When you, dear Member, read this message we will have only a few days left of 2019. How was this year for ship management? Very interesting indeed. This last issue of this year’s Dispatch will re-cap some of the major projects your Association has been working on.

There is plenty more work left to do during next year and for years to come. We are, however, happy that we were able to introduce a new ‘quality’ in the shipping industry – seafarers are now being heard! 2019 has seen the opinions of nearly 5,000 seafarers taken into account regarding deaths in enclosed spaces. This was enough to wake up organisations which did not see themselves as stakeholders in this extremely important issue.

Lifeboats continue to be a problem that our industry is struggling to fix and our Association is working hand in hand with other industry players to change this situation. Progress is slow but … it is a progress nevertheless.

500 seafarers responded to our Training Survey. We are now analysing the data and the results will be published in a future edition of Dispatch.

Cadet berths is one of the issues which wakes us up in the middle of the night and as an Association we are trying to find sustainable solutions. Academies and colleges are providing training but our industry is failing to provide the sea berths needed for the practical part of our future leaders' training. Our members are trying to pool resources to make sure that our industry will have the young talent available when needed most. Discussion with owners is ongoing but, admittedly, rather slow. We are working with industry to improve this situation – watch this space for an announcement shortly on an initiative we believe will make a difference.

Unfortunately the criminalisation of seafarers is far from being resolved and the recent case of Capt. Lasota in Mexico once again shows how toothless our industry is. InterManager cannot accept the status quo and is working with industry stakeholders to find a workable solution for all of us. Our appeal to sign the petition to
the Polish President has been seen by nearly 45,000 people and so far resulted in 9,000 signatures. To read more please refer to article on page 6.

The bravery of seafarers has been recognised by the IMO in the presentation of awards and commendations to some exceptional seafarers who went beyond the call of duty to save lives in exceptionally difficult situations. You can read about their heroism on page 10.

Our AGM and conference in London last September was a great success with all places gone three weeks before the event. 2020 will see a new formula of this popular event – make a note in your diaries as we are aiming to hold it in Singapore in October 2020.

Our March meeting in Cyprus, where we discussed scrubbers and ballast water, proved a real success too. We were absolutely oversubscribed with a good number of excellent speakers providing superb food for thought and heated discussions. As a result we would like to continue this momentum by holding a similar event. Hence we are planning another ship management event in Cyprus this coming March where we will take a ‘reality check’ for our industry on how the Sulphur 2020 regulations are working. We are also aiming to tackle the issue of a ‘no blame’ culture.

The mental health of seafarers has created a lot of discussion in mainstream shipping press. InterManager members are quite concerned that, although this is an extremely important issue for all of us, it is being misinterpreted by some quarters of our industry. Full article available on page 8.

Ship management is an exciting place to work and 2020 looks set to be very interesting indeed with a whole raft of issues which require our attention.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year – enjoy the festive season and let’s “speak soon”.

Captain Kuba Szymanski
InterManager Secretary General
Seafarers who are helping to make working life at sea safer for their industry colleagues have been honoured by InterManager, the international trade association for the ship management sector.

InterManager is leading industry calls for improved safety measures to avoid crew members losing their lives while working in dangerous, enclosed spaces.

A key component for InterManager’s campaign to address these dangers is feedback received from the seafarers who regularly face these risks. InterManager Secretary General, Captain Kuba Szymanski, explained: “We wanted to hear from the seafarers themselves to find out why fatal mistakes are still being made? Is there something the industry hasn’t taken into consideration?”

To obtain these views, InterManager conducted an industry-wide survey – and received an overwhelming response from seafarers and shore staff around the globe.

In recognition of this important assistance, InterManager has presented a number of respondents with awards and iPads. Some were presented during the Crew Connect Global event in Manila in November, one has already been presented in Hamburg, and further presentations will take place in London soon.

