Grand Lodge
International Ship Masters' Association

ISMALetter

Volume 40, Number 3

Fall 2026

137th Grand Lodge Convention

Toledo Lodge #9 and the MOW Committee are working together for the upcoming 137th Annual Grand Lodge Convention. The 2027 Convention will be held at the Renaissance Toledo Downtown Hotel -- The same venue as for the 2018 ISMA Convention for Capt. Harold Dusseau's year as Grand President.

At the request of ISMA Toledo Lodge #9, a web site has been created for this year's convention: **ISMA2027.org**.

REGISTRATION STARTS NOV. 15

Thursday night will feature a gathering at **the National Museum of the Great Lakes**, catered by Corporal Max Klinger's (Toledo native Jamie Farr's) favorite place on the TV Show MASH --- **Tony Packo's**!

Friday evening will feature our **formal gathering** with entertainment provided by the band "Arctic Clam" who's lead singer is a prominent Toledoan, Judge Nicole Khoury, from Toledo Municipal Court. Ms. Khoury is the point-person behind a major Northwest Ohio Fund Raiser "Acoustics for Autism," held every March in Maumee, OH. She and her group will put on a great show.

On Saturday night, the theme will be the **MASH TV show**. A special shout out to Capt. Seann O'Donoughue, from ISMA Lodge Georgian Bay Huronia, Lodge #15 for his excellent suggestion for a Saturday night theme.

Need help with a costume from the Korean Conflict? ISMA Toledo has made arrangements to help you out. Feel free to contact the Woodville Surplus Store, at 2172 Woodville Rd., Oregon, Ohio. Since 1949, Woodville Surplus has served Toledo-area workers, first responders, campers, and veterans with pride. To this day, Woodville Surplus remains one of the area's most trusted stores for work boots, scrubs, tactical gear, Carhartt products, and more. Store Hours Monday-Saturday, 10am-7pm and Sunday 12-5pm. You can also contact them by calling: 419-691-4636, or by email at: woodvilles@aol.com

For the latest information and registration visit:

https://isma2027.org/

ISMA Members Recognized for Historical Contributions

Two longtime members of ISMA, both from Detroit Lodge # 7, were honored on September 12 at the annual awards banquet for the Association of Great Lakes Maritime History (AGLMH). This event was the finale of their annual conference, which took place in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

ISMA Past Grand President Capt. Luke Clyburn received the Joyce S. Hayward Award for Historical Preservation. According to AGLMH's website, the Joyce S. Hayward Award is given annually to an individual who has made a major contribution to the interpretation of Great Lakes maritime history, in furtherance of the goals of the Association.

Also being recognized, but unable to attend, was Capt. Kathy McGraw. Capt. McGraw was the recipient of the C. Patrick Labadie Award for Historic Preservation, which is given annually to an individual who has made a major contribution to the preservation of Great Lakes maritime history, in furtherance of the goals of the Association.

For more info about the AGLMH:
https://www.aglmh.net



View of Thunder Bay Harbor from the historic Prince Arthur Hotel



(L to R): ISMA members in attendance were Joel Stone, Dianna Kriebel, PGP Capt. Luke Clyburn (all from Detroit Lodge # 7), Grand President Capt. Chris Edyvean (Twin Ports Lodge #12), and Todd Gordon (Milwaukee Lodge # 6 and President-Wisconsin Marine Historical Society)



Capt. Luke Clyburn and partner, Dianna Kriebel



Slide honoring Capt. Kathy McGraw

Final Bells



Camilla Ross	11437	Member Chicago Lodge 3
Eric Jon Erickson	A-10314	Member Detroit Lodge 7 (Son of PGP Don Erikson)
Tom Allor	11055	Member Detroit Lodge 7
Gary Mielke	10090	Honorary Member Toledo Lodge 9
James Lowe	11437	Member Lodge 15
Grant Dawson	11769	Member Lodge 15

From the Lodges

Chicago Lodge No. 3

M/V FT. DEARBORN Moved to Bay Shipbuilding

Lodge 3 member Capt. Bill Russell was spotted in Port Washington, Wisconsin while moving the M/V FORT DEARBORN to Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay, WI for it's five-year USCG Inspection.



Capt. Bill Russell (Lodge #3) in the pilothouse of M/V FT. DEARBORN in Port Washington, WI harbor (Photo: Capt. Greg Stamatelakys-Lodge #6)



M/V FT. DEARBORN being positioned at Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay, WI (Photo: Capt. Bill Russell-Lodge #3)

Cleveland Lodge No. 4

Lake Erie Islands Historical Society Talk

Capt. Russ Brohl spoke about his adventurous life as a ship captain on the Great Lakes during the September 22 Brown Bag Lunch series at the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society Museum on Put-in Bay. The events provide a complimentary lunch and the opportunity to hear about life on Lake Erie.



