



Albany Maritime Ministry

Welcoming seafarers along the Hudson River in New York's Capital District

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Summer Newsletter

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Panama Canal Reopened

The expanded Panama Canal has finally reopened at a cost of 5.25 billion dollars and nearly nine years of construction. Ships twice the size as before can now pass through its fifty-mile waterway, which is used mostly for container passage from the Far East to eastern North America. The project has weathered cost disputes, serious questions regarding its design, and a global slump in international shipping.

We will have to wait and see if the project delivers all the benefits that canal executives promised to the tiny Central America nation of Panama. The reopening comes at a difficult time when container shipping is slowing down; due, in part, to the economic slowdown in China. On the other hand, shipping trends are moving toward supersized ships that could not pass through the canal before the expansion, a loss that has been redirected to the wider Suez Canal in Egypt. Anders Boenaes, vice president of *Maersk*, the world's largest shipping company, said, "They would have probably maintained the current level of activity, at best, by not doing it, but now by having done it they can win back what was changed to the Suez over the past five, eight, ten years."

Most eastern United States ports have prepared their harbors, terminals and roads for supersized container shipping. However, the largest port, namely the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, is not ready. Port Authority officials have recently announced that a project to raise the Bayonne Bridge will be delayed until the end of 2017 due to engineering miscalculations and inclement weather. The delay undermines the economic rationale for the expansion and raises doubts about whether the wider canal will lead to an immediate surge in container shipment to the East Coast. "If New York isn't ready, it is unlikely that any U.S. East Coast ports will see the biggest ships either," says Marc Bourdon, who heads the U.S. operations of France's CMA CGM Group, one of the world's largest shipping lines.

The Bayonne Bridge is an eighty-three year-old arch that spans the channel between Bayonne, New Jersey and Staten Island, New York.

Albany Maritime Ministry is committed to updating our services so that we can meet new challenges for seafarers who dock along the Hudson River in Upstate New York. For example, we plan to participate in the MARE Project (see below).

See photos of the [expanded Panama Canal](#) on the National Public Radio (NRP) website.

Highlights:

- *Panama Canal reopened*
 - *MARE project advances*
 - *Day of the Seafarer honored*
 - *NAMMA conference planned*
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MARE Project Advances

Earlier this year, NAMMA (North American Maritime Ministry Association) and the Mission to Seafarers announced the joint launch of a new project entitled MARE (pronounced *Mar-Ay*; Latin for “Sea”). The project will help traditional maritime welfare agencies connect with seafarers through new digital tools—and some new paper tools, as well. Project assistant, Dr. Kaimei Zhang, has investigated ways to improve communication with Chinese seafarers. The investigation led to a collection of fifty-two flashcards that show the most important words and phrases which ministry workers might need to communicate with Chinese seafarers.



Chinese-English flash cards

Here is the Mandarin Chinese phrase for

“welcome [to]”: 欢迎 (pronounced *Huan-ying*)

Day of the Seafarer Honored

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) designates June 25th as the Day of the Seafarer. This year's tribute was themed *At Sea for All*. The day is meant to remind us of seafarers' vital role in transporting 90% of the components that make our modern world possible. Every year, 1.5 million seafarers deliver traded goods at great personal cost to themselves and their families. Although they typically work with modern, environmentally-sustainable tools, seafarers must still travel far from their homes for months at a time, and at risk of numerous perils, including the ancient crime of piracy.

The date, June 25th, was chosen because on that day in 2010, significant revisions were adopted to the Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers. The revisions were published at a diplomatic conference in Manila, Philippines. June 25th is included in the annual list of United Nations Observances.

NAMMA Conference Planned

Our director, Rev William Hempel, is set to attend the 2016 NAMMA conference on August 2-5, at the waterfront Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel in Portsmouth, VA. The theme for this year is *Being Present: Social Isolation at Sea*. Keynote speakers will be award-winning documentary filmmaker, Martin Doblmeier, producer of the recent PBS documentary, *Chaplains*; and Pulitzer-prize-winning New York Times journalist, Ian Urbina. It was just announced that Urbina's New York Times series, *The Outlaw Ocean*, will be turned into a movie by Leonardo DiCapro's production company, Appian Way. The movie will be released for Internet video streaming on Netflix.

A number of other prominent speakers and activities will invariably fortify conference participants for their ministries to seafarers who dock along North American shores.

Please pray for seafarers, and everyone who is in peril on the wide, far-away sea.