

The Anchor



SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE

A window into ministry to seafarers who keep commerce flowing and secure

Winter 2011



Fr. Jim spreads the port story -- and our role in it -- preaching at area churches and leading forums on the maritime industry.

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Our annual ditty bag day was a huge success. Volunteers packed gifts for seafarers from churches.

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Three examples in eight days of our important work for seafarers -- and local commerce

Recently we encountered three ships with major problems -- all within the span of eight days. With dexterity and resourcefulness, the Seamen's Church Institute staff met each challenge.

The M/V Annabel arrived in port on a Friday with the crew being denied shore leave by the captain at the company's behest.

Each seafarer had been cleared by Customs but the company feared that they might jump ship because of the history of seafarers from their country, Myanmar (Burma), doing so.

After consultation with Mesfin Ghebrowoldi, our veteran senior ship visitor, I emailed the flag state (Liberia) that this was a clear violation of their rights and was simply unfair to these men who had not been ashore in months.

Within a few hours, the flag state worked out a deal with the owners to assure them shore leave the next day. On Saturday we visited the ship and were greeted with broad smiles from the crew. We were clearly heroes to them. We even got invited for lunch.

Three days later the crew of M/V Nord Angel reported that they had not been paid in months and their families were suffering from the lack of money. I called in the international union inspector from Baltimore to visit the ship along with Mr. Ghebrowoldi. Turns out that the company had forwarded the money to the manning agent

in the Philippines but it had not been forwarded to the seafarers' accounts. This ship is now on a world-wide watch by the international union.

The ship has left port. But we are still working with others to resolve the problem.

Finally, the next Saturday one of our chaplains, Pastor William Rex, received a distress call from the M/V Atlantic Falcon stating that the delivery of stores had been short-changed by a significant amount. What he discovered was that the captain and the chandler had a kick-back arrangement that benefited the captain.

He also found out that the captain had alienated his whole crew with repeated derogatory racial remarks against the crew. The ship agent held up the sailing of the ship until all the stores were delivered to the ship. Pastor Rex spent 12 hours on the ship attending to the needs of the crew and providing mediation.

What would have happened if SCI had not there to help these vulnerable men? Who would have helped them? *No One.* Your support makes this ministry possible and seafarers are eternally grateful for your gifts.

*The Rev. Canon James D. Von Dreele
Seamen's Church Institute of Philadelphia and South Jersey
Executive Director*



The Rev. James D. Von Dreele, our executive director, preaches at many churches, telling the story of the port -- and Seamen’s Church Institute’s role in it. In this photo he is at First Baptist Church of Levittown-Fairless Hills, the Rev. Christine Holcomb pastor. This year its members knitted 388 watchcaps and provided more than 1,000 magazines for seafarers. Father Von Dreele gave chocolates to the children and told how seafarers bring cocoa beans to Pennsylvania and New Jersey candy factories. After the service he led a good discussion on the maritime industry’s value to our economy.

Seminarians learn about port, and maritime ministry

Preparing for the future of seafarer ministry is always a major concern at Seamen’s Church Institute. So we were delighted to provide five first-year students from the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Philadelphia with a field work assignment.

“I discovered the ministry . . . to be such a positive thing, just what the church should be doing, caring for God’s beloved children in a time of real need,” said Susan Loney of Wilmington, DE.

“I was impressed to learn of the advocacy side of SCI’s ministry, helping crew members often confined to visiting ships,” said Kerri Walsh of Medford, NY.

“We sometimes think of malls as the ‘religion’ of the marketplace,” said Daniel Spigelmyer of McClure, PA. “It’s neat to see malls as also a focus for ministry -- places SCI takes seafarers who need a little respite away from their ships.”

Alexa Epstein of Philadelphia, PA, remarked about “the complexity” of life on the waterfront. “All the different goods that come through the port, and all the agencies that are part of the work – the ministry of SCI brings a humanizing dimension.”



Aboard the Maple Mighty docked in Camden.

Pastor Bill Rex, SCI Lutheran chaplain, seminarians Daniel Spigelmyer, Susan Loney, Rachel Anderson; Kerri Walsh, Alexa Epstein; and Fr. Von Dreele.

Please visit
www.sciphiladelphia.org



Volunteers turned out again this year to pack watch caps knitted by area church members, other donated gifts, and handmade Christmas cards into ditty bags that we give seafarers. Then the volunteers gathered for a prayer service, led by Father Von Dreele, in SCI's Chapel of the Redeemer. This ministry brings much joy!

SCI Board's Mary Ruth Talley: A waterfront leader

First in a series about people who make the Seamen's Church Institute important to the port.

By Mark Staples

Mary Ruth Hannold Talley of Woodbury, NJ, says it wasn't hard to take up an interest in Seamen's Church Institute when she first heard about the ministry in the 1980s. "Both my late husband, Robert, and I had ancestors who earned their living on the high seas, and we've been aware how much our sustenance depends on waterborne cargo," Talley says.

The South Jersey native says it also made a difference to grow up around water and its influence. Talley's husband knew first-hand about waterborne commerce. He served many years as a metallurgical engineer for Mobil Oil working throughout the East Coast and Midwest.

"From the beginning I found SCI to be an interesting group," she says. She became educated about the various organizations that are part of life in the Port of Philadelphia and the services they provide. And she's seen several "evolutions" of SCI as a member of the Board since 1992, including the move to a new building on Philadelphia's North 5th Street and the new chapel.

"I really appreciate the international flavor of the men and women who work the cargo ships visiting our Port," she says. "So many countries are involved, and there are so many human needs that the seafarers face."

In 1982 Talley was appointed a volunteer commissioner to the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA) by then New Jersey Gov. Tom Kean. She served on its World Trade Committee. "We worked to research the best opportunities to gain cargo for the Port of Philadelphia," she said. The committee then planned and carried out trade missions to Western Europe, Belgium, Germany, Russia, Asia, Hong Kong, Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Spain.

The Port of Philadelphia is complex, conveniently located between Washington-Baltimore and New York. But it is

challenging. It has more than 30 terminals on both sides of the Delaware River in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Committee members pitched the port with videos and, sometimes, re-enactors playing William Penn and Ben Franklin. Talley calls herself a "bit" player over a brief time in the overall promotion of the Port.

Talley says too many people do not realize how important the port is, what a high percentage of consumer goods comes to them by water. "They see 18-wheelers beside their automobiles on the highway, and they don't stop to

think that the trucks are carrying containers or cargo that came off a ship," she says. She is personally grateful that her experience over the years has made her sympathetic to other cultures and the nature of the global economy and marketplace. "I've been exposed to other cultures, languages and lifestyles, what a living wage is in other places. It is easy to be provincial within our borders even though we have assimilated other cultures here.

"If seafarers are not able to leave their ships to shop or come to the (SCI) center, we take them cell phones so they can communicate with their families. Our senior ship visitor, Mesfin Ghebrevoldi, was a seafarer at one time. He speaks eight languages and has an innate ability to feel the vibes of people on a ship. He can

determine if there are issues there to resolve, such as whether the crew has been paid." SCI, she notes, plays a key advocacy role on behalf of seafarers.

SCI's executive director, the Rev. James Von Dreele, has "a bigger vision" for the mission of Seamen's Church Institute and provides leadership that has furthered important collaboration among Port organizations.

She sees challenges ahead – one being to tell churches and individuals about the difference Seamen's Church Institute makes in strengthening the region's economy and security – "We need more volunteers and donor support."





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for our

7 p.m. Dec. 13 Christmas service

Planning can save you money and fund good work

By Jennifer Iacono, Esquire

The only way to assure that your finances, property, and family members are properly cared for after your death is through appropriate and adequate estate planning. This includes the drafting of a Last Will and Testament.

A Last Will and Testament allows you to designate: who will receive your assets at your death; and who will serve as your personal representative (the person who will pay your debts and distribute your assets to your beneficiaries).

A Last Will and Testament also provides an opportunity for charitable giving. Besides the personal satisfaction that comes with charitable donations, it also provides numerous potential tax benefits. Gifts to charitable organizations are fully deductible for estate tax purposes. In other words, a gift left to a charity in a Will is not subject to federal estate tax. This concept is also true for most state death taxes, including Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The benefits of charitable giving are not limited to gifts left at death. Charitable giving during your lifetime also provides numerous potential tax benefits. Gifts to charitable organizations are generally deductible for income tax purposes, and a charitable gift of appreciated property can reduce or eliminate capital gains tax. Further, gifts to charitable organizations are fully deductible for gift tax purposes. As a result, a donor may make unlimited lifetime gifts to a charity completely free of gift tax.

An advantage of a lifetime gift to charity, over a testamentary gift, is that the lifetime gift provides the donor a double tax benefit: (1) the donor can claim an income tax deduction; and (2) the property will no longer be in the donor's estate, and thus not subject to estate tax at his death.

An example of the above mentioned concepts can be illustrated as follows:

Anna gives \$10,000 to her favorite charity. Generally, Anna can deduct the gift from her gross income before applying the income tax rates and paying income tax. If she is in a marginal 35 percent income tax bracket, her deduction saves her \$3,500 in income taxes. If her gift and estate tax marginal bracket is 45%, then this gift also saves her \$4,500 in gift tax.

At her death, Anna leaves the charity \$100,000. Anna's estate can deduct this amount against the federal estate tax, saving up to \$45,000, depending upon the value of her estate.

As a result of this planning, Anna has made \$110,000 in gifts to charity, and saved a total of \$53,000.00 in taxes.

Every individual has their own special circumstances. So it is prudent to consult with an attorney about your specific desires and plans.

Ms. Iacono is an associate in the Philadelphia law firm Mattioni, Ltd. Her practice focuses on tax and estate planning and administration.