The recipients are:

**Leadership Award (presented to shore staff):**
- Capt. Venkat Kesav, Campbell Shipping
- Capt. Frank Lasse, Bernhard Schulte
- Himadri Shikhar, MSI Shipping

**Seafarer Award (presented to crew members):**
- Pumpman Florencio Boongaling, Bernhard Schulte
- Capt. Avinash Serafino Carrasco, MSI Shipping
- Second Officer Sheshendra Chaturvedi, Campbell Shipping
- Second Engineer Mr Asokan Exhilan, MSI Shipping
- Chief Officer Sunny Tagappan Kannan, MSI Shipping
- Deck Cadet Vishal Kumar, Campbell Shipping
- Michael Lloyd, retired.
- Chief Officer Leigh MusseWhite, Tidewater Marine
- Capt. Somesh Singh, Campbell Shipping

Presentation of the iPads was made possible thanks to the generous sponsorship of the following companies, all InterManager members: Columbia Ship Management; Ecochlor; ISSA; Philippines Transmarine Carriers; SCF Group; Seagull; Scorpio Ship Management; SOFTImpact, The Standard Club Asia.

Captain Szymanski said: “Our Enclosed Spaces campaign has obviously struck a chord and we were pleased with the response we received from throughout the maritime community. This campaign put seafarers in the driving seat and gave them the chance to take charge of this risk to their lives. We are delighted that so many of them took the time to respond to us.”

He continued: “We received some very interesting suggestions and this feedback will help to inform our campaign as we endeavour to bring about industry-wide improvements. I am delighted to be able to recognise those seafarers and shore staff who went out of their way to help us.”

“Thanks to the great feedback we received from seafarers and marine sector workers throughout the international shipping industry we have the information we need to be able to lobby the International Maritime Organisation and other key maritime stakeholders and work towards eradicating these risks,” he said.
Our Enclosed Spaces Campaign receives an industry award

InterManager is delighted to have received a 2019 Safety4Sea – Europort Award for our Enclosed Spaces campaign.

The Safety4Sea – Europort awards focus on workplace safety, training, technology, ship operators, and initiatives that have showcased excellence and innovation within the maritime industry towards safer and more secure shipping.

InterManager received the Initiative Award for our campaign to raise awareness throughout the shipping industry of the dangers faced by seafarers working in enclosed spaces and to encourage the creation of a safer environment for those working in such spaces. Other short-listed nominees for this category were: Human Rights At Sea, Lloyd’s Register, Sailors’ Society and TT Club.

The awards were presented at a prestigious ceremony which took place during Europort 2019, in Rotterdam. Executive Committee member, Astrid Drent of MF Shipping, received our award on behalf of InterManager.

InterManager Secretary General, Capt Kuba Szymanski, commented: “We are very, very pleased that our campaign to make working in enclosed spaces safer for seafarers has been recognised in this way.”

Scale Kilimanjaro and raise funds for seafarers

Sailors’ Society is seeking adventurous members of the maritime community to take part in its charity climb of Kilimanjaro – the highest peak in Africa.

Rebecca Bridgen, Events Fundraiser, said: “We are taking on this giant of the world in August 2020 and looking for participants now so training can begin and to build a good plan for fundraising. This is certainly one of life’s achievements and will not be forgotten easily!”

Participants need to raise a minimum sponsorship amount of £5000. For further information contact the Sailors’ Society on +44 7712 404130.
Captain Andrzej Lasota, Master of the Cyprus-registered multipurpose dry cargo vessel *UBC Savannah*, is imprisoned in Mexico after his crew found packets of cocaine in the hold during unloading, which he immediately reported to the authorities.

At first the entire crew was arrested and held for several weeks before being exonerated and released. However, the Captain remains incarcerated in Mexico without either due cause or trial.

This is yet another example of seafarers being unfairly treated as criminals.

Captain Lasota was arrested in August by the Mexican authorities on the grounds of, according to the Prosecutor’s office, “alleged negligence in failing to be aware that the ship he commanded may have been carrying prohibited substances, said substances being illegally delivered to Mexico, placing the lives and health of the country’s citizens at risk”.

In excess of 240 kgs of cocaine, buried under several thousand tons of coal, was discovered when the ship’s Duty Officer, having noticed suspicious packages in the hold during unloading, informed the First Officer who subsequently notified the ship’s Master.

Captain Lasota immediately suspended discharging and reported the findings to the Mexican authorities. Despite the fact that the vessel had been subject to extensive searches at the loading port, Barranquilla, Colombia, by both local police and port security officers, during which time no drugs were located, together with the lack of evidence of any involvement by any crew member in the deployment of the drug consignment, the entire crew were immediately arrested and imprisoned.