Capt. Russell Brohl (Lodge #4)

For more information about the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society, visit:

https://www.leihs.org

Milwaukee Lodge No. 6

Lodge 6 Participates in the 10th Annual Milwaukee HarborFest

ISMA Milwaukee Lodge 6 participated in HarborFest on Sunday, September 27, introducing visitors to maritime safety, navigation and the work of ISMA.

Hosted by **Milwaukee's Harbor District** at Harbor View Plaza on the Port Milwaukee Inner Harbor, the family-friendly event drew an estimated 6,000 visitors.

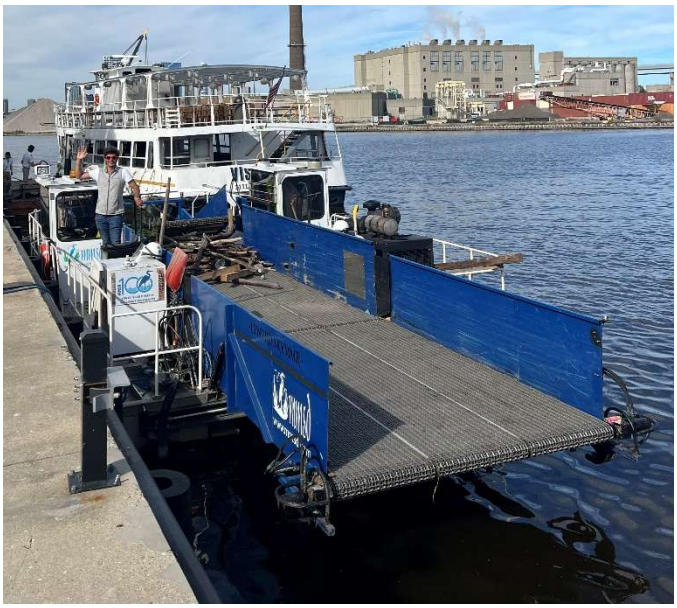
The Lodge 6 display attracted a steady stream of visitors who explored nautical charts, learned about navigation, participated in PFD demonstrations and fittings, and practiced simulated water rescues by throwing a life ring. Members also shared information about ISMA, maritime careers, and navigational safety.



Lodge #6 Members (L to R) Capt. Greg Stamatelakys, Capt. Beth Fernandez, Lloyd Seawright and Capt. James Hummert working the booth at HarborFest 2026 in Milwaukee

Several Lodge 6 members' vessels added to the maritime experience. Greg Stamatelakys brought his skerry, James Hummert showcased the M/V Lynnard Skimmer trash-collection boat, Max Morgan represented the research vessel R/V Neeskay, and Jake Chianelli participated with the M/V Vista King.

Lodge 6 participants included Beth Fernandez, Lloyd Seawright, Greg Stamatelakys, James Hummert, Max Morgan, and Jake Chianelli.



M/V LYNRD SKYMMER (Capt James Hummert) and M/V VISTA KING (Capt. Jake Chianelli) tied up at Milwaukee HarborFest in the Milwaukee Inner Harbor



Lodge #6 Members (L to R) Capt. Greg Stamatelakys, Lloyd Seawright, Capt. Beth Fernandez, and Capt. James Hummert in front of Greg's CLC Skerry 15'-Chesapeake Light Craft sailboat at HarborFest

HarborFest was an excellent opportunity to increase ISMA's visibility, engage the community, and perhaps inspire the next generation of Great Lakes mariners.

Save the date for next year's HarborFest:

Sunday, September 26, 2027

For more information about the festival:

https://harbordistrict.org/harbor-fest/

USS WISCONSIN SSBN 827 Association Hosts Public Celebration for USS WISCONSIN (SSBN 827) Day at War Memorial Center

Thursday August 27 the USS Wisconsin SSBN 827 Association, in partnership with the War Memorial Center and the Milwaukee Council of the Navy League of the United States, will host a public celebration honoring USS WISCONSIN (SSBN 827) Day today at the War Memorial Beer Garden, adjacent to the War Memorial Center in Milwaukee. The observance, formally proclaimed by Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers for the sixth year in a row, honors the Silent Service and highlights the state's profound maritime impact.

The USS Wisconsin SSBN 827 Association supports the future crews and families of WISCONSIN (SSBN 827), promotes Wisconsin's naval legacy, raises awareness of the Silent Service's critical role, fosters STEM education, and strengthens community connections.

Learn more at:

https://www.usswisconsinsub.org/



(L-R) Shipmate Randy Engness, Mr. Thaing, Capt. Mike Loescher (Lodge #6), Lloyd Seawright (Lodge #6), Capt. Greg Stamatelakys (Lodge #6) in front of the inflatable SSBN 827 USS WISCONSIN.

Congratulations to the 2026 World Champion Milwaukee Brewers from Milwaukee Lodge #6!



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

Annual Great Lakes Memorial Service

Mariners' Church of Detroit will hold its annual Great Lakes Memorial service at 11 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 8, honoring the sailors and civilians who have lost their lives on the Great Lakes and Michigan waterways, as well as mariners who passed away during the past year after dedicating their careers to working on the water.

The service comes one year after Mariners' Church hosted the 50th anniversary commemoration of the sinking of the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald, one of the worst, and certainly the best-known, maritime tragedies in Great Lakes history. On Nov. 10, 1975, the freighter, then the largest ship on the Great Lakes, sank during a powerful storm on Lake Superior, killing all 29 crew members. The disaster later became the subject of Gordon Lightfoot's 1976 ballad, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald." The service brought together an international audience of people wanting to pray for, and remember, the lives lost.

"The Great Lakes are beautiful and a constant source of inspiration and joy for those of us fortunate enough to live by their shores," said Rev. Todd Meyer, Mariners' pastor. "But they can become dangerous and unpredictable in a flash. That's why we take the time each year to reflect on those lives and to pray for safe passage and recreational enjoyment for all who spend time in and on the water."

The service, held at Mariners' Church, known as the "Maritime Sailors' Cathedral," will feature an honor guard of maritime and military personnel with Great Lakes ties and the church's professional choir. Rev. Meyer will lead the service. Mariners' warmly welcomes all who would like to attend.

For more than 180 years, Mariners' Church has served as Detroit's "House of Prayer for All People." Its annual memorial honors the Edmund Fitzgerald crew, the victims of more than 6,000 Great Lakes shipwrecks and recreational boaters, fishermen, swimmers and others who have perished in the region's waters. The service also remembers Great Lakes mariners who have died during the past year, including those who passed away from causes unrelated to their work.

"Remembering those who have passed is an important part of any church's mission," Rev. Meyer said. "At Mariners', we have a special bond with the sailors who have worked these waters and the Great Lakes communities they have touched. We hope people will join us to honor their memories and pay tribute to the family members, friends and fellow mariners we have lost."

Those unable to join the congregation at the church at 170 E. Jefferson Ave. can live-stream the service on Mariners' YouTube page.

https://www.youtube.com/@MarinersChurchofDetroit

Long-time Mariners Church Administrator Changing Course

Charlotte McKenzie A-13191 has been working at Mariners Church of Detroit for many years. As Parish Administrator she has seen first-hand the recent renovations of the church, which have taken 15 years to complete. Many of you have seen her or talked with her when attending the **Great Lakes Remembrance or Blessing of the Fleet**. Charlotte will be leaving the Church on October 30 and moving to Charlotte, North Carolina where she has several family members. We will miss her great smile and her flawless attention to detail. We wish her calm seas ahead as she changes course.



(L-R) Capt. Scott Reynolds, Charlotte McKenzie, Sandi Oset and Capt Ray Oset.



Mariner's Church in Detroit, Michigan

Toledo Lodge No. 9

137th Annual Grand Lodge Convention

See the front page of this newsletter or the Convention Website for more information:

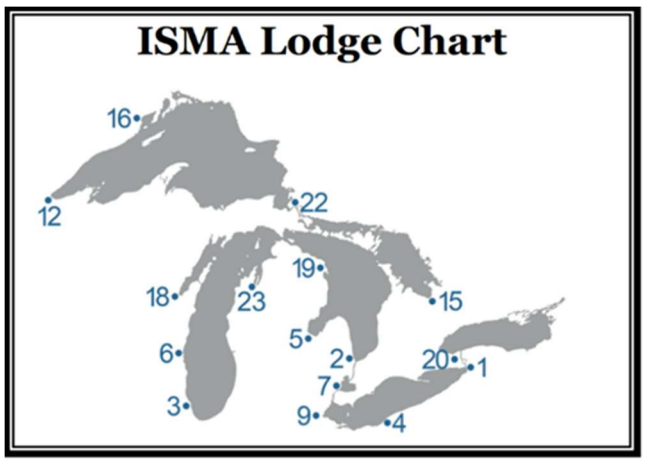
https://ISMA2027.org

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.



Georgian Bay-Huronia Lodge No. 15

Georgian College Cadet Tours

ISMA Lodge 15 helped to sponsor the 2026 fall industry tours for first-year cadets in Georgian College's Marine Program. Two tours were done on October 16, 2026.

The Engineering cadets spent a day at Walter Hiltebrand Marine Services Ltd., in St. Catharines and the Navigation cadets visited the St. Lawrence Seaway Management VTS Centre at the Welland Canal. In total, 60 cadets saw real marine industry work early in their training. Buses left the college at about 05:30, arrived at both sites by 09:00 and departed at 15:00

These tours would not have happened without the support of the sponsors. Getting cadets out of the classroom and into real marine workplaces in their first year gives them context for everything they learn after.

