



# Duluth Seaway Port Authority

SPRING 2017

NORTH STAR PORT



## The importance of beginnings:

### *CN, Duluth Cargo Connect launch intermodal container service*

In 1783, on the outskirts of Paris, two Frenchmen successfully lifted off from the earth in a hot air balloon and later landed several miles away. This was the first travel of its kind. In attendance was U.S. Ambassador Benjamin Franklin. When asked what possible good, what practical use, the new invention could have, he replied, "What is the use of a newborn child?"

That simple story has always captivated my imagination on the importance of beginnings. The start of a new project, the anticipation of what could shape the future, is a tantalizing experience in which to be involved. Our team here at Duluth Cargo Connect recently had a launch of its own—a brand new offering of intermodal services through an alliance with CN Railway. Admittedly, ours may not alter the future as dramatically as air travel once did. However, our 'newborn' service could do great things with phenomenal outcomes for the Port and the region.

As with all events, there is a time before the 'big splash' during which the preparation work is done. Our Duluth Cargo Connect team has spent

the last two years in serious pursuit of the perfect partner to help us offer intermodal services. It was important for our team to remember key concepts during this process: we must continue to focus on what the region is and does, who the next likely users may be beyond those immediately identified, and to prepare to grow in unexpected, unprecedented ways.

I have said all along here at the Port that we need to "be who we are." Minnesota is widely known and recognized for its natural resources. Mining and forest products define this region, and access to Minnesota's agri-business continues to provide a strong base of economic vitality.

This region is blessed with outstanding supply chain assets, being a natural resource-based economy for over a century. It makes complete sense that the transportation and logistics assets currently in place be further leveraged to move into additional services. The new CN Intermodal Terminal does just that. It takes advantage of a network with direct access to container freight across the globe and allows us



Vanta E. Coda II  
Port Director

to capture that land-based capacity for regional shippers to use for international moves.

Initially, we envisioned mining, forest products and agriculture as consistent consumers. We knew that regional import-dependent manufacturing businesses with distribution centers could also gain advantage to the Upper Midwest marketplace. Married with the lineup of rail, truck, marine and warehousing services onsite, having an intermodal terminal now supercharges our full, multi-modal platform. It makes the businesses we serve more supply chain competitive in the global marketplace.

I think of the scenario of having (or not having) rural broadband connectivity. We have now connected to the most significant supply chain format available. Duluth, Northeastern Minnesota and the Upper Midwest are now all fully upgraded.

To say that our Duluth Cargo Connect team is excited about the birth of our new intermodal service is an understatement. The alliance with CN's world-class intermodal network validates that this market already has great transportation assets and an untapped potential for growth.

As with every new parent, we are more than willing to sit down and discuss our 'baby.' Just ask one of us! We'll be more than happy to share pictures and stories about first steps and cool milestones. I bet you'll walk away just as excited about its future as we've been about its launch. Together, let's watch this baby grow!



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**About North Star Port**

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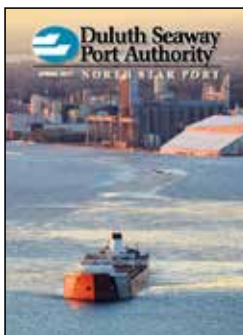
**On the covers**

**On the front:**

The *Roger Blough* departs just after daybreak March 22 to start the 2017 season in the Twin Ports.

**On the back:**

The *John G. Munson* makes her first visit to Duluth May 7 after being converted from steam to diesel propulsion. Watch for details in our summer issue!



David Schauer



Paul Scinocca



Kenneth Newhams

In the Winter issue of *North Star Port*, this photograph of Paul Scinocca was incorrectly attributed to Dennis O'Hara. The image was shot by Kenneth Newhams/*Duluth Shipping News*. We value our contributing photographers immensely and regret this error.

# The *Blough*, the *Cort* and how they changed

BY JERRY SANDVICK

Whether casual ship watchers or dyed-in-the-wool boatnerds, visitors to Great Lakes ports delight in seeing the 1,000-footers pass by. They are, of course, impressive. Thirteen were built between 1972 and 1981, and they remain the largest vessels on the Great Lakes. Two ships started this quantum leap in size, the *Roger Blough* at 858 feet and the *Stewart J. Cort* at an even 1,000 feet. Both date from 1972, and they mark a major increase in cargo capacity, not only because of length, but also their beams increased to 105 feet from the 75 feet or so of previous ships.

This growth spurt had little to do with maritime technology or construction methods and everything to do with infrastructure. The locks at Sault Ste. Marie—the Soo Locks—bypass the St. Marys rapids between Lake Superior and Lake Huron, a drop of 21 feet. Since 1855, locks in one arrangement or another have enabled maritime traffic to pass around the rapids, and, in 1896, the Poe Lock was opened. The name honored Orlando Poe, an Army Brigadier General and the superintending engineer who oversaw the improvement of the Soo Locks. “His” lock was 800 feet long by 100 feet wide. Other locks were built during World War I and World War II, and, by 1945, four locks—MacArthur, Sabin, Davis and Poe—comprised the complex at the Soo.

The opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959 meant that larger ships could now make their way to the Great Lakes, and the decision was made to upgrade the oldest lock at the Soo, the Poe. The Corps of Engineers finished the rebuilding in 1968. The new lock’s numbers were an impressive 1,200 feet long, 110 feet wide and a 32-foot depth. It wasn’t long before larger freighters were being readied to take advantage of the economies that a larger size would bring. A larger ship meant more tonnage per trip and a lower per

ton cost to move bulk cargo.

The first two larger ships to capitalize on the new lock were the *Roger Blough* and *Stewart J. Cort*. The former, at 858 feet, was a substantial step up from previous ship lengths, and the latter was the first true 1,000-footer. The two were built simultaneously and the question of which was first is really a matter of definition. The *Blough* was begun in September 1968 by American Shipbuilding of Loraine, Ohio, and the *Cort* in November 1969 by Litton Industries at Pascagoula, Miss. The *Cort*, however, made its first voyage before the *Blough*, and the story is not exactly straightforward.

The *Blough* was scheduled to be launched in July 1971, but, in June, a tragic fire broke out in the engine room, which took the lives of four yard workers. A high intensity light apparently ignited leaking fuel and major damage to the stern section and the diesel engines resulted. The \$13 million repair work delayed the ship’s launch until June 1972.

The building of the *Cort* was much more unconventional and, thankfully, less tragic. Litton Industries had the contract with Bethlehem Steel to build the ship at its yard in Pascagoula. Since a 1,000-footer could not possibly be brought down the Seaway and through the Welland Canal, and since Litton had a smaller yard at Erie, Pa., a unique solution was devised. The most complex parts of the new ship, the forward and aft sections, would be built in Pascagoula, resulting in a 185 foot vessel. Nicknamed “Stubby,” it would be sailed up the East Coast and down the Seaway to Erie. There it would be cut in two, and an 815-foot cargo hold section would be inserted. The hold section was built in 17 modules, and the new ship’s beam was 105 feet.

The layout of both ships followed the traditional laker design with the pilothouse forward and engines and crew

Courtesy Maritime Collections, UW-Superior



A view of “Stubby” in 1971. The vertical line on the hull just aft of the pilothouse has the lettering: “Cut here.”



This view of the *Cort* shows her record-breaking size and the massive pilothouse forward.

Courtesy Maritime Collections, UW-Superior

# shipping history

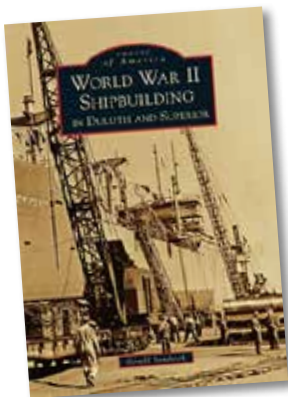
accommodations in the stern. Twelve 1,000-footers were built after the *Cort*. They had all accommodations in a massive structure on the stern, a design dictated by more economic construction. Both ships were built as self-unloaders, but neither had a large deck-mounted boom, the prominent feature of today's lakers. Both had an internal boom stowed in the stern, a seemingly good idea, but, in practice, the longer deck-mounted boom was more versatile.

Both ships remain in active service as of this writing 45 years later but with rather different narratives. The *Cort* has been generally trouble-free, and her itinerary is almost exclusively from the ore docks at Taconite Harbor or Superior to Burns Harbor.

The *Roger Blough*, conversely, has had a rather troubled history. The 1971 pre-launch fire was a bad start. In 1973, she collided with the *Philip R. Clarke* in the icy Mackinac Straights. She was laid up 1981-86 due to an economic downturn. In 1990, she sustained rudder damage after hitting a wall at Conneaut. This was followed by engine repair at Duluth in 1992. In October 1994, she went aground in the Detroit River. In August 2000, she took portside plate damage hitting a pier at the Soo. In 2006, she lost her rudder at the Soo, and, in 2016, grounded at Gros Cap Reef.

Whatever hits or misses the histories of these two vessels exhibit, the *Blough* and the *Cort* were the two pioneers of the large lake carriers made possible by improvement of the Soo Locks. On April 19, 1971, the *Chicago Tribune* carried the headline, "Two Superships To Join The Lakes Fleet."

Indeed they did.



Gerald "Jerry" Sandvick is a history professor emeritus, past president of the LSMMA and author of a new book entitled, *World War II Shipbuilding in Duluth and Superior*. All royalties from the book will go to the Bong Veterans Historical Center. It is available in the Bong Center's gift shop or at [arcadiapublishing.com](http://arcadiapublishing.com).



The giant ore carrier, *Roger Blough*, noses her way under the Bascule Bridge in Lorain, Ohio, in preparation for sea trials, as reported in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 6, 1972.

Courtesy Jerry Sandvick



The *Roger Blough* steams out beneath the Aerial Lift Bridge.

Jerry Sandvick



An undated aerial view of locking through at the Soo. The greater length and beam of the *Cort* are obvious.

Courtesy Maritime Collections, Jim Dan Hill Library, UW-Superior

# Port Land Use Plan is a map for development

A plan adopted late last year by the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Commission (MIC) and its Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC) could help protect the Port of Duluth-Superior from development that encroaches on the working waterfront.

The 2016 Duluth-Superior Port Land Use Plan seeks to maintain the Port's position as North America's largest freshwater multimodal transportation hub for moving domestic and international cargo. It serves as a guide for how public and private interests should manage waterfront lands to protect deep water berths, global waterborne connections, water-dependent businesses and maritime facilities.

Timing of the new plan is significant. It comes as the City of Duluth is retooling its comprehensive land use plan through a process called "Imagine Duluth 2035." HTAC and its partners are participating in that process, encouraging the City to adopt the 2016 Duluth-Superior Port Land Use Plan to the extent possible.

"We need to balance commercial and industrial waterfront uses," said HTAC Chair Deb DeLuca, government and environmental affairs

director for the Duluth Seaway Port Authority. "Thoughtful planning is important because converting land away from maritime use is a permanent decision."

The new plan stresses the Port of Duluth-Superior's vital role as an international transportation hub. Each year, the Port welcomes nearly 900 visits by lake carriers and ocean-going vessels carrying an average of 35 million tons of cargo. Millions more move through the Twin Ports by road and rail. Primary cargoes are iron ore, limestone, coal, grain, salt, cement and a variety of pulp and paper products tied to the region's natural resources-based economy. Important heavy lift and project cargoes, such as wind energy components and equipment used in mining, manufacturing, and oil and gas production, also move through the Port.

HTAC consultant Andy McDonald, stresses that protecting the working port is not just a local issue, but one with far-reaching implications.

"The Duluth-Superior Port is part of the larger Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway system and a global transportation network," McDonald said. "Land-use decisions

that we make here impact other ports in the Great Lakes. We have to be mindful that this is a regional, national and international asset."

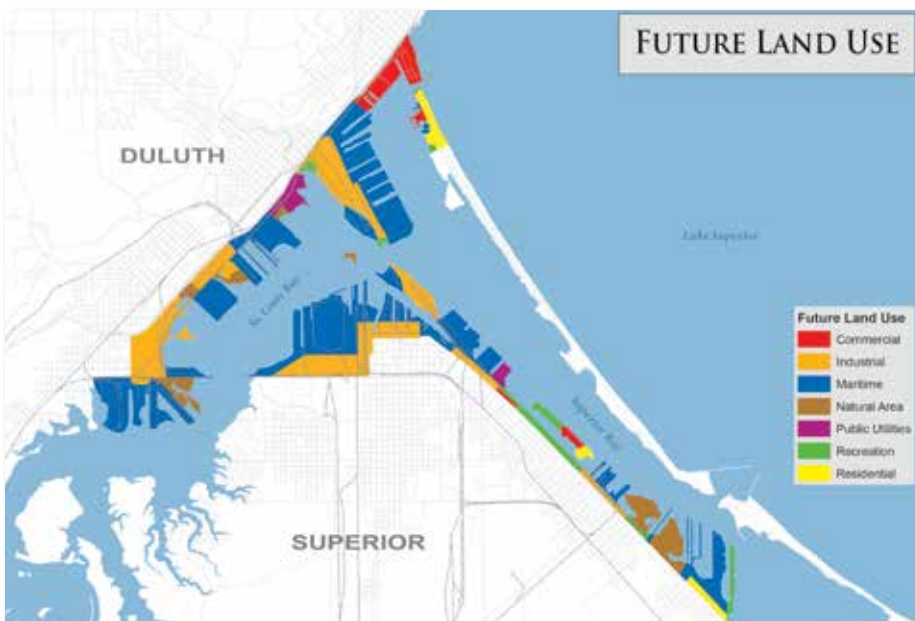
Port officials have long stressed the value of transportation and logistics jobs to Duluth's economy, noting that they typically pay 10 percent above the area's median salary. Wage and employment data for northeast Minnesota compiled by the State illustrate that while industrial jobs make up 16.7 percent of regional employment, they account for 23.7 percent of total regional wages.

As communities like Duluth and Superior strive to raise median incomes, this presents another compelling reason to protect working waterfronts and not cede too much land for non-industrial use.

The 2016 Port Land Use Plan outlines more than two dozen recommendations. Among those topping the list:

- Protect and enhance the federally designated shipping channel and critical port infrastructure;
- Prioritize port area lands that have direct access to the federal shipping channel along with adequate road and rail access for future maritime development; and
- Maintain non-waterfront industrial properties that are strategically ideal for multimodal transportation.

This is a critical juncture for the Twin Ports transportation sector and the working waterfront. The Port Authority recently completed its Clure Terminal expansion project and opened a new intermodal ramp. Meanwhile, the Minnesota Department of Transportation is working to untangle the "Can of Worms" at the I-35/I-535/Hwy 53 interchange—to facilitate growing truck traffic in and out of the Port. Strategic decisions to protect and preserve maritime-related industrial land on the waterfront can transport the entire region to a stronger economic position.



# Heroism still honored a half-century later

It's been 50 years since Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Edgar A. Culbertson lost his life while trying to rescue three teenage boys who'd been swept from the pier along the Duluth Ship Canal during a raging spring storm. The Halverson brothers—Eric, 17, and Arthur and Nathan, 16-year-old twins—also perished in the incident.

It was Sunday, April 30, 1967. A deadly spring storm hit parts of Minnesota with hail, tornadoes, blizzards and gale-force winds. It's been reported that waves on Lake Superior rose higher than 20 feet at times that night, with wind gusts clocked at over 60 mph. While most on-lookers sat in cars in Canal Park marveling at the walls of water slamming against and over the piers, those teens summoned up their courage and attempted to run the full length of the north pier, dodging the crashing waves. Two brothers made it to the lighthouse, but the third was swept off the pier. Going back to try to save him, all soon disappeared from view.

When the emergency call came into the Coast Guard Station, three volunteers stepped up: BM1 Edgar Culbertson, 31, along with Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Richard R. Callahan, 21, and Fireman Ronald C. Prei, 21. Spaced 25 feet apart, they tethered themselves with a rope and searched along the same precarious pier, but found no sign of the brothers. However, before the team could

return to safety, a huge wave slammed into them, knocking Culbertson into the water. Despite valiant rescue attempts by Callahan and Prei, Culbertson drowned. His body was recovered by his shipmates a short time later.

A permanent bronze plaque honoring Culbertson's bravery was placed outside the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center later that year, near the spot where he perished. All three men were awarded the Coast Guard Medal, the highest peacetime honor for heroism awarded by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The plaque was removed when the pier was widened and reinforced, but did not get reinstalled after improvements were completed. Fellow sailors and friends in the International Shipmasters Association Twin Ports Lodge #12 located the plaque in storage and asked the Corps of Engineers to have it reinstalled on the new pier, where it sits today—permanently memorializing Culbertson, who lost his life in service to his country and his community.



Courtesy U.S. Coast Guard

In April 1967, Coast Guardsman Edgar A. Culbertson died trying to rescue three boys during a storm.



## Oh, Buoy!

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Alder* is a 225' multi-mission buoy tender headquartered in Duluth. Two of *Alder's* primary missions are aids to navigation (AtoN) and ice breaking. Since the vast majority of the Great Lakes-Seaway system remained ice free this winter, the crew was able to get out early to attend to some needed AtoN work. On March 16, *Alder* Commander Charter Tschirgi and his crew invited members of the community onboard to experience some buoy tending work firsthand.



David Schauer

This series of photos shows the crew working with a lighted ice buoy 7 ft. in diameter by 20 ft. in length, currently the only type of lighted floating aid left in place during the ice season. They replaced its concrete sinker with a heavier one and repositioned the buoy, optimistic it will not be dragged off position by ice next winter.

# The Box Business:

## *CN Duluth Intermodal Terminal ramps up savings & routing options for customers*

CN and Duluth Cargo Connect officially announced a new alliance that established the first rail-served intermodal terminal in the Twin Ports, allowing customers to ship containers across the world directly to/from the Heartland.

News broke in March as the first six CN rail cars loaded with shipping containers rolled into Duluth and were spotted in the intermodal yard at the Clure Public Marine Terminal.

“Opening CN’s newest intermodal location here in Duluth connects our region to containerized imports and exports via their rail network,” said Vanta Coda, executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, a partner with Lake Superior Warehousing in Duluth Cargo Connect. “This hub offers customers direct access to gateway coastal container ports and global markets, including Asia. This is traffic we normally wouldn’t see. From a 50,000-foot level, it is a game changer.”

Duluth Cargo Connect operates the rail-served facility on the Clure Terminal. Regional shippers can now position containers in and through Duluth instead of having to truck product at higher costs to congested intermodal ramps in Chicago or the Twin Cities—saving miles, gas and idle hours, plus allowing for overweight container moves by rail—all contributing to a reduction in each customer’s carbon footprint. The Duluth intermodal yard also offers value-added assets and services that typical ramp operators cannot, including the ability to stuff and de-stuff containers, warehouse product and handle distribution for customers’ goods.

