photo page from the 1900 Ship Master Directory. These were the first five Past Grand Presidents that served from 1891 to 1899.



(Clockwise from Top Left) Alex Clark, C. E. Benham, Geo. McCullagh, Henry Leisk, W. E. Rice

From the Editor

Lodge Secretaries please send Lodge news to me for the next issue. Please send news stories with photos with captions to:

newsletter@shipmaster.org

(mike@milwaukee6.org is no longer being used)

The deadline for stories to be included in the next newsletter is JUNE 30, 2026.

Captain Mike Loescher – Milwaukee Lodge No. 6

2026 Event Calendar

February 25-26	Chicago Maritime Industry Day	Alsip, IL
March 7	Detroit Lodge #7 Dinner Dance	Dearborn-Detroit, MI
March 8	62 nd Annual Blessing of the Fleet at Mariners' Church of Detroit	Detroit, MI
March 22	World Water Day	
March 23	World Meteorological Day	
May 4	Great Lakes Awareness Day	
May 18	International Day for Women in Maritime (IMO)	
May 22	National Maritime Day (US)	
June 8	World Oceans Day	
June 15	Global Wind Day	
June 25	The Day of the Seafarer (IMO)	
June 26	Soo Locks Engineer's Day	Ste. St. Marie, MI
June 28	Thunder Bay Blessing of the Fleet	Thunder Bay, ON
July 20	Lake Superior Day	
August 4	Coast Guard Day (US)	
August 8	Lake Michigan Day	
September 7	Canada Merchant Navy Day	
September 25	IMO World Maritime Day	
October 5	National Shipbuilding Day (US)	
November 11	US Veterans Day Canada Remembrance Day	
December 2-4	International Workboat Show	New Orleans, LA
January 28-31, 2027	137 th ISMA Grand Lodge Convention	Toledo, OH

Please verify these dates prior to making travel plans!

As an organization, ISMA strives to:

- To be the respected voice of licensed professional mariners in matters related to navigation and safety on waters of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway System. In this process, we work with, and provide input to, regulatory agencies, legislative bodies, industry associations and other working groups on matters affecting navigational safety.
- To provide opportunities for licensed merchant mariners to network, to offer their feedback, and to enhance their knowledge in a variety of ways.
- To maintain mutual respect, support, and encouragement among our members, and to promote the pursuit of personal and professional excellence.
- To encourage and assist those preparing for careers as merchant marine officers.

ISMA NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

ISMALetter distribution is via e-mail through local Lodge Secretaries.

Therefore, **please make sure your Lodge Secretary has your correct e-mail address to ensure delivery.**

Remember that *ISMALetter* is always available on our website, www.shipmaster.org, at any time.



Connect with ISMA

ISMA Website



www.shipmaster.org

ISMA LinkedIn Page



[linkedin.com/company/international-ship-masters-association](https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-ship-masters-association)

Please follow ISMA on LinkedIn and “Like” and/or comment on our posts with your LinkedIn account. You may also invite your LinkedIn Connections to “Follow” ISMA. It will help greatly with public awareness of ISMA.

ISMA Facebook Page



www.facebook.com/InternationalShipMastersAssociation

Please follow ISMA on Facebook and “Like” and/or comment on our posts with your Facebook account. You may also invite your Facebook Friends to “Follow” ISMA. It will help greatly with public awareness of ISMA.

International Ship Masters' Association

2026 Grand Lodge Officers

★ **Grand Lodge President** ★

Captain **Chris Edyvean**

cjedyvean@hotmail.com

Grand Lodge First Vice President

Captain **Paul LaMarre III**

plamarre@portofmunroe.com

Grand Lodge Second Vice President

Captain **Tom Blakely**

tblakely@gmail.com

Grand Lodge Secretary Treasurer

Captain **Tom Foster**

thomas.foster63@yahoo.com

Navigation and Legislative Committee (NELC)

Chairman: **Scott Skrzypczak**

NELC@shipmaster.org

Canadian Co-chairman:

Captain **Seann O'Donoghue**

ismalodge15@gmail.com

Membership/Outreach/Website Committee (MOW)

Website: www.shipmaster.org

Chairman: **Matt Zaleski**

matt@hubbubmarketing.com

Change of Course Committee (CoC)

Chairman: Captain **Luke Clybourn**

lclyburn@comcast.net

Send Information for Next ISMA Letter Issue

By JUNE 31, 2026 to:

Newsletter Editor

Captain **Mike Loescher**

newsletter@shipmaster.org



From the desk of the Grand Lodge:

The International Ship Masters' Association (ISMA), on request of the **American Maritime Congress**, has joined other prominent maritime entities in signing a letter urging the USCG to consider Vessel Traffic Services and Merchant Mariner Credentialing as essential national security functions during ongoing funding lapse issues. The letter is detailed below.