With the exception of Captain Lasota, the remaining compliment of crew were released by the court some two months later – only to be re-arrested by the immigration office for remaining in Mexico illegally, due to their port passes having expired during their improper detainment! They were deported a further six weeks later.

Supporters of the Captain claim he is stressed and worried and has been deprived of access to his prescribed medicines, resulting in his health deteriorating and causing him to be temporarily admitted to a medical facility before being returned to prison.

During his most recent court hearing, the judge set a five-month deadline for the prosecutor’s office to gather evidence to start the trial proceedings which, according to the local court, may take up to two years to complete. The allegations against Captain Lasota are punishable by a term of prolonged imprisonment ranging from 10 to 20 years.

Cyprus-based Intership Navigation Co, which manages the vessel, has supplied legal representation and is giving its full support to Captain Lasota. A spokesman said: “From day one we have worked on several levels to ensure the release of the Master – legally by defending him, through diplomatic channels with Polish, Cypriot and Philippine government bodies, as well as through the EU and IMO. We will strenuously continue our efforts to secure his release.”

Now Captain Andrzej Lasota’s employers, colleagues, family, and friends have launched an online petition calling for his release.

[Click here to sign the online petition:](https://www.petitions.net/petition_regarding_the_release_of_captain_andrzej_lasota_arrested_in_mexico) We urge you to sign this petition – criminalisation of seafarers must be stopped!

InterManager Secretary General, Captain Kuba Szymanski, said: “The Captain and his crew were innocent seamen going about their daily duties and have been treated as common criminals. Seafarers should not be unfairly criminalised in this way. Our thoughts are with Captain Lasota, his family, colleagues and supporters, and we urge everyone to sign this petition.”
In response to today’s increasingly complex operating environment, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has launched a completely new edition of its Guidelines on the Application of the IMO International Safety Management (ISM) Code, originally published in 1993 with over 50,000 copies sold worldwide.

The ISM Code is a key mandatory requirement for merchant ships, critical to continuous improvement of maritime safety and environmental performance.

An expert ICS panel drawn from shipowners and shipmanagers across a variety of sectors, and with considerable experience of working with ISM, has created up to date guidelines which look forward to the future, balancing the need to implement Safety Management Systems (SMS) that further improve safety with helping the crew to do its job efficiently.

Mark Rawson, ICS Expert Group Lead says: “What emerged within ICS was a strong enthusiasm to make radical changes to the previous guidelines. The view from ship operators was that we should be looking at how we can simplify understanding of the ISM Code and the application of its requirements.

“The purpose of ISM, when it was adopted by IMO more than 25 years ago, was to make it easier and safer for ships’ crews to carry out their work. Today, this is something which is sometimes overlooked. The industry has changed so much since the 1990s and we are now in a very different and far more complex place. There is much more pressure from external stakeholders – including charterers and commercial interests, such as banks and underwriters – to use the SMS for their own purposes. We have therefore sought to provide greater clarity on what ICS believes is actually the key point of ISM Code compliance."

Mr Rawson emphasised: “The ISM Code is actually fairly simple in its approach and, with the right understanding, can be relatively easy to comply with. In a complex global business like shipping it’s time to refocus the SMS on the fundamental objective of helping seafarers perform their vital work on board ships in a safe and environmentally sound manner.”

The new fifth edition of Guidelines on the Application of the IMO International Safety Management (ISM) Code includes comprehensive advice on compliance with the Code for anyone involved with developing, implementing and maintaining the SMS, including Masters and Designated Persons Ashore (DPA).

The revised Guidelines are divided into three sections. The first outlines the significant stakeholders and objectives; the second explores the experience of companies with ISM Code implementation and the importance of risk assessment and commitment to best practice; and the third features new ideas on how to replicate success and use the ISM Code to deal with new technologies and complexities in the future.

ICS recommends that a copy of the new Guidelines is carried on board every commercially trading ship and that a copy is held within every shipping company office.
It is difficult not to notice the attention the issue of the mental health of seafarers has received in recent months. I am asking myself a question: is this good for the seafarers or bad?