The Following companies and professional associations have pooled together for many years to participate in this community outreach for the cadets:

Walter Hiltebrand Marine Services Ltd. (WHMS)

St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation

Canadian Institute of Marine Engineering (CIMarE), Great Lakes Branch

International Ship Masters' Association (ISMA), Georgian Bay-Huronia

Company of Master Mariners of Canada (CMMC), Great Lakes Division

Georgian College Student Experience Fund

The Marine Club

Special thanks to Professor Andrea Lucano, Dan Boich and Andrew Smith for organizing the tours, and to the teams at Walter Hiltebrand Marine Services Ltd. and the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation for hosting the cadets. This was the first time these tours have run, and the day was a great success. We look forward to continuing the tours with your support. Andrew Walter Hiltebrand Marine Services Ltd.



Navigation cadets on the Welland Canal tour

Navigation cadet

"Though I know it was a quiet day for them, it was very interesting to see how so few people can control that much infrastructure, hear the sort of communications that we are likely to experience when taking a ship through the canal, and see how everything is repaired and maintained. I think my favorite part was going out onto the dividing wall, being able to look straight down made the true scale of the locks very apparent, and being able to see everything that was discussed (the hands-free docking systems, the blowback zones, and the giant gates to name but a few) was very enlightening. The men who were giving us the tours were all extremely knowledgeable, and I feel that they were very good instructors. I further appreciate their willingness to answer questions."

— Peter James Vieira, Marine Navigation Student, Georgian College

Navigation Cadets

Welland Canal

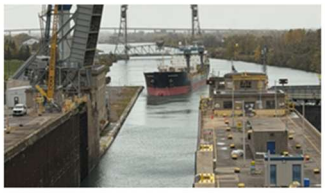


The first-year navigation cadets toured the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation's control center at the Welland Canal, where vessel traffic through the canal is managed, and saw how controllers and bridge teams work together.

Cadets: 35 first-year navigation cadets, with Professor Carolyn Babin, Lisa Lavigne (Academic Program Assistant) and Kent Simpson (Dean)
What they did: Learned about the operation and maintenance of the Welland Canal and how traffic is controlled through the system

The day

Time	Activity
Arrival	Coffee and donuts, and sign-in
Morning	Four groups rotating through the engineering spaces, the control center and a presentation about the Seaway
Lunch	Pizza lunch
Afternoon	Lock 5, watching the *Blair McKeil* transit the lock
Afternoon	The canal museum at Lock 3
Departure	Bus back to Georgian College







Engineering cadets and WHMS staff in the shop

In the cadets' words

Engineering cadet

"Thank you for organizing Friday's trip to Walter Hiltebrand Marine Services. Heading into the day, our expectations of working on diesel engine parts (jerk fuel pumps and cylinder heads) felt a bit abstract but upon arrival seeing the crankshaft outside immediately made the scale of our future careers feel very real.

The staff were incredibly welcoming and guided us seamlessly from the safety briefings right into hands-on tool instruction. Disassembling the fuel injector pumps was a really awesome experience. Using the specialized wrenches, drills/tools, and sorting components in "Helen" really helped learn parts by visual elimination. I really appreciated that lesson. The quizzes, swag and popping out valve seats with a mallet and wooden piece was so satisfying but also came with a great lesson with welding and temperature / metal use. Classmates left with knowledge and some with notes on tips and tricks for the future in our co-ops.

This trip really was a fantastic experience taking theory and applying knowledge to real life work. It reinforced the value of what we are learning in the program while bringing the excitement of what to expect in our co-ops and careers."

— Devin Dzelme, Engineering Cadet, Georgian College

Engineering Cadets

Walter Hiltebrand Marine Services Ltd.



The first-year engineering cadets spent the day at Walter Hiltebrand Marine Services Ltd. (WHMS), working hands-o in the shop on the same kind of equipment they will maintain once they are sailing.

Cadets: 25 first-year engineering cadets, with Professor Andrea Lucano
What they did: Fuel pump disassembly in the morning, then cylinder heads in the afternoon

The day

Time	Activity
Arrival	Safety brief and shop tour
Morning	Disassembly of fuel pumps
Lunch	Lunch provided, with one-on-one time with WHMS staff for questions
Afternoon	Disassembly and measurement of cylinder heads
Departure	Bus back to Georgian College





Green Bay Lodge No. 18

USS SILVERSIDES Returns to Muskegon After Major Restoration

The historic USS SILVERSIDES SS-236, one of the most decorated submarines of World War II and a longtime Muskegon, Michigan attraction, has returned home after a three-month restoration project in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. Its return voyage across Lake Michigan was accomplished with the help of Lodge #18 Ship Masters Capt. Ray Sheldon and Capt. Peggy O'Connell.

The $3.5 million preservation effort included hull steel replacement, removal of zebra mussels, structural inspections, cleaning, and the application of protective coatings designed to preserve the vessel for another 15 to 20 years. This marked the submarine's first full dry-dock preservation in approximately 70 years.



USS SILVERSIDES arriving in Muskegon, Michigan (Photo: MLive)

Built in 1941 and serving in combat from 1942 to 1945, the Silversides ranks among the most successful U.S. submarines of World War II, credited with sinking 30 enemy ships during 14 war patrols. The vessel has operated as a floating museum in Muskegon since 1987. The restoration project has been supported by grants, sponsors, and community donations, with fundraising efforts continuing to help preserve the submarine for future generations.

To help get involved:

https://silversidesmuseum.org/

Wisconsin Captain's Sheboygan River Fall Cruise

On a beautiful fall day, October 8, 2026, four Wisconsin Ship Masters enjoyed a cruise up the historic Sheboygan River and out on Lake Michigan waters aboard M/V IN NO RUSH. Capt. Rocky Groh narrated his family history and his maritime experience in and around the Sheboygan, Wisconsin Harbor. After the cruise, all hands

relaxed atr the Sheboygan Yacht Club and viewed Rocky's outstanding handmade model of the SS SHEBOYGAN.



(L- R) Capt. Mike Loescher (Lodge #6, Master M/V IN NO RUSH), Capt. Rocky Groh (Lodge #18), Capt. Greg Stamatelakys (Lodge #6) – Photo by Linda Loescher (Lodge #6)



Capt. Rocky Groh's (Lodge #18) handmade model of SS SHEBOYGAN at Sheboygan Yacht Club - Photo: Capt. Greg Stamatelakys (Lodge $6)

2026 ISMA Scholarship Award Winners

United States Cadet

Cadet **Ed Lefebre**

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 2026

3rd Quarter

NAME	NO.	TYPE	LODGE
Chelsea Bejamin	13569	AP	6
Ryan Stryker	13570	AP	6
Ev Snow	OC-13568	OC	15

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

Great Lakes & Maritime News

Toledo Dredging Project Supports $1B Dollar Economic Impact

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Buffalo District has launched the largest annual dredging operation on the Great Lakes, clearing Toledo Harbor's federal navigation channels from October 2, 2026 through January 2027.

The two-year, $11.1 million project will remove approximately 750,000 cubic yards of material from the Maumee River and lake channel to maintain safe depths for commercial vessels. Toledo Harbor supports more than $1 billion in annual economic impact, handling 11 million tons of cargo—primarily iron ore, coal, and petroleum coke. This year's work is funded under a $5.3 million task order, with a second $5.8 million task order planned for 2027. Annual dredging remains essential to sustaining jobs, business revenue, and transportation-sector reliability throughout the Great Lakes region.

Great Lakes Towing Orders New Tugs

The Great Lakes Towing Company has ordered two new Damen-designed harbor tugs from Great Lakes Shipyard, marking the next phase of its long-running fleet renewal program. These vessels—Hulls 11 and 12—will be built in Cleveland, with deliveries planned for late 2027 and early 2028. Company leadership emphasized that continued investment in modern tugs is essential for maintaining safe, reliable harbor towing services across the Great Lakes. Great Lakes Shipyard noted that experience gained from constructing the first ten Damen tugs will streamline the build of the next two. The project supports regional shipbuilding jobs and reinforces the company's commitment to the Great Lakes marine transportation system.

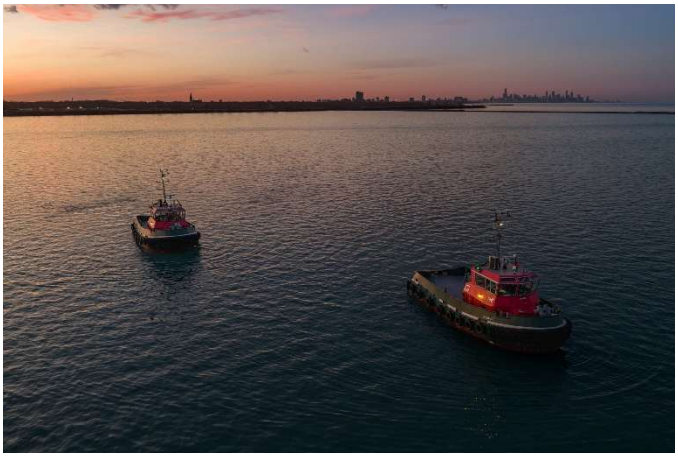


Photo: GCaptain

Duluth-Superior Blatnik Bridge Replacement Design Unveiled

Minnesota and Wisconsin transportation officials have released the final design for the new $1.8 billion Blatnik Bridge, the critical link between Duluth, MN, and Superior, WI. The replacement—featuring a modern tied-arch structure, raised piers, and a 120-foot navigation clearance—aims to deliver a 100-year service life and significantly improved safety.



A rendering of the proposed Blatnik Bridge between Duluth and Superior, Wis. (Minnesota Department of Transportation)

The project includes four traffic lanes and a 12-foot pedestrian/bike path with scenic overlooks. Demolition of the existing 1961 bridge begins in March 2027, with full removal of the main span through 2028. Installation of the new span is scheduled for completion by winter 2031, and the bridge is expected to open to traffic no later than October 31, 2031.

During construction, traffic will detour to the nearby Bong Bridge, adding travel time for commuters and visitors. Officials chose to rebuild on the current alignment to shorten the project timeline by about a year, reduce costs

by up to $100 million, and avoid risks associated with building next to live traffic.

The Blatnik Bridge carries roughly 33,000 vehicles daily and supports Great Lakes shipping beneath its mile-and-a-half span. Federal funding covers about $1 billion, with Minnesota and Wisconsin contributing the remainder.

New Lock at the Soo is 50% Complete

The New Lock at the Soo has reached a major milestone: Phase 3 construction is now 50% complete, according to multiple official updates from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Key Highlights:

- Halfway through Phase 3: The final phase of the project—building the new Poe-sized lock chamber—is now halfway finished.
- Massive Infrastructure Investment: The new lock represents a $3.219 billion upgrade to Great Lakes shipping resiliency.
- Critical to U.S. Industry: Roughly 88% of all U.S. domestic iron ore moves through the existing Poe Lock, making this second lock essential for national supply chain security.

Major Construction Work Underway:

- Cofferdams at both ends
- Demolition of Sabin Lock
- Filling of Davis Lock
- Bedrock excavation
- Chamber wall and floor construction
- Fabrication of miter gates and ship arrestors
- Installation of mechanical/electrical systems
- Hands-free mooring system
- Downstream approach wall rehab
- New pump well construction

Concrete Progress:

- Total required: ~400,000 cubic yards
- Placed so far: 140,198 cubic yards (enough to build a “sidewalk” from Sault Ste. Marie to near Dayton, Ohio).

Project Status:

- $975 million in work completed through August 2026
- Still on schedule for 2030 completion, despite Michigan Upper Peninsula weather challenges.

Buffalo District Assessment Guide Great Lakes Navigation Investments

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers **Buffalo District** has completed its **2026 Operational Condition Assessments** of federal navigation structures across **31 Great Lakes harbors** in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. These annual, hands-on inspections evaluate the condition and functionality of breakwaters, jetties, and piers that protect navigation channels and ensure safe harbor access for vessels ranging from small recreational craft to 1,000-foot freighters.

Assessment teams—drawing from Operations, Coastal Engineering, and Project Management—inspect structures by land and boat, document conditions with photos, and assign standardized ratings. The goal is to identify early signs of deterioration, shifting stone, alignment changes, or other issues that could affect navigation safety or require future repair funding.

Most structures maintained their previous ratings, though **Conneaut Harbor’s East Breakwater** showed reduced crest elevation and slope damage. Recent repairs at **Cleveland Harbor’s West Pier**, completed in 2025 at a cost of **$7.2 million**, were noted as significantly improving structural condition. Importantly, **none** of the assessed structures received a failed rating.

All findings will be entered into the Corps’ **Coastal Navigation System Database**, which informs national, risk-based decisions on maintenance funding. These assessments help ensure the long-term reliability of Great Lakes navigation infrastructure—critical to a system supporting **$36 billion** in economic activity and more than **241,000 jobs**.

Ship Master Spotlight

Capt. Raymond Sheldon Jr. (#11097)

Captain Raymond Sheldon Jr. is a second-generation mariner, following in the footsteps of his father, Raymond Sheldon Sr., who worked as an Able Seaman (AB) aboard car ferries and cement carriers on the Great Lakes.

Ray originally considered a career in the United States Coast Guard, but a high school counselor suggested he attend the newly established Great Lakes Maritime Academy in Traverse City, Michigan. Taking that advice, Ray enrolled in June 1972 and graduated in 1976 with a degree in Maritime Science.

Following graduation, Ray began his career with Inland Steel as an Able Seaman, eventually advancing to a relief mate position. Throughout his career with Inland Steel, he served aboard all six vessels in the fleet: the Edward L. Ryerson, L.E. Block, P.D. Block, E.J. Block, Wilfred Sykes, and Joseph L. Block.