“CN is the only railroad in this market with direct service to East, West and Gulf Coast ports,” said Jonathan Lamb, president of Lake Superior Warehousing. “By working with CN to establish this intermodal yard, Duluth Cargo Connect is helping customers optimize their supply chains by moving freight along its shortest and most economical path.”

The response already has been phenomenal. Customers are excited about the new service. David Claypool, sales and marketing manager with Lexington Manufacturing from Brainerd, Minn., said his company expects to save up to a third in freight costs utilizing the new CN Intermodal Terminal in Duluth. “For us, it’s been about our ability to move cargo quicker. Duluth is really close to us. It’s much

more convenient than the Twin Cities, and has warehousing capacity, too. Quite honestly, it is just a lot less expensive for us to ship through Duluth.”

“Duluth Cargo Connect crews have an established 25-year record of success with stevedoring, cargo handling, warehousing and distribution,” added Coda. “CN’s new intermodal yard adds incredible value to our existing suite of services.”

“CN’s innovative partnership with Duluth Cargo Connect opens up a new logistics supply chain and growth opportunities for the Port’s partners and shippers in the region,” said JJ Ruest, CN executive vice-president and chief marketing officer. “CN brings its extensive contacts in international markets, freight-forwarding knowledge, and customs and marketing support to the Twin Ports.”

Duluth Cargo Connect expects to move a growing number of containers to coastal ports. That offers an opportunity to better serve the mining, forest products and agriculture industries in this region—to help them gain access to new markets and save money on transportation costs, which companies and farmers can, in turn, reinvest in their own growth. Likewise, this new intermodal yard opens up a path of least resistance for manufacturers’ supply chains, including the potential to relocate manufacturing facilities and/or distribution centers to the area in the years ahead.

“To continue to thrive, a Port Authority must always be looking at pathways for growth,” added Coda. “We have always been focused on operating a highly respected maritime facility, and we remain committed to that mission, but we see this as a way to make our landside operations just as robust. It was a natural extension of what we were already doing. This alliance with CN makes us more competitive and provides regional businesses with more cost-effective access to international markets.”

The visibility this announcement has brought to the Port of Duluth-Superior will definitely help drive maritime business to the Port in the long run as more and more customers become aware of the CN Intermodal Terminal and the variety of value-added service offerings available through Duluth Cargo Connect.



Adele Yorde





North America's Railroad

# THE **DULUTH** INTERMODAL ADVANTAGE

CREATING NEW INLAND AND MATCHBACK OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHIPPERS



CN provides fast reliable shipping services throughout North America through our port gateways on three coasts. And now, with CN's newest intermodal facility in Duluth, Minnesota; we offer customers the ability to move freight by its shortest and most economical path, saving time and money!



# 2017 season off to a strong start

Ice was hard to come by across the Great Lakes this winter, and it never significantly impacted commercial navigation. Breakout didn't take a toll on ice-breaking assets as it has in years past. In fact, researchers ranked this among the top 15 earliest thaws in the last 45 years.

Towering piles of pellets could be seen miles away lining the ore docks in Duluth, Superior and Two Harbors. All were waiting for lakers to move out of winter layup and into position to load and leave. On March 22, three full days before the Soo Locks would open, the parade of freighters began.

The *Roger Blough* was first out at first light. She was on her way to the CN Docks in Two Harbors to load iron ore. By nightfall, the *Philip R. Clarke* had fueled and left, as well. Thursday saw a flurry of departures with the *Lee A. Tregurtha*, *Burns Harbor*, *Herbert C. Jackson* and *Paul R. Tregurtha* all getting underway.

While the first few days remained quiet at this end of Lake Superior, queues were forming above and below the Soo Locks. When the Poe Lock opened at 12:01 a.m. Saturday, March 25, it was the upbound *Stewart*

— FIRSTS OF THE SEASON —			
First Outbound	March 22	7:46 a.m.	<i>Roger Blough</i>
First Inbound (thru Soo)	March 26	1:22 a.m.	<i>Stewart J. Cort</i>
First Canadian	March 27	5:09 p.m.	<i>Whitefish Bay</i>
First Salties	April 2	5:32 p.m.	<i>Lake Ontario</i>

*J. Cort* that locked through first, arriving in the Twin Ports just 24 hours later to pick up her first cargo of the season. The *Clarke* was the first downbound at the Soo.

The pace of traffic picked up consistently in the Twin Ports thereafter with the arrival of four U.S.-flag lakers over the weekend. And, ardent boatnerds waited until Sunday evening to welcome the first two Canadian vessels of the season—fleet mates, *Whitefish Bay* and *CSL Assiniboine*.

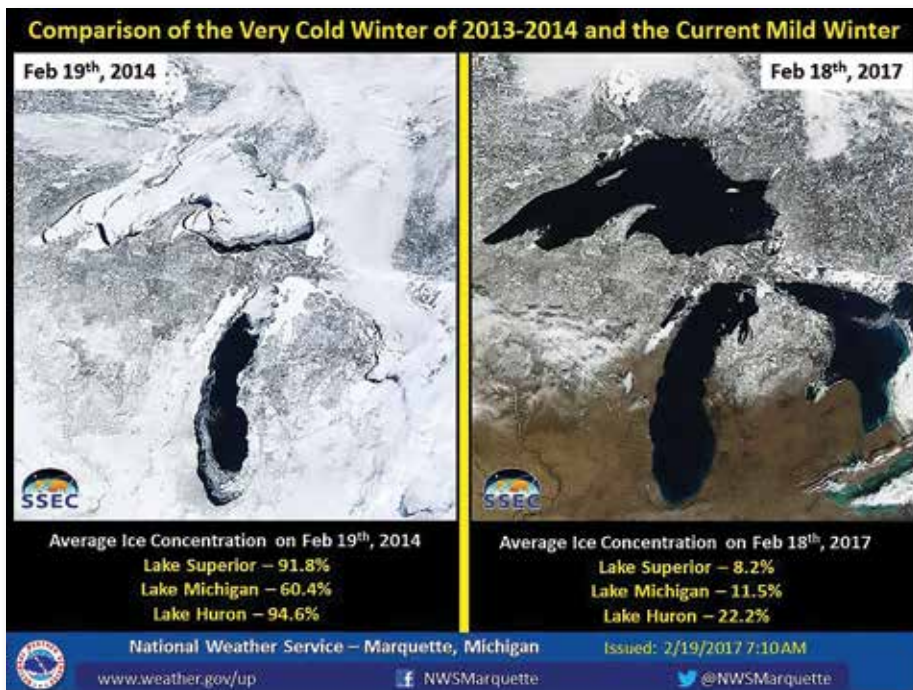
Fast forward to April 2, and many of those same boatwatchers turned out to welcome the first saltie of the 2017 season—the *Lake Ontario*—as she sailed in beneath the Aerial Lift Bridge just after 5:30 p.m. A host of maritime industry leaders and elected officials joined Captain Costelus Morosanu and his crew aboard the vessel Monday for a First Ship Ceremony at Riverland Ag/Duluth



Duluth Mayor Emily Larson welcomes Captain Costelus Morosanu and the crew of the *Lake Ontario* as the first saltie of 2017.