It definitely raises the awareness of stakeholders throughout the maritime sector, and many would argue that this surely must be good for all concerned – but I beg to differ and here is why:

Yes awareness is important – but I am concerned that the way the issue is being portrayed makes it seem like it is widespread among crew members, compared to shore staff. This is incorrect, unfair, and might actually be adding to seafarer’s stress. Imagine the stigma created around seafarers who feel unfairly targeted and may worry that industry colleagues, friends and family consider them to be emotionally unstable or even more likely to commit suicide. Parents of new cadets may be put off from supporting their young people to go to sea by this negative portrayal of the working environment on a ship.

In my opinion seafarers are representative of the general population and suffer no greater mental health issues than people on shore – indeed I would argue that happiness surveys regularly indicate that seafarers are generally happy in their roles and are less likely to suffer mental health issues.

I believe that this misunderstanding has been created because scanty research is being misinterpreted or quoted out of context. Indeed, one opinion I heard at a conference – which was subsequently disproven – has been repeated many times in maritime media reports and become an accepted industry fact, despite it not being true.

Media coverage around the world and throughout all industries is so focused on mental health that it seems that we are in the midst of a global epidemic,
particularly among the younger generations. Is this really the case? Suicide is, quite rightly, a concern for everyone – but I am unhappy at media coverage that I have seen which implies that suicide rates are higher among seafarers than the general population. This is simply not true. Indeed national and international research demonstrates that, particularly in countries which have high rates of suicide among young males (such as Russia, Ukraine, India, Poland, France, the US and Canada), rates among seafarers are far lower than their national average.

A number of empirical studies have found there is an increase in suicides following media reports of a suicide – a relationship referred to as ‘copycat’ behaviour. Based on such findings, the World Health Organisation has developed guidelines for the reporting of suicides in the media.

A recent study by Dr Rafael Lefkovitz highlights the top three important medical conditions which seafarers suffer from are high cholesterol, high blood pressure and sleep disorder. Depression and anxiety are on the list but not at the top. So why are we taking things out of context? Why do we jump to discussing depression while practically ignoring these other three very important conditions? Can I dare to say because it suits the current agenda? I am absolutely not denying that depression is an important medical condition. What I am urging is for the figures to be considered in context so that seafaring as a profession is not incorrectly stigmatized.

Another recent study by Dr Helen Sampson and Dr Neil Ellis from the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC) on seafarer’s mental health and wellbeing, produced some interesting findings. Let me quote the top three conclusions:

- It is difficult to establish the extent of the problem of mental ill health (and suicide) among seafarers relative to comparable populations.
- There is evidence of an increase in recent-onset anxiety and depression among serving seafarers.
- There is evidence that in some roles seafarers may be particularly prone to emotional exhaustion and ‘burnout’.

To me, this demonstrates that more examination is needed before we reach conclusions about whether seafarers are at particular risk. We also need to properly investigate what seafarers themselves are worried about.

I believe that when seafarers are asked what is on their mind then the likely answers include:

- Will I get home on time? I promised my loved ones to be back at a certain time so they planned their lives accordingly. Will I let them down?
- Will I have employment after I complete this trip?
- Will I be paid on time? (Sadly, a recent study among Russian and Ukrainian seafarers revealed that 12% of them are still facing this issue)
- Will my vessel visit a high risk piracy area?
- Will I be criminalised for doing my job?
- Will I have to deal with ridiculous paperwork?
- How many inspections will I face this trip?

Yes seafarers do have worries and mental health issues but we need further, peer-reviewed investigations in order to establish how widespread and deep these are. It is up to the shipping industry as a whole to ensure that all seafarers are treated fairly and given the same rights and standards of living as their colleagues on shore, particularly when it comes to online connectivity.

Undeniably, loneliness can be a factor of our life at sea, but I don’t believe that this a recent revelation and I question why all of a sudden this has become a hot topic? Yes many seafarers do prefer to have regular contact with their family and friends via access to online connections like email, social media etc. However, you may call me bonkers but, as a former serving captain I have seen that sometimes being away from terrestrial problems is what makes sea so attractive for many of us!

I urge the maritime community to tread carefully when talking about seafarer mental health. Let’s look at the bigger picture, examine all the facts, and hold discussions in measured terms, taking all factors into proper consideration. Then we can work to support those who need it and to remedy any situations which need to be improved. Let’s not unfairly stigmatise our professional colleagues at sea.
Members will have seen my summary report on the meeting of Member States at Assembly 31 in which the Bravery Awards were mentioned, albeit very briefly because of the need to keep the content of the report short but comprehensive. However, given that IMO Meetings have run their course for this year, I thought you would all enjoy reading a little more as to the exploits of those who risked their lives in order to save those of others.

Starting with the feat of Petty Officer Michael Kelly, recipient of the 2019 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea on 14 November 2018, during heavy storms in which the crew of the rescue helicopter CG6032 was directed to provide assistance to the sinking fishing vessel AARON and Melissa II. The vessel’s four crew members were abandoning ship in severe weather conditions, 70 miles off the coast of Maine, United States.

After take-off, the helicopter crew immediately encountered very strong turbulence and gusts of up to 60 knots (which equates to storm force 11 on the Beaufort scale) but when arriving on scene, managed to locate a life raft battered by raging seas.

Petty Officer Kelly was immediately deployed into the cold water and had to battle with 20-foot waves and chase the raft which was constantly being blown away by the exceedingly strong winds. Notwithstanding, he finally managed to reach the anchor line and pull himself on to the life raft.

Once onboard, he quickly assessed the situation as being extremely critical in that all four survivors were suffering from hypothermia, two of them were unable to swim and the flooded liferaft was in danger of capsizing. In spite of all these obstacles and with astonishing determination allied to remarkable stamina, Kelly pulled each of them from the raft, one by one, swimming strongly through the storm to keep them afloat. One by one, each of them was then lifted into the swaying rescue basket to be hoisted to safety in the helicopter.

After each rescue, Petty Officer Kelly was forced to regain lost ground as the heavy winds continued to blow the raft further and further away but to his immense credit, he fought through the extreme conditions, overcoming his own physical and mental exhaustion to save the lives of all four seafarers in distress.

In addition to the award so well deserved by Petty Officer Kelly, four certificates of commendation were also presented to:

- The members of the emergency rescue team of Guangzhou Salvage which rescued two people trapped for 55 hours inside the capsized dredger Rong Chang 8 which was drifting bottom up in the water. The rescue involved much courage and a physically draining effort in diving multiple times through debris for many hours and fighting
strong ocean currents to effect the rescue;

- Corvette Lieutenant of the Naval Infantry Juan Mateo Cabrera (posthumously) for sacrificing his own life while helping other crew members to abandon their helicopter which had crashed into the sea. Lieutenant Cabrera managed to help three of his fellow crew members to escape to the surface but very sadly, he did not survive the ordeal and his body was recovered five days later;

- Captain Miac Zeljko and crew of the M/V APL Vancouver for bravery, determination and professionalism displayed whilst fighting a fire that broke out in a cargo hold and had quickly spread to the containers on deck. Captain Zeljko and his crew fought the fire for more than 36 hours, keeping it under control until the arrival of firefighting tugs and the Vietnamese Coast Guard. Thus, 24 lives on board were saved, further damage to the ship prevented, also a serious marine pollution incident was averted; and,

- Captain William Boyce and crew of the car carrier Green Lake, for the exceptional seamanship, tenacity and leadership they demonstrated in rescuing seafarers from the car carrier Sincerity Ace who had been forced to abandon ship due to a fire on board that had spiralled out of control. In 30 knot winds and 25 foot waves, Captain Boyce skilfully manoeuvred his 633-foot long vessel for over 18 hours safely alongside a number of survivors in the water, during which seven crew members were rescued. He simultaneously coordinated rescue efforts conducted by three on-scene vessels assisting in the rescue operation which resulted in saving the lives of further survivors.

IMO PROGRAMME FOR JANUARY and FEBRUARY 2020. The Navigation, Communications, Search & Rescue (NCSR) Sub-Committee meets from 15 through 24 January for its 7th session. During February, the Sub-Committee for Ship Design and Construction (SDC 7) meets from the 3rd to the 7th (which InterManager does not normally attend) and that for Pollution Prevention & Response (PPR 7) from the 17th to the 21st. Should anyone wish to see the provisional agenda for any of the above meetings and does not have access to IMO Docs where they are published, please let me know and I will gladly relay the details.