Sincerely,

Capt. Chris Edyvean, ISMA Grand Lodge President

March 17, 2026

Admiral Kevin E. Lunday
Commandant, United States Coast Guard
Washington, D.C. 20593

Re: Urgent Request to Designate Vessel Traffic Services and Merchant Mariner Credentialing as Essential National Security Functions During the DHS Funding Lapse

Dear Admiral Lunday,

On behalf of the American maritime industry, including maritime unions, shipowners, trade associations, port authorities, towing and offshore service companies, and the thousands of merchant marine who crew the vessels that sustain our nation's commerce and defense, we write to you with deep urgency. The ongoing lapse in funding for the Department of Homeland Security is causing immediate, serious, and compounding harm to maritime safety, commerce, and national security. We respectfully but strongly urge you to designate Vessel Traffic Services (VTS), the National Maritime Center's (NMC) Merchant Mariner Credentialing program, and National Vessel Documentation as essential functions exempt from furlough, and to restore full operational staffing to all three programs without delay.

I. Vessel Traffic Services

Similar to the Federal Aviation Administration's National Airspace System (NAS), the Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) is implemented by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic. VTS centers monitor and manage the movement of commercial vessels through the nation's most congested and hazardous waterways, including the Ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach, New York/New Jersey, Houston, Puget Sound, San Francisco Bay, and the lower Mississippi River.

The suspension of VTS operations during the current funding lapse creates conditions directly analogous to what the aviation industry would face if air traffic controllers were furloughed. Vessels transiting without active VTS oversight face elevated risk of collision, allision with fixed structures, grounding, and hazardous material spills. Unlike aircraft, large commercial vessels require miles to stop and cannot deviate from narrowly dredged channels. A single incident in a major port can close that port for days or weeks, cascade into supply chain disruptions of national consequence, and risk catastrophic environmental damage.

Congress and the American public understood immediately that furloughing air traffic controllers during a government shutdown was unacceptable. We respectfully submit that the same logic applies with equal force to Vessel Traffic Services. We urge you to invoke your authority to designate VTS personnel as excepted employees performing work essential to the protection of life and property, and to restore full operational manning at every VTS center in the country.

II. Merchant Mariner Credentialing

Every mariner who serves aboard a U.S.-flagged vessel is required by federal law and international treaty to hold a valid credential issued by the National Maritime Center. Without a current credential, a mariner cannot legally stand a watch, sail as an officer, or hold a safety-critical position aboard ship. There are no waivers, no grace periods, and no foreign substitutes. A credential that expires is a credential that ends a mariner's ability to work.



The NMC's slowdown of credentialing operations during the current lapse is already producing a cascading workforce crisis. Mariners whose credentials are expiring or awaiting renewal cannot be assigned to billets. Manning shortfalls are spreading from vessel to vessel as companies scramble to cover gaps with the shrinking pool of mariners holding valid credentials. This is not a paperwork inconvenience. It is a direct threat to vessel safety, to port operations, and to the United States' ability to sustain its merchant fleet.

The merchant marine is explicitly recognized in the Merchant Marine Act of 1936 as an auxiliary of the U.S. Navy, essential to national defense. The men and women of this fleet move the equipment, fuel, and supplies that sustained American forces in every conflict of the twentieth century, and they stand ready to do so again. Allowing their credentialing infrastructure to lapse is to undermine the very workforce readiness that national defense planning depends upon.

III. National Vessel Documentation

The National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC) is the federal registry through which vessels are enrolled under the U.S. flag, establishing ownership, and nationality. This documentation is the legal foundation upon which vessel ownership, financing, and commercial operations rest.

The NVDC's reduced operations during the current funding lapse have effectively frozen vessel movements into and out of U.S. documentation. Owners seeking to document newly acquired vessels cannot obtain the Certificate of Documentation required to place those vessels in service. Operators seeking to transfer documented vessels - through sale, refinancing, or change of ownership - face the same impasse. The practical result is that vessels that should be entering the active fleet cannot do so, and vessels that should be transitioning to new ownership or operators are stranded in limbo.

