

President's Message

By Fran Hoffman

I would like to begin our Summer 2026 edition of *Ropecord News* by thanking our membership for the trust placed in me to serve as President of the Cordage Institute. It's truly a privilege to represent such a knowledgeable, talented, and dedicated group of professionals. Our members' willingness to share expertise, support one another, and continually advance our industry is what makes the Cordage Institute so special. I would also like to recognize a milestone that is particularly meaningful to me: Elizabeth Huntley and I had the honor of serving as the Cordage Institute's first women President and Vice President. It was a special chapter in the Institute's history and an honor that Elizabeth and I will always share.



Immediate Past President, Elizabeth Huntley (left) congratulates Fran Hoffman (right) on being elected Cordage Institute President.

Our mission is clear: to advance the safe, proper, circular, and sustainable use of cordage products while educating users, standards organizations, government agencies, and stakeholders across our global industry. That commitment to technical excellence, education, and collaboration was on full display this past June in beautiful Algarve, Portugal, at the 7th Joint Eurocord & Cordage Institute Conference.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Eurocord for hosting this year's conference, with special appreciation to Luis Teixeira - President of Eurocord, the very talented Jaibora Gusatto - Managing Director of Eurocord, and the Conference Planning Committee for their outstanding work. Organizing an international conference of this scale required months of preparation and extensive coordination. The result in Portugal was a seamless and highly successful event that was both professionally rewarding and personally memorable.

The conference included productive technical meetings for both organizations, as well as the successful kickoff of the upcoming revision of the Mooring Equipment Guidelines, MEG5. I would like to acknowledge Sarah Padilla for leading this initiative on behalf of the Cordage Institute, and we were pleased to welcome Alexys Nielsen, Engineering Advisor at OCIMF, to our Joint Conference. Her participation provided a valuable opportunity to further strengthen our relationship and highlight the importance of our ongoing collaboration with OCIMF as we work together to support industry best practices. While still in its early stages, the discussions in Portugal marked an important first step in this collaborative effort.

As always, the technical presentations were a highlight of the conference and reflected the exceptional expertise within the Cordage Institute. Slide presentations are available on Ropecord.com in the Members Only section, and I encourage you to review them, along with the summaries and technical papers featured in this edition of *Ropecord News*. Whether or not you were able to attend, these materials provide valuable insight and reflect the collaborative spirit that continues to advance our industry.

Beyond the meeting rooms, we enjoyed boating, golf, evenings along the Algarve coast, an elegant seaside Ivory-inspired dinner, and our annual President's Dinner. These gatherings are just as important as the technical sessions, strengthening the relationships that support our collaboration.

At the President's Dinner, we recognized two individuals whose contributions have had a lasting impact on our industry. We were honored to posthumously present Dr. Walter Paul with the Richards Technical Contribution Award in recognition of his many years of service and meaningful contributions to our industry. Bill Putnam was also presented with the prestigious Gale Foster Award of Merit.

Bill's decades of service, including his time as President of the Cordage Institute, have helped shape the organization we know today. His technical expertise, leadership, and commitment have greatly benefited our membership, and we are deeply grateful. We wish him every happiness in retirement and thank him for his friendship, mentorship, and dedication. As he begins this next chapter, we bid him a fond farewell—and note that, after a lifetime in the rope industry, he is finally off the hook and, we hope, no longer tied up with meetings.

We also had the wonderful opportunity to celebrate Peter Lance's 50th birthday while in Algarve. Pete is our fearless leader, and we are deeply grateful for his hard work and dedication to our organization. I would like to thank the Board for hosting a celebration in his honor, and extend a heartfelt thank you to Koen Van Goethem, our Master of the Mic, for leading us in a multilingual rendition of Happy Birthday! It was a memorable celebration and a reflection of how global our organization has become.

This conference also marked an important transition as we welcomed four new Directors to the Board. I encourage you to learn more about them in our upcoming newsletter and join me in warmly welcoming Forrest Sloan, David Rowatt, Travis Zahradka, and Kris Volpenhein to the Board. Their experience, energy, and fresh perspectives will be a real asset as we continue working together to serve our members and strengthen our industry.

I would also like to congratulate Christian Rheault of Samson Rope on his election as Vice President of the Cordage Institute, and I look forward to serving alongside him. A sincere thank you as well to Elizabeth Huntley of Whitehill for her leadership as President over the past two years; she guided the organization with steady dedication, thoughtful leadership, and great grace. And finally, I'm especially pleased to share that Sarah Padilla will continue to serve as our Technical Director for the next three years.

Looking ahead, I am genuinely excited for the work before us. The collaboration between the Cordage Institute and Eurocord continues to show what is possible when organizations with shared values come together. The progress made in Portugal has set us up well for the months ahead, and I look forward to seeing many of you this fall in Philadelphia. Please mark your calendars for October 6th and 7th as we gather to celebrate America's 250th birthday with a trolley tour through the city, followed by a networking event at Philadelphia's oldest tavern—an evening that promises great conversation, good company, and a bit of history along the way.

Thank you for your continued support of the Cordage Institute. It is an honor to serve as your President, and I look forward to what we will accomplish together!