Wishing you all a jolly festive season,

Captain Paddy McKnight
Georgia’s seafarers benefit from national characteristics

Did you know that the first Shell tanker, Murex, in 1892, which was the first oil tanker to sail through the Suez Canal and delivered kerosene to Asia, was actually loaded at Georgia’s Batumi oil terminal built by the Nobel brothers.

Since that time Georgia has developed as a country with strong maritime traditions which are based on the availability of a skilled and competent workforce. These traditions date back to 1929 when the Batumi Maritime Technical University was established. During the Soviet times Georgia had its own shipping company founded in 1967 in Batumi. By the time the USSR collapsed there were 67 tankers under the company’s management.

The maritime career has always been very popular in Western Georgia and the interest continues to grow every day. Today there are four maritime educational institutions in Georgia and around 12,500 active seafarers who work successfully in the best international shipping companies. Georgian seafarers are increasingly in demand due to high qualifications and a competitive wage scale. Georgia is among the countries on the IMO’s white list and Georgian certificates of competency are recognized by 50 States, among them 19 EU Members.

Georgian social characteristics also help Georgian crews to be popular. Georgian people are cordial and hospitable with very close family bonds. They are very talkative and easily find a common language with other crew members which has a positive effect on the performance of the crew. They like hanging out together, doing things like playing board games, video games, cooking together some national food, such as Khachapuri. During IMG’s 10-year history as a manning agency we haven’t had a single discharge of a Georgian crew member due to alcohol abuse.

Other positive national traits worth mentioning are eagerness to help others, braver and leadership. Staying calm in high stress situations is also characteristic. In 2018 the IMO presented an award to Georgian Capt. Levan Mamaladze and his 15 Georgian crew members for the exemplary effort, courage and tenacity they displayed when rescuing 13 crew members of the sunken tanker Rama 2, in very adverse weather and sea conditions.

IMG is working closely with the Georgian Government to maintain and strengthen maritime traditions in Georgia and promote its Seafarers on an international level.

Anna Motsonelidze, Co-Founder of International Maritime Group (IMG), an InterManager member company, outlines the skill sets of Georgian Seafarers and Georgia’s maritime traditions.
Safety 4 Sea Forum
12 February
London
For more details see website: https://events.safety4sea.com/safety4sea-london-conference/

European Shipping Week
17 – 21 February
Brussels
For more details see website: www.europeanshippingweek.eu

Connecticut Maritime Association (CMA) Shipping Conference
31 March – 2 April
Stamford
Further details: https://informaconnect.com/cma-shipping/
Through the Porthole

Want to see your company ‘Through The Porthole’? We welcome photographs from all our Members.

Email them to: kuba.szymanski@intermanager.org
On The Wire
Snippets from across social media.

@InterManagerOrg
Is it time for the #tanker industry to 'man up'? Our SecGen joins #maritime specialists in London today to discuss the @BIMCONews @shippingics Manpower Report and predict how worldwide supply and demand of #seafarers will develop over the next 5-10 years.

@InterManagerOrg
Captain Andrzej Lasota, Master of the UBC Savannah, is imprisoned in Mexico after he officially reported finding illegal drugs in the hold. Seafarers should not be unfairly criminalised in this way. We urge everyone to sign this petition: http://ow.ly/P41i50xmU5R

@InterManagerOrg
We're working with #maritime partners to reduce the risks for #crew working in #enclosedspaces onboard #ships. Our campaign has been boosted by the input we've received from #seafarers - and tomorrow we're pleased to honour some of the people who have provided vital feedback.

@InterManagerOrg
On The Wire
Snippets from across social media.

InterManager
I would strongly recommend all my sailing friends, both professional and recreational, watch this video

Lifeboats are designed to save lives – no-one should be injured or killed when using one.

Our campaign to improve safety for seafarers working in enclosed spaces continues. In today’s TradeWinds our Secretary General hits the message home hard. Read the full article here: http://ow.ly/qoyy50xbLLB or via our website: https://www.intermanager.org/.../shipmanagers-predict-surge…/

We love to hear your views on the shipping industry and our work. Follow our social media accounts and join the conversation: