



From the Bridge

The Newsletter of the Company of Master Mariners of Canada

November 2007

The Company of Master Mariners of Canada is a corporation established to serve the shipping industry, further the efficiency of the sea service and uphold the status, dignity and prestige of Master Mariners.

FROM THE MASTER'S DESK



Dear Colleagues,

As we approach the festive season, I would like to wish everyone a happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy 2008. I ask you to spare a thought for those mariners who are being incarcerated or otherwise subjected to harsh justice for events over which they have little or no control.

I have been fortunate enough to visit with a number of the Divisions, specifically Maritimes, Vancouver Island, Vancouver, Great Lakes (for the conference and the AGM) and Newfoundland. I was pleased with the enthusiasm of the members with whom I met, and look forward to greater participation from our members in the years to come! I hope to see more of the members during the upcoming year, and trust that the Company has the opportunity to expand, both in its number of members, and in its direction and influence.

Recently, Captain Frank Nicol requested to be relieved of the duties of the Membership Chairman. Frank and Ann, as chairman and secretary, have tirelessly kept our membership documentation current, and their stewardship will be missed. We are fortunate to have the position of Membership Chairman filled by Captain Yezdee (Denis) Kooka, Great Lakes Division, and I am sure you will join with me in wishing him well in this position. I would ask you all to remember that the information that he has is dependant upon the Divisions providing the correct and latest information to him.

Also, Captains Andy Whitelaw and Peter Ireland, who have served in the position of National Treasurer and Secretary respectively, have expressed a desire to step down. The Company will lose the strong guidance and support provided to us by Andy and Peter. I will shortly be seeking members to fill these important roles. I would ask that you solicit your fellow members to aid in the search! (These positions do not require that the member lives in Vancouver.)

Two recent conferences have taken place, and both have been successful. The Great Lakes Division put on a conference ``Vessels in Crisis`` which was well attended and run in conjunction with the AGM, and the Newfoundland Division put on a seminar entitled ``Human Resource Solutions in a Dynamic Marine Industry``. Although I could not attend this seminar, I have it on good authority that it was successful, and in fact five prospective members signed up!

I would ask you all to consider the need to increase our membership, particularly with younger members; this goal was identified at the AGM, and I cannot emphasise strongly enough that without new members and a program to keep them involved, demographics will determine the future of our Company!

I hope that you all have the time and opportunity to celebrate the holiday season, whatever your belief, and trust that 2008 finds you in good health.

Sincerely,

Peter Turner. National Master.
November 26th, 2007

Captain P. Ireland, National Secretary read and tabled his report.

Captain A. Whitelaw, Treasurer read and tabled his report for 2006 and 2007 report to date. He moved it be adopted– carried. He also read out the report for the Captain G. O. Baugh Fund.

Captain D. Bremner, Chairman of the Trustees for the Captain G. O. Baugh Fund, read out his report. Two \$1,000 scholarships were awarded this year.

Captain A. Whitelaw read out the Membership Report and moved that it be adopted– carried.

Item 5 – Auditor’s report.

Captain A. Whitelaw handed out the report and noted certain items should be identified such as the IFSMA membership expense.

Item 6 – Appointment of Auditor for 2007/2008.

Moved by Captain A. Whitelaw that Karen Grover be re-appointed Auditor- carried.

Item 4 - Slate of Officers for 2007/2008.

The following Officers were nominated for election:

National Master Captain P. Turner, Deputy National Master Captain M. Van Roosmalen, Assistant National Master Captain R. Wallace, National Secretary Captain P. Ireland, National Treasurer Captain A. Whitelaw. Moved by Captain A. Soppitt and seconded by Captain R. Osborne that these Officers be duly elected – carried.

Captain P. Turner thanked the organizers for their work on the Conference “Vessels in Crisis, the Master Dilemma in the Great Lakes”, over the past two days.

Item 7 - Date and time of the 41st Annual General Meeting.

The 41st Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday October 4th 2008 at 1500 hours at St. John’s, Newfoundland.

Item 8.- Adjournment.

Captain R. Wallace proposed the meeting be adjourned – carried.

P. M. Ireland, National Secretary.

Captain Alan Shard is a frequent supplier of articles on the theme, “**Why go to sea!**” Following are two such items.

Life at sea is just not as much fun for today’s generation

Letter to the Editor. November 27th 2007 Lloyds List

From Capt CR Kelso (Southampton, England)

SIR, It was reassuring to read in Lloyd’s List of 21 November (Spreading the careers word) that the number of trainees entering the system in the UK is expanding. But, as the article on the adjoining page rightly says, “retention is [the] key issue for Merchant Navy training”, and unless that issue is recognised and dealt with very quickly, the current competent-manning crisis will steadily worsen.

Why did so many of “our” generation stay at sea throughout their working lives and seek promotion to the pinnacle of their discipline? And why today are so many young trainees and junior officers seeking an alternative career? These are the questions that should be addressed before the retention problem can be rectified.

Through various associations I have an opportunity to speak with young seafarers of different backgrounds and nationalities. When they are asked about their career intentions, their responses differ little.

Life at sea is not what they expected and few have any intention of seeking promotion to senior grades — master or chief engineer.

The reasons for their disillusionment seldom vary. Lack of opportunity to go ashore, loneliness aboard the ship, unfamiliar food, fatigue, poor communication facilities, claustrophobic accommodation, little opportunity for study and long periods of engagement are the most frequently voiced reasons for getting out, but there are others.

Cadets speak of being used as night watchmen in port and long hours of gangway watch "because we can speak English". A female officer told of "getting down the gangway four times in four months — three times to read the draft and once to the dentist". A Polish chief officer spoke of not getting ashore once in a six-month period of engagement.

Undoubtedly, the inability to go ashore, do shopping, meet people and see the world is the most commonplace complaint. In port, sea watches are maintained and, coupled with the need to catch up on sleep, prevent even short runs ashore.

Today's frenetic industry, with minimum multinational manning, offers little opportunity for change, so perhaps a little lateral thinking is needed.

Years ago it was not unknown for many UK liner companies to employ staff officers in some UK ports. These company men were ashore for a variety of reasons — retirement, illness, domestic, study and so on — and were frequently employed to relieve the sailing officers for a short leave during the in-port period.

Today's officers would almost certainly welcome a similar arrangement whereby one or two of them would be relieved for the short in-port period to afford a much-needed break from the monotony and loneliness of shipboard life today. It is feasible and would make a difference.

Seatime should not be like jailtime

An extract from an article that appeared in the August 30th 2007 edition of Lloyds List. (Author unknown)

A DISTURBING, if not especially surprising, headline in the Mission to Seafarer's newspaper "The Sea" catches the eye: "Working at sea is like being in prison, say some seafarers." Perhaps it always was, at least in some ships and some trades.

In my old company we had a commodore who, when he was not terrorising us afloat, sat as a magistrate in his home town when he was home on leave and was able to really frighten those unfortunate enough to come up before him on the bench. He was a sort of one-man recruiter for the Merchant Navy and would offer the wretched miscreant the choice of six months jail and hard labour, which in those days meant breaking rocks, or signing on a ship, probably some awful tramp where they rationed the water and spent their lives cleaning out coal dust or guano from the furthest recesses of the holds.

While the criminal, as he opted for a new sea career, probably thought he was going to enjoy a cruise, he would probably reflect in the months and years to come — we signed two-year articles in those cruel old days — that six months in the slammer might have been a better option. Perhaps it is a thought we might revisit with all these youth problems we are experiencing.

Tanker operations to me always had a whiff of the seaborne prison about it, although I never sailed in one. They always seemed very luxurious compared with our fairly basic accommodation, but it seemed poor compensation for never getting a run ashore as they transferred their oily cargoes from one heap of inhospitable sand to the end of a two-mile oil jetty on the other side of the world.

'Tankeritis' may not have been a notifiable disease, with pages on its treatment in the Ship Captain's Medical Guide, but you could certainly recognise its symptoms as sufferers were gradually introduced back into polite society. 'Stir crazy' seemed to me to be an apt description.

But I should not joke about this article, which was a comment on some serious and timely research by the Seafarers' International Research Centre in Cardiff on the efficacy of present-day welfare facilities for modern shipping circumstances. Commissioned by the International Transport Workers Federation Seafarers' Trust, the research was based on an extensive survey of the opinions of serving seafarers, who were able to express their views about their role in shipping today.

Not surprisingly, seafarers commented on the security problems they frequently encounter, with difficulties in obtaining shore leave, which in any case is constrained by the short time the ship is in port.

Traditional welfare services based on seafarers' centres close to the docks, may no longer be appropriate if the 'customers' cannot even get down the gangway.

It is significant that many of the providers are offering mobile facilities that will bring the welfare to the ship with vehicles or operations like that run by the Mission to Seafarers in Fujairah Roads, where the new support boat "Flying Angel" operates.***

I suspect that most of the welfare agencies would have detected this trend, but the SIRC research offers valuable confirmation that seafarers, always out on the margins of society, risk being marginalised still further. But there are a lot of aspects in this research which have wider importance over and above welfare provision.

In a way it is a commentary of what we as society think about seafarers, who do a vitally important job but are really quite invisible in most countries. The ships come and go, the goods appear in the shops and the refinery tanks are refilled, but no one thinks of how or why all this happens so smoothly. No one thinks of the little communities of workers aboard their ships who are playing such an important role — no one, that is, except the chaplains and their staffs who do their darnedest, often against quite considerable odds, to show these seafarers that they really are appreciated.



*** The "Flying Angel" is a customised boat built by Alwardy Marine in Al Jadaf, Dubai. It features an Internet Café, a library with both educational and fictional DVDs and books, a medical clinic with a fully trained paramedic, access to telecommunications, and pastoral and spiritual support from a dedicated Welfare Officer. Every week for 72 hours, 'Flying Angel' sets sail, out to the ships using the East Coast Anchorage, allowing seafarers to step off their

ships for a period of rest and relaxation. With 99% of all UAE imports arriving by sea, all UAE residents have a vested interest in ensuring the welfare of seafarers. Many seafarers anchored off the UAE's East Coast can neither afford nor get the opportunity to come ashore and are unable to communicate with family and friends at home for weeks, sometimes months. This can lead to feelings of extreme isolation and loneliness, even desperation. The 'Flying Angel' is designed to alleviate these feelings.

"The Sea" Issue 187. May/June 2007. Published by The Mission to Seafarers

Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Study, Final Report, Fall 2007

The governments of Canada and the United States released the binational study report on November 26, 2007. This 128 page report can be found at <http://www.glsls-study.com/English%20Site/home.html>

The GLSLS Study was conducted to evaluate the infrastructure needs of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway system, specifically the engineering, economic and environmental implications of those needs as they pertain to commercial navigation. The study assesses the long-term maintenance and capital requirements to ensure the continuing viability of the system as a safe, efficient, reliable and sustainable component of North America's transportation infrastructure. Its main observations are familiar to the shipping lines that use the Seaway, with little offered beyond continued discussions between Canada and the United States. The study claims that the system could alleviate railway and highway congestion in the Great Lakes region of the two countries, especially if shortsea shipping operations across the Lakes are developed. It also says the waterway has to be maintained and further steps have to be taken to reduce the negative environmental impacts on shorelines from passing ships. The Canadian Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon said Canada wants to ensure the Seaway "continues to serve efficiently as one of North America's trade corridors." The US wants the Seaway to remain "a safe, reliable, and efficient component of our continent's transportation system", said Mary Peters, the American Secretary of Transportation.

Seven Canadian and United States departments and agencies were involved in the study: Transport Canada, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, the U.S. Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, Environment Canada and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Interested parties are invited to provide feedback on the final report, which will be provided to the above noted organizations for their consideration. Written feedback received by January 18, 2008 will be posted to the study website.

A Rare Phenomenon

A mixture of different nationalities and languages can cause communication problems on board the ship. The following is very illustrative:-

The Captain's note to the Chief Officer: Early tomorrow morning there will be a total solar eclipse at 0900. This is something that cannot be seen every day, so let the crew line up in their best clothes on the deck in order that they may see it. To mark this rare phenomenon I will explain it to them myself. If it is raining we will not be able to see it clearly. In that case the crew should gather in the messroom.

The Chief Officer's note to the Second Officer: On Captain's orders there will be a total solar eclipse early tomorrow at 0900. If it is raining we will not be able to see it clearly from deck in our best clothes. In that case the sun's disappearance will be fully observed in the messroom. This is something which does not happen every day.

The Second Officer's note to the Third Officer: On Captain's order we shall fully observe in our best clothes that the sun disappears in the messroom at 0900. The Captain will tell us if it is going to rain. This is something that does not happen every day.

The Third Officer's note to the Bosun: If it is raining in the messroom early tomorrow, which is something that does not happen every day, the Captain in his best clothes will disappear at 0900.

The Bosun's note to the Crew: Early tomorrow at 0900 the Captain will disappear. It is a pity that this does not happen every day.

STCW REVISION

Members of this professional association should be interested to know that the Convention on Training, Certification and Watch-keeping which was radically revised in 1995 is again under review. This should encourage members in the various divisions to consider what improvements we might wish to submit to IMO through the appropriate channels.

It might also be timely to look at Canada's certification system to confirm if our training and examination services meet and hopefully exceed the requirements of the Convention.

The Nautical Institute's journal "SEAWAYS", November 2007 issue, has published an excellent article by Captain John A. Clarkson, who was the head of Canada's delegation to the STW Sub-committee of IMO during the creation of the "white list" in the early 1990s. Capt. Clarkson is now Associate Dean, School of Transportation, BCIT Marine Campus, North Vancouver BC.

In a prologue to his article, Capt. Clarkson writes, (quote) "With the world's maritime community gearing up for the much-anticipated STCW review, there will be many discussions, both within the hallowed halls of IMO and among the industry, as to what exactly needs to be done. Indeed, member nations are now submitting their documents to STW 39, March 2008, in order to complete the review by 2010. In this article, I want to offer some brief suggestions about what the international maritime community needs to address in order to enhance the STCW and its vital role in the human element of the maritime community." (Unquote)

We missed the boat on the revision to the Migratory Birds Act, because of our incompetent watch-keeping to look out for such matters which affect master mariners. Now, here is another one. We may not be too late. We are members of IFSMA. You may be sure they will be submitting their professional views. In fact, nobody in CMMC is "on watch" to look out for matters of professional interest in which CMMC should become involved. Instead of wasting Council time debating endlessly whether cadets should be accepted as members we should turn our professional attention to ensuring that their training is up to a high standard.

**Captain Angus McDonald, FNI,
National Councillor, Maritimes Division.**

POSITION OF NATIONAL TREASURER.

The position of National Treasurer of "The Company of Master Mariners of Canada" will become vacant in July 2008, and applications for this position are requested.

Those applying should be familiar with Microsoft Word and Excel, or equivalent type programs. Knowledge of "Simply Accounting" or any of the "Bedford" programs would be beneficial, but could be learned at a later date. The current space requirements are for a large photocopier, one filing cabinet 15"x 29"x 32"high, 5 cardboard boxes containing old and current files and brochures and several boxes of company regalia.

Applicants should be available to attend all Annual General Meetings held during the second half of October. This is an executive position and worthy of your immediate attention. Applicants would benefit if they are available to "sit in" with the current Treasurer as preparations for the annual audit are underway, during the month of February.

The requirements of the position or job description, as listed in the "company" Procedures Handbook, follow.

NATIONAL TREASURER

- Receives, records and deposits all monies and issues receipts accordingly.
- Examines and approves all bills for payment and prepares the appropriate cheque and records the function in a bookkeeping system.

- Collects the National portion of the member's Dues from the Divisions, after the National Membership Chair has recorded them.
- Maintains full financial records, with the assistance of the accounting staff person, (if one is being used), and arranges an appropriate audited financial statement, for each year ending Dec. 31st.
- Reviews, balances, files and correlates the National's bank statements.
- Presents the Auditor's Report, Membership Chairman's Report and Treasurer's Report to the Annual General Meeting.
- Presents a proposed financial Budget for each year and advises on Dues increases/decreases for each year; at the NCM, immediately following the AGM.
- Receives copies of the financial records from each of the Divisions, on an annual basis and deals with them accordingly.
- Reports to the National Council any changes to the Income Tax "rules and regulations", and keeps them abreast of any other appropriate governmental changes.
- Maintains an inventory of The Company regalia sells directly to the Divisions and buys inventory as required.
- Acts as Administrator for the Capt. G.O. Baugh Memorial Fund, by maintaining financial records, balancing bank statements, issuing cheques, depositing donation funds, arranging an annual audit, receiving applications for scholarships and updating the website accordingly. Presents a report to the AGM re audit and finances of the Fund.
- Liaises with the Company webmaster.
- Acts as a member of the Executive Committee.

Whenever a new National Treasurer is elected, the bank holding the accounts should not be changed unless the National Executive authorizes any such change.

Please contact Capt. Andrew H. Whitelaw for more details, or to apply for the position. Phone 604 986-8526. andyandbetty@shaw.ca

National Treasurer

Books that may interest you:-

Great Images of a Time When Ships Looked Like Ships

Cargo Ships: A Colour Portfolio – a marvellous exercise in nostalgia – containing well over 100 excellent photos of the sort of ships that made the British Merchant Navy lead the world in the 50s and 60s. Each of the ships featured in the book comes with brief technical details, some background on their significance and a potted history of their commercial life. The pictures offer a tapestry of surprising variety including pre-war designs, SD 14s, turbine steamships, turbo-electric cargo liners, an engineer cadet training ship and reefers. They also reflect on the way in which the photos show the vibrancy of the old docks, now replaced by “yuppie” housing developments and remote terminals handling specialised cargoes.

“Cargo Ships: A Colour Portfolio” by David Williams & Richard de Kerbeck (ISBN 978071 1031616) costs £14.99. Published by Ian Allan. www.ianallanpublishing.com

How the Shipping Container made the World smaller and the World Economy Bigger

The Box – The development of containers as the primary mode for shipping cargo is a spectacular story, affecting global trade & port development. The container has made products from every corner of the world commonplace and accessible everywhere. It brought about the Supply Chain. Did you know that Barbie, the all - American girl has a body made in China using molds from the USA, her nylon hair is Japanese, the plastic in her body is Taiwanese, the pigments American and the cotton clothing Chinese? This could only have happened because the container helped to create the Barbie “Supply Chain”. The book provides a fascinating set of true stories about a seemingly mundane subject.

“The Box” by Marc Levinson (ISBN – 10: 0-691-12324-1) Published by Princeton University Press.

Crewing crunch approaches crisis point

Neville Smith. November 27th 2007 Lloyds List

THE maritime industry has no plan to cope with the shortage of trained, competent crew, but it has so far been spared the full effects of the crewing crunch, a leading industry figure has warned. Hong Kong Shipowners Association managing director Arthur Bowring told the opening session of the SeaTrans Asia conference in Shanghai that the crew shortage was a result of fleet growth in the past three years, which had outpaced desperate attempts, including promoting Junior Officers and returning training staff to sea, to plug the gaps.

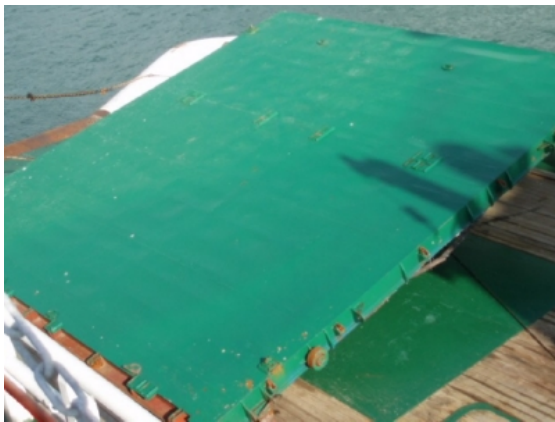
He asked how we could have predicted that so many units would be added to the world fleet in three years with almost no scrapping. Five years ago we wondered if there was enough money to replace the tanker fleet with double-hull ships by 2010, or whether adding one yard in Korea might upset the supply-and-demand balance.

Mr Bowring added there was always the expectation that we would muddle through because that's what we do, but fleet growth has turned this into a crisis. The typical reaction was to promote as many seafarers as possible, but this was very risky for the health of the industry. The real shortage is going to bite soon, he continued. Are we prepared? No. Do we have a plan? No. As a result, we risk the direct threat of new regulation.

Mr Bowring said that by next year the crewing crisis could be acute enough to prevent ships sailing, but owners unprepared to risk losing charter revenue might apply to their flag states for single or multiple-trip exemptions to operate without the required complement. Moreover, he warned that pollution incidents or casualties that found that operational failures were to blame might encourage pressure groups to make the case for more unilateral regulation, citing ships as a threat to the environment.

Mr Bowring said the industry should take steps now to retain experienced crews. That meant improvements in pay and conditions, more direct employment and better benefits for staff.

A Word from the Editor: As you can see this edition is smaller others have been. The intent is to limit the size of the newsletter to eight or nine pages. This may mean, as it does in this case, that not every item submitted to me has been included in this edition. I hope that will not deter you from sending articles to me in future. I need your contributions. During the three months since the last edition of FTB numerous newsworthy items have appeared on the internet or in industry magazines but after a while they seem to lose their importance. There is one notice that was published on August 20th by the Press Office of the UK's Maritime & Coastguard Agency that fascinated me and I would love to know if the puzzle was ever resolved. It is the story of the floating hatch cover. I wonder where the cover came from.



ANYONE LOST A 25 TONNE HATCH COVER?

The Coastguard Emergency Towing Vessel, Anglian Monarch has recovered a 25 Tonne ship's hatch cover which was floating in the busy Dover Strait this week.

The floating hazard off Dover was reported to the Coastguard by a passing vessel on Tuesday and the Anglian Monarch was sent to locate and recover the object. Anglian Monarch is now alongside at Folkestone. If operations permit, the hatch cover will be landed and stored at Folkestone.

The size of the cover is approximately 12 metres square and an estimated weight of 25 tonnes. The cover appears to be in good condition with the wheels and several cleats free and can be turned by hand. It is not clear if it is a fore-aft hatch or an athwartships as the hatch seems to be a

centre section of three or possibly four. This would be consistent with a fore-aft layout but it is hard to see how it could have fallen over the side if this were the case. There is evidence that a grain cargo was being carried according to Anglian Monarch crew and judging by the size of the cover it is estimated to be from a vessel approaching 60000-70000 tonnes, if not bigger.

This hatch cover had to be removed from the busy shipping lanes and would certainly have caused catastrophic damage to a small vessel like a yacht, or even damage the hull of a larger vessel if hit at speed.

Do you have anything for me? The cut-off for submissions to the next edition will be February 10th 2008. Please send them to me at **13375 14A. Avenue, Surrey, B.C. V4A 7P9** or at **whitknit@shaw.ca**
My Best Wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year. **Sincerely, David Whitaker**