

DECEMBER 2024

deepend

DUTCH SEAFARERS

MISSIONS MAGAZINE

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

Port Betaald



BIG EGOS

SAILORS CHEAT ON REST HOURS

*Christmas
special!*

MARITIME ART OF THE ROTTERDAM PORT



FROM THE EDITORS

Twenty-five years ago, Dutch maritime welfare organizations decided to launch a new magazine: *Diepgang*. The idea was to look beyond the headlines and explore what developments in the maritime world mean for “the person on board.” We believe we’ve done a decent job over the past 25 years.

However, times have changed. And today, life on a Dutch-flagged or Dutch-owned ship looks different from when *Diepgang* began. Crews are now international, and English has become the primary language on board.

To mark this anniversary year, we’re taking a step forward by publishing a bilingual issue. On one side the magazine is titled *DeepEnd* and if you flip it over, it reads *Diepgang*.

The number 25 also has a special meaning in December, when Christmas is celebrated in most of the Western world. This issue - which can still be enjoyed on January 6 when some other countries celebrate Christmas - highlights the holiday season. Inside, you’ll also find a critical piece on rest hours, an interview with a finance expert, and a story from a port chaplain about meeting a cook with a sore back. We’re also introducing a new section on maritime art.

Enjoy the read!

COLOPHON

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MEDITATION

by Stefan Francke
Pastor for workers in dredging and Marine construction

DO NOT DISTURB!

"WHAT'S UP WITH THE COOK? HE FORGOT TO MAKE THE POTATOES, AND THE MENU SAYS GREEN BEANS, BUT I DON'T SEE ANY."



One of the crew members says this as we're sitting in the messroom. Others nod and mutter in agreement, but that's it. I'm curious, so I go over to the cook. "Is something wrong? People are saying you forgot a few dishes today." The cook sighs and pulls me aside, whispering, "My wife had a baby last night. But I don't want anyone to know."

I'm surprised and say, "Why not? That's amazing news. Congratulations!" As we talk, he shares that he really misses being home right now. He worries that if everyone congratulates him, he'll feel even more homesick. So he's

trying to keep the news to himself. I understand, but I suggest he tells the captain so there aren't any misunderstandings if his work slips a bit. After all, it's natural to feel emotional with the arrival of his son.

The birth of a child is life-changing. It's not just a small interruption; it's a completely new beginning. When a child comes into your life, everything changes. Suddenly, you're a parent with responsibility for this tiny, vulnerable life. It's no longer just about you; you now have someone who relies on you. The cook is trying to ignore this

while he's on board, but once he's home, he'll be ready to fully welcome his child into his life.

Over 2000 years ago, a child was born in Bethlehem in a stable, barely noticed by anyone. In Christian tradition, the birth of this child is a starting point—not only for the calendar we use but also for new hope for the world. This child is a symbol of the world's survival through care for the vulnerable, love for small, precious life, and forgiveness, no matter what. It reminds us that each person has immense value, even in a world of powerful rulers fighting dark wars. In the dark of Christmas night, the Eternal One brings light. This child is called Immanuel: God with us.

For over 2000 years, many people have tried to ignore the disturbing news of this child's birth. But it's also news that many continue to share because it brings hope and inspiration. It's a message that reminds us to value kindness, even in our dark times.



Fiesta Pork Hamonado

CHRISTMAS RECIPE

from a Filipino chef

CUT ALONG THIS LINE AND SAVE

Ingredients

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| • Garlic | at your taste |
| • Onions | 170 grams |
| • Pineapple | Juice 0,83 L |
| • Sliced Pineapple | 500 grams |
| • Pork Bouillon | 2.50 cube |
| • Pork Hocks | 3350 grams |
| • Soya Sauce | 0,21 L |
| • Brown Sugar | 42 grams |
| • Tap Water | at your taste |

from a Filipino chef



PREPARATION

Fiesta Pork Hamonado



1. Combine the pineapple juice with the soy sauce. Stir well. Place the pork knuckle in a large resealable bag and pour the mixture into it. Release the air from the bag and seal it tightly. Place in the refrigerator and let it marinate overnight.



2. Heat oil in a pan. Chop the onion. Press or finely chop the garlic.

Sauté the onion and garlic in a frying pan.



3. Add the marinated pork when the onion softens and the garlic starts to brown. Sear one side for one minute.

Turn over and sear for another minute.