Storage. The ship departed two days later, bound for Italy with 19,000 metric tons of spring wheat.

Barb Gaiser of Falcon Heights, Minn., won this year's First Ship Contest with a guess that was just two minutes off the official arrival time. The contest is co-sponsored by Visit Duluth and the Port Authority.



The *Lake Ontario* loads wheat at Riverland Ag/Duluth Storage.

Carole Lent



A ribbon of fog and glints of sunlight welcome the *Riga* to Duluth.



David Schauer

Final inspections aboard the *Roger Blough* during fit-out.

David Schauer



Spring welcomes the *John Leitch* and rowers to the harbor.



Terry White

The *Stewart J. Cort* takes a bow—first in through the Soo.

Terry White



The *American Spirit* all aglow as she leaves Duluth loaded with pellets.



Paul Scinocca

First Canadian laker arrives— *Whitefish Bay*.



Nick Stenstrup

The 2017 shipping season is in full swing by the end of March as the *Cason J. Callaway* departs.

## Mississippi River shipping season also off to early start

Commerce on the mighty Mississippi began flowing earlier than usual this spring. The towboat *Stephen L. Colby* passed through Lock and Dam No. 2 near Hastings, Minn., on March 9 and continued to St. Paul, pushing 12 barges. She was the first commercial vessel to pass through the lock this year, an event the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers considers the unofficial start of the shipping season because it means all locks are accessible. The earliest start date is March 4, which occurred in 1983, 1984 and 2000. On average, the Mississippi River navigation season begins March 22.



Courtesy USACE

A dozen barges on the Mississippi River approach St Paul.

## CTS honors Port director for industry leadership

The University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) recently recognized Duluth Seaway Port Authority Executive Director Vanta Coda for his leadership in the freight transportation and logistics field and contributions to the mentorship and education of future industry leaders. CTS officials presented Coda with the 2017 William K. Smith Distinguished Service Award at the center’s annual meeting and awards luncheon in February.

Coda has served as executive director since October 2013, capping a career of more than 20 years in multimodal transportation and logistics. He currently is president of the Minnesota Ports Association and an active member of the American Great Lakes Ports Association, the Chamber of Marine Commerce Board and the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council. Coda also serves on the University of Wisconsin-Superior Transportation and Logistics Advisory Board and the Department of Transportation’s Maritime Transportation System National Advisory Committee.



CTS Director Laurie McGinnis with Vanta Coda, executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority and winner of the CTS 2017 William K. Smith Distinguished Service Award.

## Port Authority elects new officers

The Duluth Seaway Port Authority Board held its annual meeting March 22 at which new officers were elected for the next fiscal year (April 1 - March 31): Ray Klosowski, president; Rick Revoir, vice president; Tony Sertich, secretary; Yvonne Prettner Solon, treasurer; and Norm Voorhees, assistant treasurer. Other members of the seven-member board include Pete Stauber and Patrick Boyle.



Ray Klosowski



Rick Revoir



Yvonne Prettner Solon



Norm Voorhees



Tony Sertich



Adele Yorke

The *Roger Blough* pulls away from its winter berth at the Clure Terminal, marking the start of the 2017 shipping season.

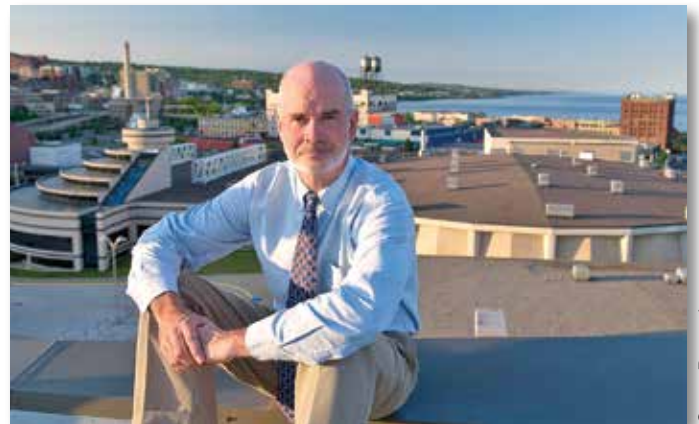
## DECC Executive Director Dan Russell to retire after 27 years

Dan Russell, the leader of the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC) for more than half of its 51-year existence, is retiring August 31.

Since his tenure began in 1989, Russell has spearheaded development of Amsoil Arena, City Side Convention Center, Harborside Convention Center, a multi-screen movie theater and two parking ramps. The complex has grown to include more than one million square feet under several sprawling roofs and has an annual budget of \$10 million. The DECC also manages Bayfront Festival Park and operates the retired *William A. Irvin* as a floating attraction (*see related story below*).

“A large part of the DECC’s success is because of our location on Duluth’s waterfront,” said Russell, reflecting on the facility’s connection to the busy harbor. “Our convention delegates watch in awe at the ships from the Harbor Side Convention Center. Over 1.5 million guests have walked the deck of the *William A. Irvin*, and I have seen performers at our Bayfront Festival Park stop the show to watch a 1,000-footer pass by. Coast Guard vessels, cruise ships and research vessels moor at our seawall—the DECC is part of Duluth’s working waterfront.”

“Dan turned out to be a real winner,” said Bob Heimbach,



Steve Burmeister

Dan Russell

who was chair of the DECC board when Russell was hired. “He has done an unbelievable job in growing the facility and is clearly a leader who makes things happen.”

Russell received a Joel Labovitz Entrepreneurial Success Award from the UMD Center for Economic Development in 2007 for “Entrepreneurial Leadership in the Public Sector” and the Sam Solon Lifetime Legislative Service Award from the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce in 2012.