This freeze compounds the manning and operational pressures already created by the credentialing backlog. A vessel that cannot be properly documented cannot be lawfully operated in the trades for which it was acquired. Financial institutions holding preferred ship mortgages face recording delays that cloud title and create uncertainty in the maritime lending market. New construction deliveries, vessel acquisitions, and fleet transactions that have been planned and financed for months are now stalled by an administrative stoppage that serves no safety or security purpose.

IV. Our Requests

We respectfully request that you take the following immediate actions:

1. Designate all Vessel Traffic Services centers as performing functions essential to the safety of life and property, and restore full operational staffing immediately;
2. Designate the National Maritime Center's credentialing and examination operations as essential to national security and the defense industrial base, and restore full NMC staffing to process all pending applications, renewals, and examinations without further delay;
3. Designate the National Vessel Documentation Center's documentation, titling, and mortgage recording operations as essential to commerce and the integrity of the U.S. vessel registry, and restore full NVDC staffing so that vessels may lawfully enter and exit U.S. documentation without further delay;
4. Communicate directly with the Secretary of Homeland Security and, if necessary, the White House Office of Management and Budget, urging that maritime safety, credentialing, and documentation functions be treated with the same policy priority as aviation safety functions under any shutdown or funding lapse scenario.

We stand ready to meet with you and your staff at the earliest opportunity to discuss these concerns in greater detail and to provide any supporting data or operational information that would be of assistance. Each day of delay deepens the credentialing backlog, compounds the risk to vessel traffic, freezes lawful vessel transactions, and erodes the confidence of the mariners and vessel operators who depend on the Coast Guard as a partner in safety.

Thank you for your service, your leadership, and your urgent attention to this matter.





**International Ship Masters'
Association - Toledo Lodge #9**



**137th Annual Grand Lodge
January 28 - 31, 2027**

Renaissance Toledo Downtown Hotel

OUR HISTORY



CELEBRATING

REMEMBERING



OUR HEROES

Honoring 140 Years of ISMA History





**ISMA TOLEDO
LODGE #9**

**ISMA Grand Lodge Convention
Toledo, OH
Jan. 28 - 31, 2027**

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE _____
 E-MAIL _____
 SELLER _____

FREIGHTER CRUISE RAFFLE

**Grand Prize: A Trip for 4 - 6 Adults Aboard
M/V Honorable James L. Oberstar**

Good for the 2027 season • Guests must be at least 18 years of age • Adhere to all company policies & procedures • Be flexible concerning ports of departure / return.

Drawing Date: Sat. Jan. 30, 2027 10 p.m. Renaissance Toledo Downtown Hotel
 Donation - \$10 ea. or 6 for \$50 • Winner need not be present to win. • Tickets cannot be redeemed for cash.
 To purchase tickets: Mail check made payable to ISMA Toledo Lodge 9 / P.O. Box 5218 / Toledo, OH 43611
 For questions or concerns, please email: ISMAToledo9@gmail.com or call: 419-345-5206

<p>Second Prize Round trip for two aboard historic car ferry S.S. Badger</p>	<p>Third Prize Pilot boat ride to touch a freighter Good for four people Courtesy - Lake Pilots' Association</p>	<p>Fourth Prize A trip on the legendary mailboat J.W. Westcott</p>
--	--	--

M/V Hon. James L. Oberstar



INTERLAKE STEAMSHIP

M/V Honorable James L. Oberstar - Toledo Built!

Steamer Charles M. Beeghly joined The Interlake Steamship Company fleet in 1967. When built in 1959 by American Ship Building Company at Toledo, Ohio, as Shenango II, she was one of the largest vessels (710 feet long) on the Great Lakes. In 1972, the Beeghly was lengthened by 96 feet at Fraser Shipyards, Inc., Superior, Wisconsin. She was converted to a self-unloader at Fraser Shipyards in 1981, and is capable of discharging cargo at a rate of 6000 tons per hour. Her steam turbine power plant was replaced with two Bergen B:32:40L diesels during the 2008-2009 winter layup period. She returned to service in June 2009. The Beeghly was named for a former president and chairman of the board of Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation. In 2010 the M/V Charles M. Beeghly was renamed the M/V Hon. James L. Oberstar honoring the former congressman of the same name from Minnesota who served the US House of Representatives for nearly a half century.