4. Pour the remaining marinade into the pan. Add water. Bring to a boil. Add the stock cubes. Stir well. Cover the pan. Cook on low to medium heat for 1 hour.

Turn the pork knuckle over. Cook for another hour in the covered pan.



5. Add the brown sugar and pineapple slices. Cover and cook for another 15 minutes.

Season with ground black pepper.

Reduce until sauce is reduced by half.



6. Place pork on a festive platter. Serve, share, and enjoy!

Option:
Serve with a few pineapple slices on top.

Mmmmm!



CUT ALONG THIS LINE AND SAVE

CHRISTMAS ON THE RHINE

Christmas story

In the cities along the Rhine, Christmas markets are being set up. There's the twinkle of colourful lights and the smell of Glühwein is hanging in the air. On the passenger vessel the crew is arranging the decorations in the lounge before passengers embark in Königswinter.

For this Christmas voyage, Jack has been appointed to assist the first captain, Peter, as the second captain. On inland ships, two captains are fully responsible for their own watch. Jack has worked with Peter before, though the relationship could be much better. Peter is a good navigator, technically skillful, but very young and impatient with his colleagues. He does not trust them, nor does he rely on them, as one should in a team. Peter believes he needs to be in control of everything.

Jack is much older, so old that he no longer needs to prove himself. He is calm and experienced, having learned to be a team player and a fair leader. Peter sees him as a threat because of his authority and good reputation. Jack can sense Peter's rivalry.

He looks out at the 'Drachenfels.' Here, according to legend, is where Siegfried killed the dragon. Further up the river, he sees 'Rolandsbogen' on the hill. He remembers his father's words: "When you pass the 'Rolandsbogen,' you are above the current, and you can slow down the engines. Smooth waters will lie ahead of you..."

They have set sail. The river produces a misty fog, hanging above the trees high in the mountains. As they pass Remagen they can barely see it; only a faint glow from a church light somewhere is visible. Among other things, they discuss how to divide the watches and agree to navigate the 'Lorelei' passage together. Peter, quick with words as he is, makes a few comments about Jack's



behavior, including his lack of a name tag. On a passenger vessel, one should wear a name tag! It's not the remarks themselves but Peter's tone that slightly annoys Jack. He replies quickly, *"It's not the name, only the role of the captain that matters, and that's why I'm on board."* He looks at Peter, waiting for his reaction. Peter frowns and quietly leaves the wheelhouse. Jack feels a slight concern: what can he expect?

An hour later, Jack really needs to focus on navigating the ship. It hasn't rained for weeks in the Rhine area, which makes the fairway narrower and shallower.

Jack knows he must slow down in time; otherwise, the ship will hit the bottom.

Meanwhile, Peter, feeling challenged by Jack, plans to lead him into making a mistake. Only this way, he thinks, can he show Jack his proper place on board. He tampers with the navigation equipment and, in addition, gives misinformation about the ballast tanks' condition.

Above Boppard, the two castles of 'Die feindlichen Brüder' (The hostile brothers) appear. Jack recalls the saga his mother told him years ago. He was too young to understand it fully then, but later he, too, faced challenges with his own brother; each had his stance, and each challenged the other. But when he stopped mocking his brother, their relationship greatly improved. Now, alone on the bridge, he holds the wheel, letting his thoughts drift as he looks at the river. How can he and Peter become companions? This struggle must end.

The mist grows thicker. He can barely see the mast ahead. As they pass Ehrenthaler Werth, where many ships have damaged their keels, Peter returns to the bridge *"Jack, what are you doing?"* he shouts, feigning concern. *"How is this possible? We should still have enough water under the keel."* Peter feels shocked, now guilty, but his pride prevents him from admitting what he did.

The ship doesn't respond to its rudder, and they need the entire width of the river to regain control. *"We'll sort this out,"* Peter says, now realizing he's gone too far with his tricks.

The Lorelei is approaching, and Jack needs Peter's assistance. Soon, they'll pass the 'Geissenrücke' dam, where the river is at its shallowest. They are so close to the Rhine's bed that they can hear stones scraping the vessel's bottom. Fortunately, the mist is clearing a bit.

"Jack, steer a little more to starboard. The red buoy is quite close to the bow."

"Okay, Peter. Is this enough?"

"Yes, Jack. There are four meters between the bow and the buoy now; that will do."