## *William A. Irvin* marks 30 years as iconic tourist destination

It is hard to believe 30 years have passed since the *William A. Irvin* opened as a museum ship in Duluth’s Minnesota Slip. Once known as the “Pride of the Silver Stackers,” the vessel served as the flagship of what was then U.S. Steel’s Great Lakes Fleet. It carried iron ore and coal to Great Lakes ports for more than 40 years before it was retired in 1978. Several years later, the vessel found new life as a tourist attraction on the Duluth waterfront.

Local businessman Bob Heimbach, a member of the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC) Board in the 1980s, was a driving force behind the project. He persuaded colleagues of the demand for a museum ship, helped negotiate the purchase from Great Lakes Fleet, and oversaw the vessel’s transformation into a floating attraction. In 1986, the repainted and spruced up *William A. Irvin* opened for tours on the outside face of the DECC. The following year, it was moved to a more secure location in Minnesota Slip. Thirty years later, it remains one of Duluth’s most visible and iconic destinations.

“The active working waterfront draws people to Duluth,” Heimbach said. “While the *Irvin* is no longer a working vessel, it is authentic in every way and gives people the experience of getting on one of the big boats. It has been a smashing success. I’m proud to have been part of it, and I’m glad we pulled it off!”



DSPA

The *William A. Irvin* is open for tours.

## Duluth a hub for transportation researchers

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) will hold its summer workshop July 18-20 at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. The event is expected to draw public, private and academic professionals from across the country to explore the theme “Natural Resources, Sustainability and their Intermodal Connections.”

It is hosted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the University of Minnesota Duluth Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) and the UMD Center for Economic Development. It is sponsored by the TRB Resource Conservation and Recovery Committee, Geo-Environmental Processes Committee, Aggregates Committee and the Sustainable Pavements Subcommittee.

Topics include transportation infrastructure, facilities and right of ways as sustainable resources; aggregate resource sustainability and the use of mining and industrial byproducts; the nexus of intermodal systems and natural resources; and dredged material management and beneficial reuses.

“The overall theme and interests of the sponsoring committees overlap nicely with what is happening in the Twin Ports and at NRRI,” said Larry Zanko, a senior research fellow at NRRI and member of the TRB Aggregates Committee. “Hosting this event will bring national attention to our region as a transportation hub and to the research being done here. Duluth is a great venue.” [www.trb-adc60.org](http://www.trb-adc60.org)



Paul Scinocca

The Lake Ontario waits to load wheat in Duluth.

## Unlock your inner engineer at the Soo

Shipping fans and boatnerds, mark your calendars and plan to attend the 2017 Soo Locks Engineers Day on Friday, June 30, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

The open house, held the last Friday in June, is a once-a-year opportunity for people of all ages to walk across the Soo Locks walls, climb observation platforms and visit historically important buildings used to operate the busy lock system. New

exhibits in the Soo Locks Visitors Center include “Ships of the Great Lakes,” with historic photos and information on vessels dating back to the early 1800s, and “Sisters,” a display that highlights freighters built with the same plans.

In addition, visitors can tour the Cloverland Electric Cooperative Hydroelectric Plant, explore the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) station and cutter *Katmai Bay*, and witness

demonstrations of a USCG helicopter rescue and a boat inspection aboard the Museum Ship *Valley Camp*. There also is an Arts, Crafts and Family Fun Fair to round out festivities.

**Please note:** *The International Bridge Walk, usually held as part of Soo Locks Engineers Weekend, has been moved to Saturday, June 24, this year due to the July 1 Canada Day holiday on Saturday.*



Adele Yorke

Visitors get a bird’s-eye view as the *American Spirit* enters the Poe Lock during Engineers Day 2016.

## National Maritime Day speaker addresses Great Lakes policies

Federal legislation and appropriations related to the Great Lakes could take dramatic turns under a new Administration and Republican-controlled Congress. Great Lakes Commission (GLC) Policy Director Matt Doss shared his insights and perspectives during a National Maritime Day luncheon, hosted by the Propeller Club of Duluth-Superior on Monday, May 22.

Doss develops GLC's federal priorities and manages relations with Congress and federal agencies. He also coordinates the Commission's engagement with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and supports GLC's work on

restoring Great Lakes Areas of Concern, preventing the transfer of Asian carp and other invasive species, restoring fish and wildlife habitat, and strengthening the Great Lakes navigation system.

National Maritime Day honors the historic and ongoing service and sacrifice of our nation's Merchant Marine and celebrates the contributions of the U.S. maritime industry. Each year, the Propeller Club hosts a commemorative luncheon and memorial service to honor U.S. Merchant Marine veterans, current seafarers and members of the maritime community.



Matt Doss

## Digging Duluth

The Great Lakes Dredging Team held its 2017 annual meeting in Duluth May 22-23. The organization is a forum for governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to discuss the region's dredging needs and to support timely, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable dredging practices. Its priorities include sustainable dredged material management, legislative monitoring of federal and state policy issues related to navigation dredging in the Great Lakes, and the use of science to inform dredging policy and management. The meeting coincided with National Maritime Day. [www.greatlakesdredging.net](http://www.greatlakesdredging.net)



### Save the Date

The Great Lakes Commission will hold its 2017 annual meeting in Duluth, Minn., Sept. 19-20. It is an opportunity for Great Lakes stakeholders to network with colleagues and share perspectives on important issues. Registration opens soon. Visit [www.glc.org](http://www.glc.org).



Terry White

*Solina* loads grain on April 13 at CHS for her first cargo of the shipping season.

## Port sets strong pace with the 2016 season

More international cargo passed through the Port of Duluth-Superior in the 2016 shipping season than in the prior year. That increase earned the Port a prestigious Robert J. Lewis Pacesetter Award from the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC). The Port's total international tonnage last year (shipped to/from overseas or transshipment points) was 1,967,505 metric tons. That marked a seven percent increase over the 2015 season. Grain shipments alone were up by 19 percent.

# Learning center to open on Barker's Island

The Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) plans to open its newly renovated learning center on Barker's Island in Superior, Wis., by mid-year. The center, located next to the USS *Meteor*, will include exhibits and an interpretive design that fosters understanding of the Lake Superior watershed and St. Louis River estuary. It will feature meeting space and classrooms for the organization's programming needs and use by University of Wisconsin-Superior and community partners. The project is funded by a \$316,667 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration with a match from University of Wisconsin-Extension. Much of the work is being done by apprentice carpenters from the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters. There are 28 NERR facilities nationwide, and this is one of just two on the Great Lakes.



(Above) Interior work being completed at the new LSNERR Learning Center by the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters.

(Left) The LSNERR Learning Center located on Barker's Island is one of only two facilities on the Great Lakes.

Courtesy LSNERR



Julie Zenner

## LSNERR honors local leaders

James Hurley, director of Wisconsin Sea Grant, and Terry White, second district supervisor of Douglas County, were honored April 30 by the Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve (LSNERR) and Reserve Advisory Board (RAB).



James Hurley

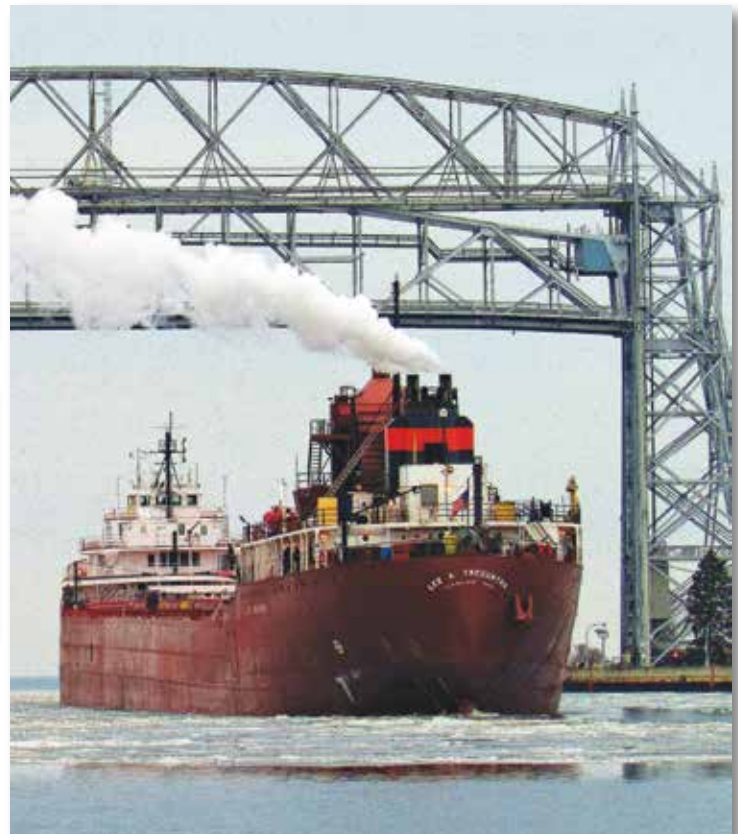
"Jim was a primary driver in the Reserve's nomination, site selection and designation process," said Erika Washburn, LSNERR director, in presenting the outstanding achievement awards.



Terry White

White has been a member of the RAB since 2015. In that short time, he has had major impacts on the remodeling process for the Reserve's learning center on Barker's Island and has contributed to programming.

"Terry jumped right in," said Washburn. "He pored over architectural blueprints from the contractor, brainstormed ideas for wind and solar power, spent hours renovating the building himself, and had a great idea to bring in union carpenters to help as part of a training program."



Ed Labernik

Interlake Steamship Company outfitted its fourth vessel (the *Mesabi Miner*) with exhaust gas scrubbers during winter layup this year at Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding Co. So, now you know what those white plumes of smoke are trailing behind smokestacks on its *James L. Oberstar*, *James R. Barker*, *Lee A. Tregurtha* (above) and now the *Miner*.



## Minnesota Trade Office names new director

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced Gabrielle Gerbaud, a Polaris Industries manager with 14 years of experience in international business and trade, has been named executive director of the Minnesota Trade Office. She succeeds Kathleen Motzenbecker, who left late last year for an executive position with the Medical Alley Association. Gerbaud assumed leadership of the Minnesota Trade Office on April 19.

A native of Spain, Gerbaud is fluent in Spanish, French and English. She has traveled to 29 countries on business and worked with 12 other nations on business matters during a career that included: international sales management positions at Polaris Industries and working closely with distributors in Central and South America; managing owner of the Hotel Punta Couso in Santiago de Compostela,

Spain; general secretary and business development manager for the Thomson Prometric standardized-testing firm in Madrid and in Manchester, England; and international relations manager for E.N. Mercasa, an organization within Spain's Ministry of Agriculture.

Gerbaud holds bachelor's degrees in economics and international relations from Boston University and a Six Sigma Yellow Belt Certificate from the University of St. Thomas. "I have lived and worked in many countries, but I am proud to call Minnesota my home," said Gerbaud. "I look forward to working with the Minnesota business community, our small businesses and manufacturers, to highlight all that our great state has to offer the world."



Gabrielle Gerbaud

## MIC welcomes new senior planner

Michael "Mike" Wenzholz has been named senior planner at the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC). In this capacity, he coordinates MIC's Harbor Technical Advisory Committee along with the Area Truck Route Study, freight planning, and its Long Range Transportation Plan.

Wenzholz joined the MIC in 2016, bringing a broad range of academic credentials and professional experience to the job. He has a B.S. degree in water resources—aquatic toxicology from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, a Master of Science (MS) in environmental toxicology from Clemson University and an MS in urban and regional planning—land use planning from the University of Wisconsin. He has worked on a variety of water-related, solid waste, recycling, composting, shoreland zoning, recreational trails, environmental toxicology and brownfield redevelopment projects for numerous sectors over the past 20 years.

The position formerly was held by Andy McDonald, who retired from the MIC in September 2015 but remains active as a consultant in many harbor-related activities.



Mike Wenzholz

## Logistics expert heads PM Duluth office

Pickands Mather appointed David Sauer as logistics representative of the company's affiliate, PM Lake Services Company, in Duluth.

Sauer comes to PM following a 27-year career with S. A. McLennan, vessel agents in the Twin Ports. Prior to that, Sauer held positions with USS Great Lakes Fleet and the Port Authority. He has extensive experience in all facets of Great Lakes shipping and vessel agency services.

"We are delighted to have a person of Dave's integrity, experience and creativity join our team as we complete the process of developing and implementing a strategic plan for the future", said Scott Brown, PM president. "We look forward to expanding both the scope and areas of the services we provide to the industry."

The Pickands Mather Group is comprised of privately held companies involved in the development and management of bulk material supply chains; coal and related product marketing; and vessel agency services. The company also has developed and markets a bulk material supply and terminal management software package.



David Sauer



The *Michipicoten* on April 5 arrives to load ore at BNSF.

Travis Chadwick

## Progress Minnesota awards movers and shakers

The daily print and online newspaper *Finance and Commerce* honored the Duluth Seaway Port Authority with a 2017 Progress Minnesota Award in April. The annual awards recognize entrepreneurs, individuals, businesses, manufacturers, nonprofits and economic development organizations for moving Minnesota's economy forward in innovative ways.

A panel of independent judges who specialize in economic development reviewed nominations and selected honorees. The Port Authority was nominated by the Duluth Economic Development Authority.

Two other Duluth organizations also received 2017 Progress Minnesota awards: Loll Designs and The College of St. Scholastica.



Courtesy Finance and Commerce

DSPA's Adele Yorde accepts the 2017 Progress Minnesota Award from Bill Gaier, president and publisher of *Finance and Commerce*.

## PORT PASSINGS

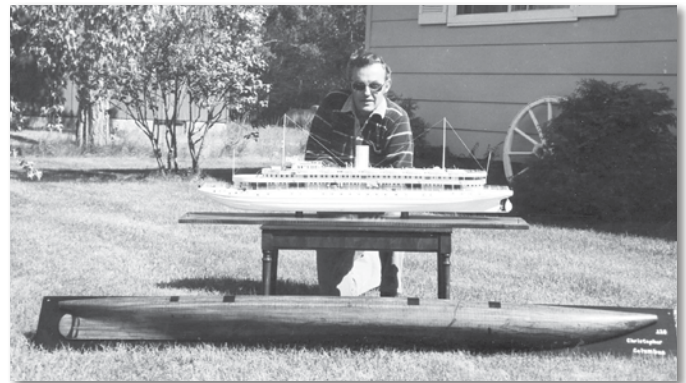
### Ken Thro was a model historian

Local collector and historian **Kenneth Thro** died January 29, 2017, at the age of 88, after a life spent largely preserving the history of vessels that sailed the Great Lakes. Thro was a former Twin Ports resident who retired and moved to Florida decades ago, but he left an indelible mark on the Great Lakes region.

In 1993, "Kenny" donated his personal collection of 9,500 historic photographs to the Marine Museum, a gift that virtually doubled the facility's archival collection at the time. It included many original photos and glass plate negatives by famed Duluth photographer Hugh McKenzie, dating from 1900 to 1930. Over the years, Thro also gifted the museum with intricate scale models of ships that he built using original plans and photos. "He will always stand out," in the opinion of C. Patrick Labadie, former director of the museum and himself an expert in Great Lakes maritime history.

"Kenny was very generous at sharing what he acquired with the museum and also very deliberate in seeing that it was preserved for access to the public," said Labadie, a personal friend who shared many common interests and hobbies with Thro. "He had an incredible impact."

According to a 1993 article in the Lake Superior Marine Museum Association's journal, *The Nor'Easter*, and newspaper reports, Thro bought his first camera in 1942 at the age of 14 and began photographing ships in the Twin Ports. This passion continued through a career that included work aboard Great Lakes freighters and ocean-going vessels, service in the U.S. Army, and years as an Army National Guard mechanic in northwest Wisconsin.



UW-Superior Archives

Ken Thro

He reportedly photographed every ship he saw and traded with collectors and institutions across the U.S. and Canada. Thro took particular interest in the whaleback steamers built by Capt. Alexander McDougall in the Twin Ports in the 1890s and became an expert in these unique vessels. He obtained plans of the whalebacks from the U. S. Patent Office and used them to create his beautiful models.

"Many will come to know Kenneth Thro through his photographic collections and the models he built, some of which are on display at the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center," said Thom Holden, who succeeded Labadie as director of the Marine Museum in 2000 and retired in 2013. "His knowledge of the details separating one whaleback, steamer or barge from another was just amazing."

The Lake Superior Maritime Collection, including the Kenneth Thro Collection, is now archived at the University of Wisconsin-Superior's Jim Dan Hill Library.

# IN FOCUS: Nick Stenstrup

*This is the fifth in a series of profiles about the gifted photographers whose images bring the Port's working waterfront to life.*

Nick Stenstrup is 18 years old, but he has several years of photography under his belt already. Currently enrolled at the College of Saint Scholastica, Stenstrup is studying communications and English. He hopes to combine his education and love of photography in a career that involves Great Lakes vessels. Submitting photos to *North Star Port* magazine is a good start.

## **How did you get into photography, specifically the shipping scene?**

When I was 12 years old, I saw the *Mesabi Miner* arrive at Two Harbors in the evening. My family was having a picnic on the shore. The size of that boat amazed me, and I was hooked.

## **What draws you to the Great Lakes and the working waterfront?**

I love the history behind the ships. Not only do I get to see an interesting boat, I can document it, as well. Duluth's maritime history goes back a long time, and it is amazing that many of the elevators and docks are still here.

## **Do you have a personal connection with Lake Superior and the Port of Duluth-Superior?**

Absolutely. We have no relatives that sailed on the lakes, but Duluth is like a second home to my family. We would come to Duluth for vacations to see the Lake whenever we could. Dad and I would camp at Jay Cooke or Gooseberry for a night or two, then enjoy the North Shore.

## **How would you describe your approach to photography?**

I take pride in getting a good shot. I don't want to go down to Canal Park, see a boat and not put in the effort to get a good shot. I recently acquired my first DSLR (digital single-lens reflex) camera, so I'm trying all the different features and settings. I take it seriously.

## **Is there a time of day or season when you get your best shots? Why?**

Sunrise is my favorite time of day. Not only is it beautiful to see the sun come up over Lake Superior, but, many times, I'm the only one out there. It's a surreal feeling being the only one around to watch an amazing event.

## **Are most of your shots planned or spontaneous?**

It depends on the weather or lighting. If there is a storm and a boat is arriving, I am at Enger Tower trying to get the clouds and a strike of lightning in the background. If it is a sunny day, I am on the South Pier shooting a boat because the lighting is best there. However, if I am driving somewhere, and I see a boat, I capture my surrounding and as much of the ship as I can for a spontaneous shot.

## **What makes a great shipping or harbor shot? Do you know immediately when you get one?**

It's tough to define a great shipping or harbor shot because each photographer has a different eye. Shots that appeal to me include more than just a ship, like having a lighthouse or the hill in the background. When I smile after taking a series of pictures, I know I got a good shot.



Nick Stenstrup





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