Ray earned his Great Lakes Master's License in 1993 and was promoted to Captain in 1994. He went on to command both the Wilfred Sykes and the Joseph L. Block, retiring from the latter in 2021 after nearly five decades on the Great Lakes.

One particularly memorable occasion aboard the Joseph L. Block took place in 2019, when Ray married his wife, Peggy, while the vessel was anchored near Port Inland, Michigan. It was a fitting setting for a couple who share such a strong connection to the Great Lakes and maritime life.

Retirement, however, did not mean leaving the maritime industry behind. Ray has remained remarkably active on the Great Lakes, taking on a variety of roles that have allowed him to continue doing what he loves.

Shortly after retiring, he was invited to work aboard tugs for Sarter Towing in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. Following the sale of Sarter Towing, Ray and Peggy—who also holds a Merchant Mariner Credential and is a member of ISMA—joined the Original Soo Locks Boat Tours in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Ray served as Captain while Peggy worked as a narrator, sharing the rich maritime history of the Soo Locks and St. Marys River with visitors. During their time there, they lived aboard their own boat at Kemp Marina, directly across from the Valley Camp Museum Ship.

Today, Ray and Peggy continue their maritime adventures, working with Basic Towing/North Shore Marine Terminal in Escanaba, Michigan, and Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. One of their most recent assignments involved towing the USS Silversides museum submarine from Sturgeon Bay to Muskegon, Michigan, following its dry docking. This marked the second submarine towing operation in which Ray has participated, the first being the USS Cobia in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

Both Ray and Peggy have recently renewed their Merchant Mariner Credentials, ensuring that their adventures on the water are far from over.



Grand President's Report

2026 is rapidly slipping away from us, and my term as Grand President is nearing expiration.

ISMA continues to move forward with community involvement and support of our industry. I would like to give a shout out to Port Huron Lodge # 2 for their work in hosting a river cruise for ISMA members and guests, and to Milwaukee Lodge # 6 for their involvement in Harbor Fest 2026. Although I missed both events, I was able to make it up to Thunder Bay, Ontario for the finale dinner of the Association of Great Lakes Maritime History conference, in which our very own Past Grand President Captain Luke Clyburn was honored.

Looking ahead, I will be attending the annual Veterans Day program at the Arlington Nation Cemetery on November 11 as part of the American Merchant Marine Veterans group. The purpose of the group's involvement is to represent the U.S. Merchant Marine.

I look forward to seeing all of you in a few short months in Toledo at the Grand Lodge Convention. I know that Lodge # 9 is working hard to ensure the convention will be a great success.

To all our active members: Please be safe and diligent as we enter the most difficult and challenging months of the shipping season.

Fraternally,

Capt. Chris Edyvean
2026 Grand Lodge President

Grand Lodge Financial Report

By Grand Lodge Secretary-Treasurer Capt. Tom Foster

Our financial picture for this last quarter is exceptional. With almost all budget items in place we should be under budget for the fourth year and moving close to placing some funds into a continuing investment account.

Revenues were greater than anticipated in both the General account and the scholarship fund. Our four scholarships in 2027 will make a small dent rather than a large hole as we usually create for ourselves each year.

Much of the new revenue is for the scholarship fund and has been a gift of arduous work by Adrea Guerriero of Twin Sault Lodge 22. Andrea is an associate member who has run dozens of Maritime auctions for us and conducted the extraordinarily successful Voices of the Valley Camp. We should all thank Adrea the next time we see her for the tremendous effort to make our Scholarship fund so bountiful.

Heading toward our Toledo convention I am sure there will be lots to discuss. All lodge are eligible to have delegates present. Those credentials will be in the mail next month.

Our membership is also getting stronger. Again, a big thank you to the Port of Monroe for paying for all our cadets this year. Continued support such as this is a fantastic way to raise funds and ensure we can keep pushing the Lodge forward as an entity of Expert Knowledge and aiding in the education of future Ship Masters.

I will close by saying the 501 (c) 3 application is still a work in progress.

I look forward to seeing many friends in the city of Toledo.

MOW Committee

By Chairman Matt Zaleski

ISMA saw some great regional and national exposure over the late Spring and early Summer --- Especially on National Maritime Day --- Some of which you already read about in this newsletter. I developed and distributed several news releases. They included helping Capt. Beth Fernandez at Lodge 6 and the Maritime Interaction Day with the group We Work the Waterways, and ISMA President, Capt. Chris Edyvean honored on National Maritime Day in Washington DC. In addition, our last newsletter was distributed to the media outlets where member lodges are located.

In an attempt to show ISMA's geographic size and reach, a new news release letterhead was developed that shows all member lodges with logos and the member lodge hyperlink. There is a paragraph with the ISMA background at the bottom of the letterhead.

There was also significant work done with the Toledo Lodge for the upcoming 137th Annual Convention. Among early interest is the United Autoworkers – Region 2B sponsoring a table to the banquet, United Steelworkers purchasing a program ad, and the Insulators Local 45 Union taking 100 freighter cruise raffle tickets to sell to its members. Dre Design has agreed to work with the Toledo Lodge to help sell freighter cruise raffle tickets.

ISMA Past Grand President Harry Dusseau, Toledo Lodge 9 president Rick Brown, my wife Betty (an Associate Member), and I will attend the upcoming American Great Lakes Ports Association (AGLPA) Annual Summer Conference, July 30 & 31, 2026 in Chicago. Our group will host a table and work the venue distributing information on sponsorships for the upcoming convention in Toledo and selling freighter cruise raffle tickets. The ISMA Grand Lodge will also have a table there to promote port involvement with our Association.

Additional accomplishments included arranging a business associate, Ed Blankenship, to provide free services to help Capt. Thomas Foster, ISMA Grand Lodge Secretary-Treasurer, to complete the ISMA 501(c)3 work.

The Fitzgerald legacy continues. A few months ago, I sat down with the CBS affiliate in Toledo, WTOL. The meeting was to secure a media sponsor for the Toledo convention, but it turned into something else. WTOL committed several months of coverage to the 50th Anniversary of the Fitzgerald Tragedy. WTOL General Manager, Brian Lorenzen, told me that the Fitzgerald stories posted on their website, and on affiliates on the Great Lakes and eastern seaboard, were among the top-five percent for web hits. Mr. Lorenzen said this revealed something that they didn't expect --- Their audience has an interest in maritime stories. As a result, their Chief Meteorologist, Chris Vickers, now offers regular posts about the maritime industry and following ships headed to Toledo. For ISMA, this is just the start of re-introducing the maritime industry to the media.

Finally, many lodges are hosting events this summer and early fall. Most of these events are aimed at fellow ISMA members and their respective guests. In other words, these events are not open to the public. With those types of events, I will not be sending out a news release or event announcement. If you are hosting an event and it is open to the public, please let me know. I will gladly put something together. Also, if possible, let's try to work with at least a four-to-six-week lead time before the event.

Change of Course Committee

By Chairman Capt. Luke Clyburn

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

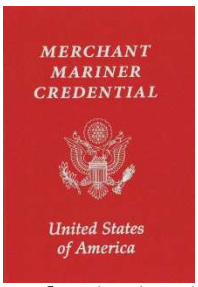
Leadership

- 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

Coast Guard Rolls Out Digital Credentialing Platform

The U.S. Coast Guard has launched a new digital system to modernize mariner credentialing, aiming to reduce a significant processing backlog and improve efficiency.



The new system, known as NAVITA—Latin for "sailor"—**went live in September 2026** and is being developed as part of the Coast Guard's broader digital transformation initiative. The platform is designed to streamline applications, enhance tracking, and speed up approvals for merchant mariners. While the move marks a major step toward modernization, it comes as the agency continues working through delays that have impacted the maritime workforce and industry operations.

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.

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@milwaukeelodge6.org is no longer being used)

The deadline for stories to be included in the next newsletter is JANUARY 31, 2027.

Capt. Mike Loescher – Milwaukee Lodge No. 6

2026 Event Calendar

November 3-4	HWY H2O Annual Conference	Toronto, ON
November 6-7	Gales of November 2026	Duluth, MN
November 8	Annual Great Lakes Memorial Service	Mariner's Church Detroit, MI
November 11	US Veterans Day Canada Remembrance Day	
November 19	Great Lakes Navigation Stakeholder Event	Detroit, MI
December 2-4	International Workboat Show	New Orleans, LA
Dec. 5	Chicago Christmas Ship	Navy Pier Chicago, IL
January 12-13	Great Lakes Captains Association Industry Days 2027	Traverse City, MI
January 28-31, 2027	137th ISMA Grand Lodge Convention	Toledo, OH
Please verify these dates prior to making travel plans!		

Connect with ISMA

ISMA Website

www.shipmaster.org

ISMA LinkedIn Page

linkedin.com/company/international-ship-masters-association

ISMA Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/InternationalShipMastersAssociation

International Ship Masters' Association

2026 Grand Lodge Officers

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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**
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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'Donoughue**
ismalodge15@gmail.com

Membership/Outreach/Website Committee (MOW)
Website: **www.shipmaster.org**
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Change of Course Committee (CoC)
Chairman: Captain **Luke Clybourn**
lclyburn@comcast.net

Newsletter Editor
Captain **Mike Loescher**
newsletter@shipmaster.org

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

NAME_____
ADDRESS_____
CITY_____ ST____ ZIP____
PHONE_____
E-MAIL_____
SELLER_____

ISMA TOLEDO LODGE #9

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

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

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

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.