Silently, they continue, passing through the strong side currents of 'Taubenwerth' and climbing up 'Clemensgrund,' where the river current is strongest. They leave

the cliffs of 'Assmanshausen' behind, with 'Bingerloch' still to tackle. They navigate the obstacles together, beginning to build confidence in one another. A sense of forgiveness is born, humbling their hearts.

They arrive in 'Rüdesheim' on time, hearing the sound of Christmas carols coming from the narrow streets. On the pontoon where the ship docks, children sing "Oh Tannenbaum," welcoming the passengers.

Jack looks at Peter with a smile.

"Peter, I know I can challenge you too much."

"Jack, you do."

"It has to do with my ego, I suppose."

"Oh, really?" Peter's voice drips with irony.

"I'll work on that."

"Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas, Peter."



Le Trait, Frankrijk.

Last night, a heavy-lift ship arrived to load project cargo. It docked at an offshore base equipped with a heavy land crane for loading reels (large cable spools). Unfortunately, the crane was out of order, but the captain assured that this wasn't an issue. His ship also had heavy-duty cranes, so loading would not be a problem. However, they were in a hurry, so they would have to work around the clock.

Date

01	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
02	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
03	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
04	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
05	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
06	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
07	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23

Working Hours ☐ Rest Hours ☐

10 hours of rest in any 24 Hours ☒

Divided into not more than 2 parts, one being at least 6 Hours ☒

77 Hours of rest in any 7 days period ☒

Compliance with exception ☒

by Kees Wiersum



REST HOURS LISTS

The captain split the crew into two shifts. Since they had to use the ship's own cranes, most of the deck crew was needed. When the offshore staff was replaced after six hours, the ship's crew still had to keep going. That's when the first mate ran into the ship's office.

"Captain! This really can't go on. The deckhands and third officer have been up since six this morning! And they still have to keep working tonight to load two more reels! They're already working fifteen hours or more like this!"

"Then just get 'creative' with their hours in the rest lists!"

The captain looked up from his laptop, clearly annoyed.

"It has to get done, officer."

"But the guys have already been working over twelve hours all week, and they're not even allowed to work more than fourteen hours, and—"

"Then just get 'creative' with their hours in the rest lists!" And that was the end of the conversation.

At the end of that month, when it was time to complete the paperwork, the captain flipped through the rest hour lists. He frowned, then grabbed the phone angrily.

"Officer, come up here!" he barked. When the first mate poked his head around the door, he got a full blast of the captain's frustration.

"I can't send these lists to the office! Look at this! Alvin worked fifteen hours! And the bosun even sixteen, and again the next day! We're going to have trouble with this. Make new lists, and don't put down more than twelve hours! I said creative writing, didn't I!?"

There was a pause. Then the mate replied, *"These are the real hours. If you want the lists changed, you'll have to do it yourself. I won't."*



It's not unusual to mess with these so-called rest hour lists, as seen in the story of Hatk Andresj, a young Latvian seafarer who's the first engineer on a Dutch ship. He's proud of his position, especially on a Dutch vessel at such a young age!

Exhausted, he shut down the engine at four in the morning

After a whole night sailing through pilot waters, his ship finally reached Houston and docked at Harbour Docks. Exhausted, he shut down the engine at four in the morning after being in the engine room all night through Buffalo Bayou.

"I'm going to rest. Call me when the bunker barge arrives," he told the third engineer. Fifteen minutes later, the phone rang in his cabin. The third engineer asked him to come down—the bunker barge had arrived. Andresj sighed, pulled on his pants again, and headed to the bunkering manifold.

Since the ship had ordered a full bunkering, the engineers were busy all day. Andresj had to stay to oversee it; the other engineers were new to this vessel and hadn't bunkered before. When the last ton of fuel was pumped, the almost ritual argument began over how much fuel was actually delivered. Andresj claimed it was short, while the bunker operator insisted they'd delivered plenty. The debate, inspections, and calls went well into the evening. When it was

finally settled and Andresj thought he could at last sleep, there was a loud honk from the shore.

Three diesel tank trucks had arrived and needed to unload—right now! (*"Now!"* the driver insisted, American style). Bunkering continued through the night. Before breakfast, serious-looking men in uniforms climbed the gangway. They announced, loudly, that they'd come to conduct the annual survey (in the engine room). Port State Control also showed up, demanding to see the oil log and other important documents directly from the chief engineer.

Pale and with bags under his eyes, Andresj emerged from the engine room. Just as he thought he could at long last sleep—it was already evening—the ship's agent entered my office.

"You're moving from Harbor Docks to Dock 5. Now!"

I had bad news for him: my chief engineer was exhausted and needed rest.

"Every hour you stay here costs two thousand dollars, Captain," the agent warned.

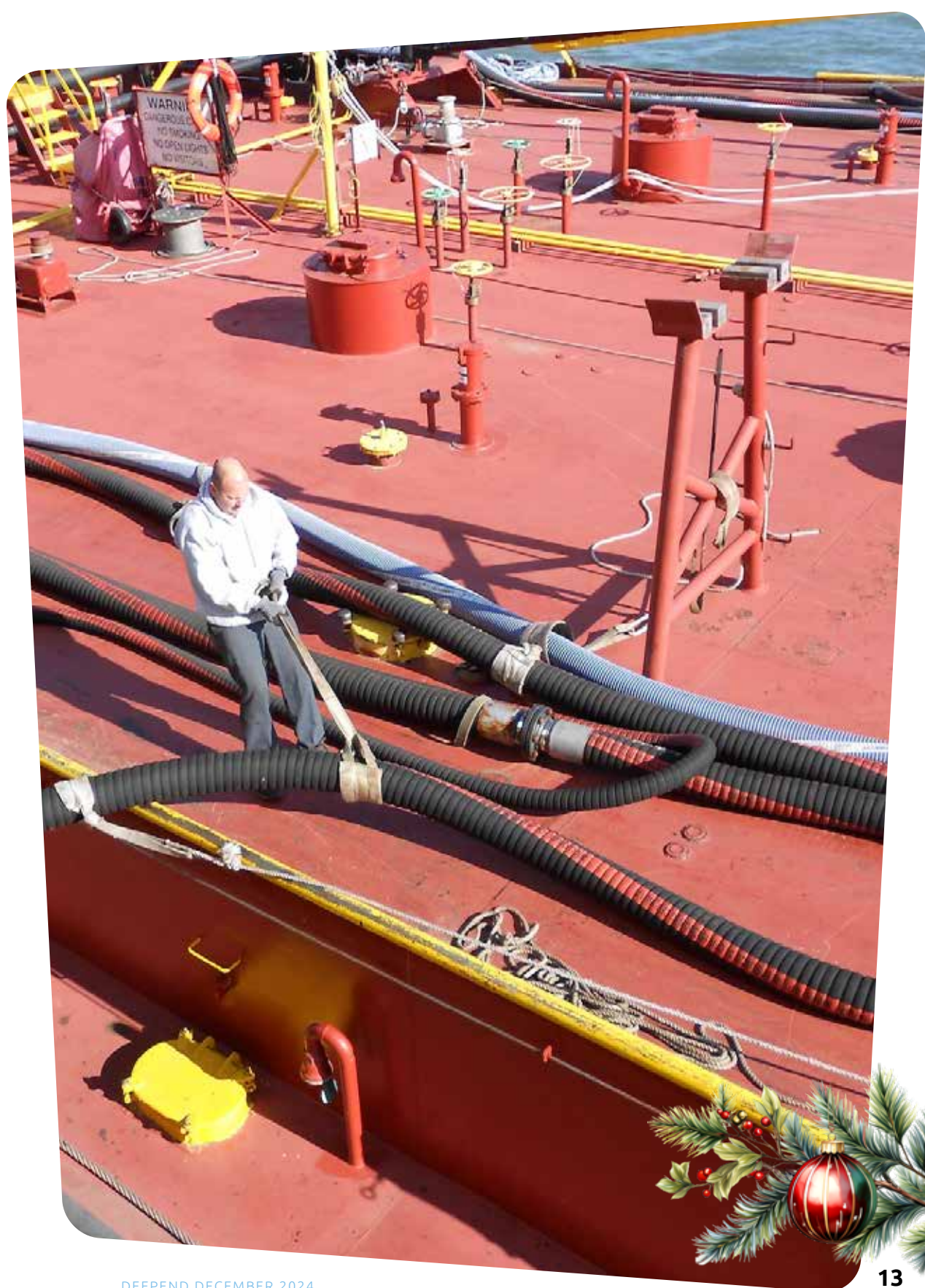
To make a long story short: we stayed put after notifying various parties (the shipowner and the US Coast Guard). Despite this, a fine of eight thousand dollars was imposed two months later. To contest it, they requested the original rest hour lists. To my surprise, our chief engineer had filled in only eight hours each day for his time in Houston. His comment? *"Maybe the company doesn't like real working hours..."*

This is just one example of why seafarers sometimes manipulate their rest hour lists: fear of their superiors.

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Want to read more?

<https://zwarekeesartenstories.jouwweb.nl>



Christmas

- HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF -



I AM A DUTCH SEAFARER'S WIFE. MY PARTNER IS AN ENGINEER ON AN OFFSHORE SHIP. WHEN WE FIRST STARTED DATING, HE JUST GOT HIS FIRST JOB AT SEA AND LEFT FOR FOUR MONTHS AT A TIME. IT FELT LONG.

Back then, there was no internet—we could only talk when he was in port. It was hard, but I was still in school and had many friends, so I kept busy and enjoyed my life.

When he was home, we spent a lot of time together. We went out, saw movies and took vacations. Eventually, we bought a home together and were very happy.

I finished school and started working. He loved his job at sea—he was a true engineer at heart. He often said, "If we have kids, I'll stop going to sea. Maybe around age 30, or a bit later."

We had three children, but he didn't stop. He was there when our first child was born and stayed home with us for three months, caring for our baby, then went back to the sea.

Five years later, it seemed he might leave the sea. Our second child, a daughter, was born, but sadly, she didn't survive. Her father was very heartbroken, and we thought it best for him to stay onshore for a while. He got his first job on land at a nearby shipyard and enjoyed the work and

people. But he soon missed his leave periods, and so did I. So he went back to the sea, and he still sails happily today. Our third child was born healthy, and life was bright again. We felt lucky.

Now, 15 years have passed, and Christmas is near. Every seafarer hopes to be home then, with family or friends, but you never know if it will happen. Our kids are older now, and our oldest son is even grown up and attending maritime school, just like his father. This year, his father will be home for Christmas, which is wonderful. I'm not sure yet about my son; he's in his cadetship at sea. History repeats itself—I'll just have to wait.

To all seafarers on board: I wish you a joyful Christmas with your colleagues, the people you live and work with every day. Take care of each other and make it special. Know that loved ones are waiting for you at home.

To everyone: safe voyages in 2025. Thank you for reading.

PAINFUL!

"HE SAT DOWN IN A STRANGE HALF-SITTING, HALF-LYING POSITION, FAR FROM WHERE I WAS SEATED."



MARITIME PASTORAL CARE IN PRACTICE

by Léon Rasser
Port Chaplain in Amsterdam

Every now and then old ships arrive in the port of Amsterdam. As the port chaplain, I know that the crew on such ships usually appreciates an invitation to visit the seamen's home. Recently, one of these rusty ships arrived, and the crew was indeed glad to see me. Everyone was working, so I was asked to wait in the recreation room. Since I'd had a busy day, I actually enjoyed the chance to relax for a bit. This feeling grew when the cook brought me a cup of coffee.

As I sat down on the couch, however, my comfort disappeared. I felt a sharp pain in my back; the couch was completely worn out! I ended up sitting on the edge, where a bar in the frame provided a bit of support for my spine.

IT SEEMED THIS WAS THE BEST WAY TO USE THE COUCH

A little while later, the cook returned. He sat down in a strange half-sitting, half-lying position, far from where I was seated. It seemed this was the best way to use the couch.

When I asked if he also had back pain, he admitted that he did. He thought it was from carrying heavy supplies, but the worn-out couch didn't help.

The cook had bought a SIM card, and it turned out that his wife had sent him videos of their daughter. Proudly, he showed me his kid swimming and playing piano. I noticed how hard the young girl tried to make a good impression for her father—possibly at her mother's encouragement.

That evening, as I lay in bed, my back was still sore, and the

pain continued the following night. I began to wonder how seafarers are expected to live with such uncomfortable furniture.

I BEGAN TO WONDER HOW SEAFARERS ARE EXPECTED TO LIVE WITH SUCH UNCOMFORTABLE FURNITURE

I wanted an answer, so I called the Port Authority first. They strictly enforce rules on life vests, helmets, and safety shoes, even issuing fines when necessary. However, they said they're not responsible for the seafarers' comfort onboard.



When I asked a union inspector, he said that issues like a bad couch could be discussed during onboard safety meetings. Previously, I'd thought of safety as life vests, fire extinguishers, and lifeboats, so this was an insightful answer.

THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS FOR RECREATION ROOMS, STATE THAT A COUCH SHOULD BE COMFORTABLE

The Transport and Environment Inspection Department asked me for a photo of the couch. If it was as bad as I described, they would send an email to the captain, asking him to address it. By the time they received my message, though, the ship had already departed, so it was too late.

Jason Zuidema, the general secretary of the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA), is always interested in these kinds of stories, so I sent him a message too. In response, he sent me an article advocating more attention to such issues, but it didn't provide any solutions. Jason also shared



the international regulations for recreation rooms, which state that a couch should be comfortable.

SAYING I LIKED IT EVEN THOUGH I DIDN'T MEAN IT

Looking back, I wonder which conversation was the least painful: was it watching the cook's video of his daughter playing piano, saying I liked it even though I didn't mean it? Or was it talking with inspectors who know something is wrong but do nothing in practice? Or with those who say something should be done but offer no solutions?

As a chaplain, I usually conclude that it all depends on people. Hopefully, one day a captain will ask the company for a new couch, or an inspector from the flag state or an insurance provider will step in. Or perhaps a Good Samaritan will offer a solution.

In hindsight, I could have advised the cook to bring up the couch issue with the captain if he was in a good mood. Or maybe I could have bought them a couch from a second-hand store. I feel a bit guilty for not having done so.



Christmas Films!



ANIMA

ON SEPTEMBER 21, THE DOCUMENTARY ANIMA, CREATED BY ANNA WITTE AND JOSEFIEN VAN KOOTEN, PREMIERED AT THE NETHERLANDS FILM FESTIVAL.

THIS FILM OFFERS A REALISTIC GLIMPSE INTO LIFE ON BOARD AND IN THE HARBOR, GUIDED BY ITS OPENING MOTTO: "WE MAKE THINGS, BUT THINGS ALSO SHAPE US." THIS MAKES IT ALL THE MORE MEANINGFUL WHEN PORT CHAPLAIN HELENE PERFORs COMES ON BOARD.

THE FILM HAS ALSO AIRED ON DUTCH TELEVISION AND IS STILL AVAILABLE TO WATCH AT: [HTTPS://NPO.NL/START/SERIE/2DOC-KORT/SEIZOEN-7_2/2DOC-KORT-ANIMA](https://npo.nl/start/serie/2doc-kort/seizoen-7_2/2doc-kort-anima) OR BY SCANNING THE QR CODE.



During the Christmas season, seafarers can also watch a special Christmas video, created by port chaplain Léon Rasser from Amsterdam, in collaboration with several colleagues.

<https://youtu.be/Ptm1SF59tYg>
or scan the QR code



CHRISTMAS AT SEA

As Christmas approaches, many seafarers will once again be cheered by receiving a Christmas package onboard. These packages have been organized for many years by the Christmas at Sea Committee, which also publishes a beautiful calendar each year. For more information, visit www.kerstfeestopzee.nl



JURASSIC PARK //

Why I paint the harbour

For centuries, the maritime world has inspired artists to create beautiful works. In upcoming issues, DeepEnd will explore maritime art from both recent and distant history.



Our family often took vacations on our tiny sailboat. The wooden 7.10m Waarschip was called Waratje. We would always sail in Zeeland, Haringvliet, Hollands Diep, Veerse Meer. One day my parents had set course for Breskens. For that we had to cross the Western Scheldt. We had never been there before. A busy shipping route runs right through the Western Scheldt, which connects openly to the North Sea. We sailed up the Western Scheldt in Waratje, father, mother and four children. I remember the feel of the swell; I had never seen waves this high before. And the sails were lowered because sailing is forbidden in a shipping channel. We were lifted high on a wave, and I saw the propeller of our 8 HP outboard motor turning helplessly in the air

and in the subsequent wave through I saw the entire outboard motor disappear under water together with the stern. The engine stalled.

Now the six of us were adrift in perhaps the busiest shipping channel in Europe. The sails had to be raised again, and my father kept pulling the starter cord on our soaking-wet outboard.

And then it happened, the shouted commands on board faded...

Because here they came. One by one. Like a scene from Jurassic Park. The absurdly large container ships passed right by us. Slow and unapproachable. So close. I was enchanted. For good.

Sasja Hagens

Sasja Hagens (Utrecht, 1973) lives and works in Rotterdam. She started her art education in 1991 in Utrecht at the School of Arts. In 1992 she was selected for the Royal School of Arts in The Hague, where she graduated in 1996.

With strong colours and daring compositions, Sasja Hagens gives her own interpretation to the themes of harbours, industrial- and future landscapes.

Hagens: 'People sometimes ask me why I've spent so much time painting ports, such an obvious theme. But their size and industrial quality light the fire in me.'



www.sasjahagens.nl

DEEPEND DECEMBER 2024



No Seaport in Sight...

It might not seem obvious, but Switzerland—and especially Geneva—matters a lot to the maritime industry. This connection is also important for welfare work, which is why ICMA held its annual meeting there.



ICMA stands for International Christian Maritime Association.

ICMA is an organization that connects nearly all Christian welfare work for seafarers. Its members include big global groups like Mission to Seafarers and Stella Maris, as well as smaller organizations. The work they do for seafarers varies. Some members don't focus on visiting ships or running seamen's centers but instead support seafarers by providing Bibles and other materials in different languages. From the Netherlands, two groups are members: the Dutch Seafarers' Missions and SPWO – Pastoral Care for Workers in Dredging and Marine Construction (these organizations publish DeepEnd). I attended the meeting as a representative of the Dutch Seafarers' Missions.

But why would people working for seafarers' welfare meet in Geneva? Surprisingly, this city plays a unique role in the maritime world. First, several shipping companies have their headquarters there, including MSC Group, now the world's largest container shipping company, which hosted us.

Geneva also hosts many United Nations organizations, like the World Trade Organization (WTO). Most importantly for seafarers, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is also based here. The ILO was responsible for the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), a set of rules aimed at improving seafarers' lives on ships.

These connections were clear in the program and setup of the ICMA meeting, held at MSC's headquarters. This huge, luxurious building is filled with trophies, awards, and beautiful ship models, though no photos of seafarers at work are displayed. This isn't meant as criticism, but it showed a big contrast for many ICMA members who see how different life is for crews on ships.

ICMA's main goal is working together to improve seafarers' well-being and protect their interests, which was also the meeting's theme. We learned about the ILO's history and the next steps for the MLC. The ILO is unique because it was founded right after World War I and has survived through World War II. It's also the only UN group where governments, employers, and unions all have a say. All three parties look at issues like worker protection differently, yet they must agree to make decisions. In 2006, they managed to do this, and the MLC was adopted with all three groups' support. Any future changes to the MLC also need all three to agree.

Looking at issues from different perspectives to reach a shared goal—that's real collaboration, isn't it?

ICMA has been working this way for over 50 years. This unity in welfare work has real potential to improve seafarers' lives, not only in ports and on ships but also through policy. ICMA will even participate when MLC updates

are discussed in April. ICMA has proposed strengthening seafarers' right to shore leave, which would be very welcome, especially in the Netherlands. There's a good chance this will happen, as shipping companies have submitted a similar proposal to ensure seafarers are not confined to ships when they're in port.

This kind of cooperation really can lead to better conditions for seafarers—in a city that has never seen an ocean ship.





A 'NEW COURSE' IN THE WORLD OF INVESTING

Interview with Kees Gootjes

Kees Gootjes was born in the port city of Busan, South Korea, and raised in the port city of Hamilton, Canada. After studying Financial Business Management, he began his career in asset management, but his interests soon shifted. He wanted to understand the deeper impact of money and investments: how do they affect people? This led him to study development geography and take an internship in Cambodia's garment industry, where he saw firsthand how the global economy impacts individual lives.

Gootjes points out that the economy isn't a natural force like the tides or seasons. "The economy is created by people, and it reflects what we value," he explains. "But right now, people often aren't the priority. The economy should exist to serve people." He notes that the word "economy" comes from the Greek 'oikos', meaning 'community'.

A new market course: shareholders as responsible leaders

Gootjes is the director of 'De Nieuwe Beurskoers' (The New Market Course), a group that encourages Christian shareholders to hold companies accountable for social responsibility. With

a background in both finance and social responsibility, he focuses on labor rights and human rights, with a particular interest in seafarers—an essential but often overlooked workforce.

"Seafarers work in challenging and sometimes isolated conditions," he says. "There are millions of them worldwide, working as teams, yet their work and living space are the same, and it can be very lonely. Although their work is critical to our economy, they're only noticed when things go wrong—like when a container ship blocks a major canal." Gootjes sees De Nieuwe Beurskoers' role as informing shareholders about working conditions in industries like shipping, so they can encourage companies to make improvements. "Policies made during crises aren't natural laws; they're choices," he adds. Gootjes sees this responsibility as part of the Christian values.

A long tradition of supporting seafarers

Gootjes' interest in maritime issues comes from both his personal background and the Christian tradition of caring for seafarers—a tradition that goes back centuries. "Many people don't know, but in almost every port in the world, you can find a port chaplain.



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There's an enormous network," he says. This network motivates him to discuss working conditions with companies that rely on sea transport.

De Nieuwe Beurskoers operates around three main values:

1. Ecumenical cooperation: building connections with various Christian organizations.
2. Focus on social responsibility: prioritizing human rights and labor conditions.
3. Learning from existing initiatives: Supporting the work of churches and Christian groups, including port chaplains.

People first

Although Gootjes doesn't consider himself political, his motivations are deeply rooted in the Christian belief that every person has value. "The investment world often overlooks people," he explains. "Christians may have different theological views, but at the core, we believe everyone is created in God's image. We believe each person has inherent worth, and companies should respect that." He describes his drive as "righteous anger," a sense of moral duty.

There are also practical reasons. Events like the Ever Given blocking the Suez Canal show how much the global economy depends on shipping. "For investors, it's important to realize that supporting good working conditions is also financially wise," he says. Improving seafarers' working conditions can strengthen the stability of the supply chain and the global economy.

The economy is a human design

For Gootjes, the economy is a man-made system, and it can be reshaped. "Companies follow society's expectations," he says. "If we want companies to change, society has to lead the way."

Through De Nieuwe Beurskoers, Gootjes aims to create a movement in the financial world that puts people first. He sees this as a Christian responsibility, learning from the past while looking toward the future: "As far back as 300 AD, it was said, 'In Christ, we are all one; we cannot be slaveholders.' Our long tradition of caring for others can have a major impact if we use it to make the economy more humane."



White Christmas

FOR MOST PEOPLE, A WHITE CHRISTMAS IS NOT VERY LIKELY. IT ALMOST NEVER WAS, BUT THE DESIRE REMAINS—PERHAPS THANKS TO BING CROSBY, WHO HAS BEEN TRYING TO MAKE US WARM (COLD) FOR A “WHITE CHRISTMAS” SINCE MID-OCTOBER. SLOWLY, TWINKLING LIGHTS, COLORFUL CHRISTMAS TREES, SANTA CLAUS AND DECORATIONS APPEAR EVERYWHERE. AND WE FIND OURSELVES FANTASIZING ABOUT SNOW.

Almost everyone also longs for a few days or weeks of rest from work—a well-deserved holiday, family gathered around, and a pleasant evening. Yet there are many seafarers who continue working. Gifts must be delivered, ports prepared, or monopiles installed. On the road, at sea, or in an exotic harbor, they celebrate Christmas with colleagues. Most captains, and especially cooks, do their best to make it special. But for the fathers and mothers on board it can be a challenging time. A half-hour video call offers only a small comfort during a

family celebration. For many sailors, it's a frustrating downside of the otherwise free life they chose.

Back home, Christmas used to be quite predictable. You weren't allowed to play outside because it was always damp and dreary (even then), and you couldn't get your clothes dirty. There was a beautifully set table with shrimp cocktails in those fancy glasses that came out only once a year, followed by hare, which I didn't like at all as a child. Dessert was a delicious ice cream cake. But we had to sit at the table far too long when I would rather have been playing a video game. Knowing what I know now, I would have listened more closely to the stories of my grandparents and parents.

We also remember those unspoken family matters that suddenly surfaced, the stress of preparations, and the oppressive heat of too many people crowded in one room. So, on board, one might question whether the idyllic image of celebrating Christmas at home is entirely accurate.

Still, I always look forward to the Christmas season. We celebrate the birth of new life, a beautiful symbol of new hope for the world, which is always there. For me, it brings energy and feels like both a wonderful ending and a fresh start to the year.

The hope for the perfect Christmas almost never comes true. But perhaps that desire itself is the true Christmas spirit—the longing for warmth, coziness, peace, camaraderie, and all right, a white Christmas.

Let's hope...

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I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas...