From the Bridge

The Newsletter of the Company of Master Mariners of Canada

www.mastermariners.ca

November 2008

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.

TOP NEWS STORY: From Lloyds: November 27th 2008

Captain cleared in drug appeal

CAPTAIN Kristo Laptalo has been sensationally cleared of cocaine smuggling on appeal in Greece, the International Transport Workers' Federation said today. Laptalo, Master of the reefer ship *Coral Sea*, was sentenced to 14 years in prison by a Greek court after being found guilty of drug trafficking. More than 50kg of cocaine was found in banana boxes discharged by *Coral Sea* at the port of Aegion in July 2007. The appeal verdict was issued today at the Patras Appellate Felony Court.

ITF maritime co-ordinator Stephen Cotton said: "This is justice at last for Kristo Laptalo. It has long been clear that [he] was not guilty of any involvement in such an activity, and we are glad that the Greek courts have now recognised this." He continued: "Happy though we are for him, we must not forget that every seafarer is potentially in the firing line. Authorities have to learn to stop reaching for the easy option and condemning the – usually foreign – ships' officers as a gift to public opinion when things go wrong. "We would never condone drug smuggling but it has long been clear that Captain Laptalo was not guilty of any involvement in such an activity."

In July 2007 Captain Kristo Laptalo, first officer Konstantin Metelev and Bosun Narcisco Garcia were arrested when 51 kilograms of cocaine were found in a container which had been discharged in the Greek port of Aegion having been transported from Venezuela aboard the refrigerated vessel m.v. *Coral Sea.* The master was sentenced to 14 years in jail; the other two were acquitted four months ago.

Captain Laptalo has spent 17 months in jail. A defence team consisting of numerous lawyers, and senior executives from industry and professional associations, including Captain Rodger MacDonald of IFSMA were in Greece to plead this case. After a part day hearing and about 20 minutes deliberation on 27th November, a five-member Appellate Felony Court in Patras acquitted the veteran master of the *Coral Sea* of all charges stemming from the discovery of the cocaine.

Captain Rodger MacDonald, secretary-general of the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations, also welcomed the acquittal: "It is absolutely fantastic." He had earlier told the court that there was "no way" the master could have been expected to know that drugs had been loaded on to his ship in Venezuela. A shipmaster "is not in a position to see what is being loaded in sealed containers and sealed pallets", he had earlier told Lloyd's List.

Coral Sea is a Bahamas-flagged, Belgian-owned refrigeration ship of 9,748dwt that is operated by Trireme Vessel Management.

ZAGREB, CROATIA – Croatian Captain Kristo Laptalo was acquitted of all charges in Greek court, the head of the Croatian Seafarers' Union, Predrag Brazzoduro, told Javno. "At last somebody who had the courage to admit they were wrong stepped up", Brazzoduro said.

The appeals process took place today in which the Captain appealed his 14-year sentence. Witnesses for the prosecution reiterated their testimonies that they did not believe Laptalo had any involvement with the drugs found on his ship. http://www.javno.com/en/croatia/clanak.php?id=208554

After the witness testimonies, even the prosecutor in the appeals process motioned for Laptalo to be acquitted. The Croatian Captain spent a total of 16 months in Greek detention after being accused of smuggling 52 kilograms of cocaine.

An absurd fact is that Laptalo will not be able to travel back to Croatia immediately. He will have to spend several days in extradition detention because, according to EU provisions, Laptalo violated EU regulations according to which non-EU members can spend three months at the most in a country of the European Union, even though he was not there on his own free will.

(Note from National Master: It cannot be stressed too strongly that such cases as these and the resultant miscarriage of justice must not be brought against Masters and senior officers. Retaining and incarcerating seafarers, just because they are available to answer the interests of law enforcement, justice or environmental groups, must not be allowed to continue. Not only does this go contrary to justice but restricts the capability of encouraging the next generation to take up a marine career.)

FROM THE MASTER'S DESK

Dear Colleagues,

The time has one again come around to that period in the Christian calendar, when the celebrations of the birth of Christ necessitate over indulging, eating, drinking and spending. Spare a thought, this year, for those of our profession that are being held either in jail or by pirates. They and their loved ones must be experiencing the deprivation which comes from enforced separation. Our commiserations go out to them, and it is hoped that their separation is short lived and not injurious to health or the desire to continue in their professional careers.

2008 has been a sad year for the profession, with seafarers being increasingly incarcerated for actions beyond their control and exposure to increased acts of piracy in many areas of the world. It has also seen casualties which have claimed the lives of seafarers and passengers, and polluted or threatened to pollute the marine environment.

It is not all bad news however. MARPOL has introduced controls for the SOX and NOX emissions from ships, which in turn will reduce the sulphur content in fuel oils. The IMO has also recognised that the shortage of seafarers is a major concern and has initiated a new recruiting campaign. It will focus on the Public image of shipping, the careers available in the industry, and the quality of life at sea. Both of these initiatives are much needed. The IMO and ILO are developing a set of guidelines for the fair treatment of seafarers which, it is hoped, will assist in the allowance for shore leave in various terminals and facilities, and support masters and senior officers should they be charged with offenses relating to our profession.

The very recent release of Captain Kristo Laptalo has shown what can be obtained when industry, professional associations, unions and governments proceed as a single body against injustice. Captain Rodger MacDonald, Secretary General of IFSMA, was included in the defence team brought together to appeal the sentence of Captain Laptalo. CMMC has also pledged its support for Captain Jasprit Chawla and Mr. Syam Chetan, who are being held in jail in South Korea, because, while at anchor, the Hebei Spirit was rammed and holed by a Korean registered Samsung crane barge, spilling 66,000 barrels (approximately 10,000 tonnes) of oil into the Korean waters.

Our influence on the world's marine industry is dependent upon our membership supporting and commenting upon the needs to modify and reform the marine industry, not only in Canada but internationally. This will also ensure recognition of the CMMC in the Canadian merchant service, and hopefully increase membership in the Company, and an interest in the merchant service as a profession and career.

I attended the Transport Canada and IMO symposium in Halifax on 17th & 18th November. This was well attended and some very frank and open comments were presented by the various panels. It was encouraging to note that a large number of the participants were members of the CMMC. While it was regretted that Captain Paterson was storm bound and unable to deliver his paper in person, Captain Angus McDonald presented it with flare and to the appreciation of the delegates. The presentations will be made available on Transport Canada's web site in the near future.

This year's AGM in St. John's was a success and I encourage you to read the minutes, produced in this Newsletter. Newfoundland and Labrador Division were splendid hosts, for which I thank them. The role of co-ordinator for the strategic plan passed from Captain Soppitt to Captain Calvesbert, and I am pleased to see that the Divisions are supporting him in the progress of the plan. I must at this point advise that annual dues are due in January 2009!

I wish everyone a happy Christmas, and a happy holiday season. May you remain in good health and may the blessings of your Gods be with you. I wish you health and prosperity (particularly in our present economic climate) for 2009 and the years to come.

Sincerely, Peter

Minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting. St John's, NL. October 4th 2008.
In Attendance

National Executive: Captain Peter Turner, National Master, Captain Ratch Wallace
Divisional Masters: Captains A. Patterson, J. Calvesbert, J. McCann, I Lantz, F. Hough, D. Bremner, F. Hubbard
Members: Captains B. Parsons, J. Thorpe, A. Zaki, K. Hye Knudsen, K. Rogers, J. Greenway, G. Fiander and D. French.
Guest: Captain I. Giddings (Honourable Company of Master Mariners, U.K.).

1505 hours. Captain P. Turner opened the meeting and welcomed members to the Annual General Meeting. Captain Turner invoked the name of Captain Allan Cabot, one of the Company's Founders, who will reach the age of 100 years on October 24th this year. He asked all members to sign a birthday card.

Captain Turner then recognized Captain Ian Giddings, a guest from the Honourable Company of Master Mariners (UK).

1. Acceptance of the Minutes of the 40th AGM. Moved by Captain Calvesbert, seconded by Captain Bremner that the minutes be accepted. Correction requested to a member's name as written from J. Dos Santos to F. Dos Santos. Minutes accepted with correction. Proxies on hand: Captains Hough – 4, Bremner – 2, Hubbard – 9, Calvesbert – 18.
2. No business arising from the Minutes of the 40th AGM.
3. Proposed By-Law changes (per information attached to the Agenda sent to all members). Captains Wallace & Turner provided an explanation of the By-Law changes proposed at the 156th NCM January 10, 2008 for acceptance today by the membership. Two housekeeping (wording) changes to By Law 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 due to the CSA 2001 Marine Personnel Regulations. By Law 5.6 is proposed to be changed to allow for Cadet Membership. It was explained that Captain Patterson of the N-L Division will develop a template for the National Council on the mentoring and developing of Cadets accepted in to the CMMC. Also By-Law 9.1 and 9.2 are amended to allow for the appropriate collection of each category of members dues and the nomination fee for all new members. Moved by Captain Patterson and seconded by Captain Bremner to accept the By-Law changes. Accepted. Captain Turner thanked the By-Law committee for their work on this item.
4. Reports from Officers: Captain Turner, National Master, commenced. Divisional Masters (or representatives) read and tabled their reports. Captain Hubbard, Captain Hough, Captain McCann, Captain Calvesbert, Capt. Lantz, Captain Patterson and Captain Bremner. Captain Patterson presented a cheque from the N-L Division to the Foundation President, Captain Greenway for $1927, the profit from the 2007 Maritime & Human Resource Solutions Seminar. Applause. Captain Turner formally thanked Captain Peter Ireland for his years of service as National Secretary. Captain Wallace read Captain Ireland's report.
    - Captain Wallace read Treasurer Captain Whitelaw's report (as he could not attend personally this year). Captain Patterson raised a concern that despite financial issues last year at Hamilton, conferences should not be physically disconnected from the AGM. This item as follow up from the 159th NCM. Discussion followed.
    - Captain Wallace read Membership Chair Captain Kooka's report (as he could not personally attend). Presently there are 458 members in all categories and there was no loss or gain in membership this year even though 16 new members joined.
    - Captain Bremner, Captain G.O. Baugh Fund Chair, read and tabled the Baugh Fund Report. Two scholarships of $1,000 from the seven high quality applications received.
    - Captain Greenway, President of the CMMC Foundation read and tabled his report. This year there were two scholarships awarded of $2000 each. The current bank balance is $66,720.76. As Education Chair, Captain Greenway read his report recommending CMMC support for the Sector Council as crucial. Captain Turner, in support, will send a letter to the HRDC.
5. Slate of Officers: The following officers were nominated for election by the National Council at the 159th NCM. Captain P. Turner, National Master, Captain J. Calvesbert Deputy National Master, Captain J. McCann Assistant National Master, Captain R. Wallace National Secretary, Captain A. Whitelaw National Treasurer (Note: Treasurer position is available for replacement as Captain Whitelaw wishes to step down). Moved by Capt. Turner & seconded by Captain Lantz that these officers be duly elected. Carried.
6. Auditor's Report: Captain Wallace passed out the report on behalf of the Treasurer. There were three items identified for clarification by phone to the Treasurer. Captain Wallace offered to call and report back to the 160th NCM Sunday. Moved by Captain Hough & seconded by Captain Hubbard that the Auditor's report be accepted. Carried.
7. Appointment of Auditor for 2008/9. Karen Grover appointed as Auditor 2008/9. Carried.
8. No other business put forward.
9. Date, location & time of the 42nd AGM: October 3rd 2009. Halifax, Nova Scotia. 1500hrs local time.
10. Adjournment: Moved by Captain Calvesbert.

2008 CMMC Foundation Scholarship Winners: Matthew Taylor, Georgian College.
David Anderson, Marine Institute of Memorial University.

CAPTAIN ALLAN NORMAN CABOT FNI CENTENARIAN
A FOUNDING FATHER OF CMMC.

The Company owes so much to you,
Founder, Master, Secretary too.
Man of principle, you led the way,
Now your successors have their day.
A professional association is our boast,
To Captain Allan Cabot, we give a toast.
Here's to you Sir, God bless you and, "Thank You".

On October 24, 2008, Capt. Cabot celebrated 100 years of age in his home at Lantzville, Vancouver Island, frail in body (from all that steaming) but clear in mind. He was regaled with congratulatory messages from Royalty, politicians, friends from around the world and members of the Company and the Nautical Institute, and of course, his two dear daughters.

In early 1945, fate and his employer, Alfred Holt's Blue Funnel Line of Liverpool decreed that, as Chief Officer of their requisitioned ship, *MENESTHEUS*, Allan Cabot would be based in Vancouver overseeing the conversion of their general cargo ship to an "Amenity Ship" to provide "rest and recreation" for Allied forces destined to occupy a Japan which would have no amenities for "Jack ashore". The War was over by the time the ship reached Yokohama, sporting a second funnel needed for the exhaust from the on-board brewery. While in Vancouver the Chief Officer succumbed to the charms of a local lass and they married before he sailed.
Capt. Cabot from Merseyside, England, started his sea career with Blue Funnel in 1924 but in 1947, he migrated to Vancouver and continued seafaring as Master with Western Canada Steamships until 1954 when he joined the Vancouver firm of Casco Terminals, a division of Canadian Stevedoring Ltd, and stayed with them until retirement.
In 1967, with Capt. Gerald Baugh (A Canadian Pacific Master and RCNR Commander), and six other worthy master mariners, Capt. Cabot obtained Letters Patent for the Company of Master Mariners of Canada. Nearly 500 years prior, King Henry VII of England, had granted Allan Cabot's ancestor, John Cabot, Letters Patent to sail across the Atlantic in search of new lands and a westward passage to the Orient. In 1497, John Cabot sighted land, called it Newfoundland, erected a cross on shore and named the place of his landing, Bonavista. Our Capt. Cabot was in the old seaport of Bristol in 1996 at the dedication of the replica of the explorer's caravel, the *MATTHEW* and he was at Bonavista on June 24, 1997, when H.M. the Queen and Prince Philip welcomed the *MATTHEW* and celebrated the quincentennial of Cabot's great discovery. The worthy navigator also discovered a rich cod fishery on the Grand Banks.
During Capt. Cabot's tenure as National Master, he united the west coast Company with the Canadian Institute of Master Mariners, based in Montreal and with chapters in Ottawa and Toronto. This was achieved in 1975. Two years later, a new division based in Halifax, joined the Company and from it evolved divisions based in St. John's and Saint John. Subsequent upon his term as National Master, Capt. Cabot continued his dedication to the Company's development and well-being, through his role, for several years, as National Secretary.
The best compliment we current members of the Company can give to our worthy Centenarian - call it a "centennial promise" - would be to adopt his spirit of dedication and ensure that this professional association will flourish and expand its influence in maritime affairs.

Submitted by Capt. Angus McDonald FNI, National Councillor, Maritimes Division. Nov. 12, 2008

Position of National Treasurer

The National Treasurer for "The Company of Master Mariners of Canada" wishes to stand down and applications for this position are requested. This is the fourth time the position has been posted. Please consider applying for it. It is an interesting and worthwhile undertaking. For more information read Page 6 of the February 2008 FTB or contact Captain Andrew Whitelaw at **604 986-8526** or **<andyandbetty@shaw.ca>**
The National Treasurer attends all Annual General Meetings held during October. This is an executive position and worthy of your immediate attention.

Pirate Attacks Soar.

It seems like every day there is a news item referring to piracy, particularly in the Gulf of Aden. The following item appeared on the mglobal.com website on October 23rd: The latest figures released by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) show a dramatic increase in pirate attacks which, it says, is directly attributed to heightened piracy activity off the Somali Coast. A total of 199 incidents were reported to the PRC in the first nine months of 2008. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of incidents reported in the third quarter (83) as compared to the first (53) and second quarters (63) of 2008. In the first nine months of 2008 - worldwide 115 vessels were boarded, 31 vessels hijacked and 23 vessels fired upon. A total of 581 crew members were taken hostage, 9 kidnapped, 9 killed and 7 missing – presumed dead. Compared to the corresponding period last year the total number of actual attacks

reported has increased. The types of attacks, the violence associated with the attacks, the number of hostages taken and the amounts paid in ransoms for the release of the vessels have all increased. The Gulf of Aden and East coast of Somalia rank as the number one piracy hotspot with 63 incidents reported, accounting for almost a third of the overall reported attacks.

Piracy, of course, is hardly a new phenomenon. Criminal gangs have been exacting treasure on the high seas for centuries. However the lawlessness off Somalia is seriously affecting shipping. Growing numbers of shipowners are so concerned about the threat of piracy off the coast of Somalia that they are lengthening voyages by as much as three weeks to avoid the area. Intercargo, the international organisation of dry bulk ship operators, said several of its members were also now using the Cape. Intertanko, the international tanker-owners' organisation, said members were not using the Cape route but some were seeking to send ships only on voyages that avoided the danger area, which has seen 83 attacks and 33 hijackings this year. The diversions will push up the number of days customers will need to pay to charter a vessel – although, since rates have plunged by more than 90 per cent since May, costs remain only a fraction of a few months ago.

IMB Director Pottengal Mukundan said: "Piracy attacks off the coast of Somalia are unprecedented. It is clear that pirates in the Gulf of Aden believe that they can operate with impunity in attacking vessels – some of which have included tankers and large bulk carriers. The cost to owners whose vessels are hijacked is significant. What is required is robust action against the pirates' mother ships before they succeed in hijacking vessels. The locations and descriptions of these mother ships are known. We therefore call upon all governments to direct their navies to disrupt the activities of the pirates and their mother ships. This is vital to protect this major world seaway". The IMB World Piracy Map illustrates this trend www.icc-ccs.org. Of the 63 reported incidents in this area, 51 have been reported in the Gulf of Aden and 12 off the east coast of Somalia. Attacks in the Gulf of Aden involve vessels being indiscriminately fired upon by automatic weapons resulting in the loss of life of one crew member. The use of rocket propelled grenades has resulted in damaging the hull of a tanker causing minor pollution. Capt Mukundan added: "The IMB also wishes to thank the Coalition naval units and the Yemeni Coastguard for all their actions in preventing a number of hijackings in the Gulf of Aden in the last quarter."

Nigeria holds second spot with 24 reported incidents received. Indonesia is the third highest ranking country with 23 reported incidents. Two incidents have been reported for the Malacca Straits, the same number as for the corresponding period in 2007. The littoral states should be complimented, Capt Mukundan said, for the continued and enhanced co-operation that has been in existence since 2004 which is directly attributable to keeping the overall number of incidents in this important strategic choke point down. http://www.mglobal.com/news

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Vessels of the future will use wind and sun. In the future, Viking Line vessels will perhaps be equipped with sails and solar panels, supplementing more efficient engines which in turn will be powered by more environmentally friendly fuels. And the future is closer than one might think, since planning of the new generation of Viking Line vessels for service between Finland and Sweden has already begun.

At a seminar for financial journalists, Nils-Erik Eklund, Managing Director and Chief Executive of Viking Line, provided a small glimpse of how the company's vessels might look in the future. "Since the early 1980s, we have been working with various solutions for our vessels to reduce oil consumption, thereby reducing our bunker expenses and minimising emissions. The next generation of vessels will pay even more attention to these aspects," Mr Öhman explains.

"I think we can be proud of many things we have done over the years. For example, starting to use low-sulphur fuel nearly 20 years ago and installing humid air motor (HAM) exhaust purification on the *Mariella*, the only such vessel in the world. The *Viking XPRS* is the only vessel serving the Helsinki-Tallinn route that has catalytic cleaning systems on all engines. We pump all black and grey water ashore. We have extremely knowledgeable and ambitious people in our organisation, each of whom has contributed to these developments in his or her own way." Tony Öhman says.

One current example of fresh thinking is the German cargo vessel *Beluga SkySails*, which was completed earlier this year – the world's first container vessel equipped with a kite that pulls the vessel forward. The vessel uses a computer-controlled kite − a 160 square metre sail − in addition to its regular engine. Kite technology will make it possible to save about 15% of today's bunker expenses. There are also vessels powered by other types of sails. An additional 5-10% can be saved by using other technology. In Australia, for example, there is a solar-powered vessel in commercial traffic. Development work related to solar technology is moving ahead rapidly all over the world.

"With our vision of a new environmentally friendly vessel, we want to encourage all 'Vikings' to think in new ways. Using all the brain power that exists in our company, we can do something that is good for all those affected − including customers, employees and the environment. And oil will not become cheap again," Tony Öhman says.

http://www.vikingline.fi/about/press_releases/

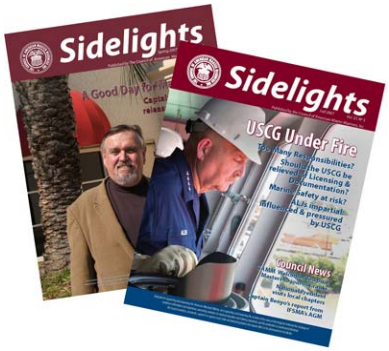
COSCO ships to sail solar. Australian energy firm ***Solar Sailor*** has signed an agreement with China's biggest shipping firm **COSCO** to fit solar-powered sails on two of its ships in 2010. **COSCO Bulk Carrier** will fit the aluminum solar-powered sails, measuring 30 metres long and covered with photovoltaic panels, to a tanker and a bulker. **The sails can harness the wind to cut fuel costs by 20-40%** when the vessel is travelling at 18 knots, and use the sun to meet 5% of a ship's energy needs, according to Solar Sailor.

Once fitted, the sails can pay for themselves in fuel savings within four years, said Dr Robert Dane, chief executive of Solar Sailor. Dane said there were further hopes that the technology could be improved by developing systems to raise and lower sails with fewer moving parts and store energy more efficiently.

The sails require no additional training to operate, and use a computer which is linked to a ship's existing navigation system, while sensors automatically angle the sails to pick up the wind.
The development of the sails has been supported by the New South Wales government's Australian Technology Showcase programme. "This is a breakthrough opportunity for *Solar Sailor* to play a leading role in the future of international shipping design during a period when rising fuel costs and environmental concerns have taken centre stage," Ian Macdonald, Minister for New South Wales Primary Industry. "This is a case of back to the future - back to the days of sailing ships but to the future in terms of high technology solar and wind sails operated by computer rather than sailcloth and rigging manned by crew," he said.
http://www.tankerworld.com/news/i73972/COSCO_ships_to_sail_solar 11th November 2008

USCG seeks rule change on passenger weights: In a move that will be instantly understandable to anyone who has ever been on line at a dinner boat buffet, the U.S. Coast Guard proposes to amend its regulations governing the stability of passenger vessels and the maximum number of passengers that may safely be permitted on board a vessel. This could mean a significant reduction is the passenger capacity of some vessels. The average American weighs significantly more than the assumed average weight per person utilized in current regulations, and the maximum number of persons permitted on a vessel is determined by several factors, including an assumed average weight for each passenger. Among other things, the Coast Guard is proposing using an average passenger weight of 185 pounds rather than the current 160 pounds. What's more, it wants to up the average weight used whenever new statistics indicate such a change is needed
Besides proposing that intact stability and subdivision and damage stability requirements utilize an updated assumed average weight per person, the Coast Guard proposes adding more specific requirements for a vessel owner or operator to show that the vessel meets intact stability and subdivision and damage stability standards, including provisions accounting for possible changes in vessel and weight per person. To help ensure that vessels maintain the intended safety levels after initial certification, USCG would clarify the requirement that stability information be checked at each annual inspection to confirm that it is still valid for the loading and service intended. USCG also proposes requiring stability verification--including calculations--at least every ten years. August 20, 2008 http://www.marinelog.com/

In a letter received from the Vancouver Mission to Seafarers: "I was reminded the other day of our work and presence in the lives of the seafarers. A sailor wearing his overalls walked into the Flying Angel Club and began setting up his laptop. As he neared the final hook-up of the webcam and 'Skype' in preparation of speaking with his wife, he stood up, stepped back and unzipped his overalls and emerged wearing pressed slacks and shirt. He combed his hair, sat down and proceeded to hit the 'send' button. A moment later, appearing on the screen was his wife similarly groomed and preened. It was a date of sorts and the Mission had provided the space and forum for their sharing. It is what we do best, the joint ministries of invitation and hospitality".



"Sidelights" is the quarterly national publication of the "Council of American Master Mariners Inc". It is available for all to read on the CAMM website www.mastermariner.org. You will find the link to **Sidelights** on the Home Page.

With reference to the FTB August 2008 Edition, Captain Doug Subcleff, Secretary of the Seattle PNW Chapter of CAMM says, "*We are also following the story about Capt Laptalo of the "Coral Sea" as well as that of Captain Jasprit Chawla of the "Hebei Spirit" who is still being detained in South Korea. We definitely need the IMO to foster some international legislation to stop this criminalisation of ship's masters. Let's hope for better news about those two ship's Captains in particular*".

Weird water stories (case of the rubber ducks). Like many a good story, this one began a dark and stormy night. In January 1992, a container ship en route from Hong Kong to the USA ran into trouble in mid-Pacific. While the ship was rolling violently several containers fell overboard. At least one broke open spilling its curious cargo of 29,000 plastic toys. Sixteen years after they first leapt overboard into the Pacific Ocean, a flotilla of small plastic ducks (along with some beavers and turtles) is heading for Britain's beaches. This has been no idle pleasure cruise. The toys have been working during their trip. By monitoring where the creatures wash up on shore, scientists have been able to study ocean currents in a way that's not been possible before.

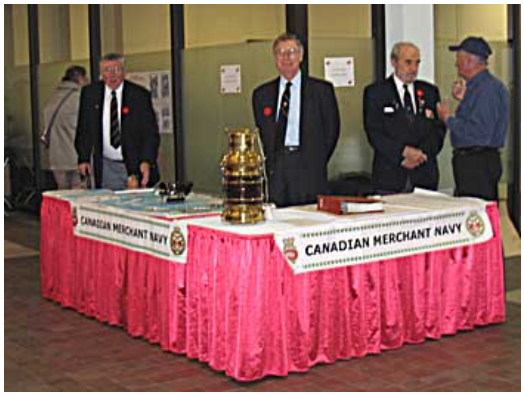
As well as helping experts try to conserve fish stocks and to better understand the effects of global warming, the ducks have even helped to investigate a suspected murder or two along the way. Curtis Ebbesmeyer is a scientist who has been tracking the ducks. Their movement has been inputted by Ebbesmeyer into a computer model called OSCUR (Ocean Surface Current Simulator). Developed by James Ingraham,

OSCUR uses air pressure measurements as a means of calculating the direction and speed of wind across the oceans - and consequent surface currents.
After some ducks first washed up in 1993 near Sitka, Alaska - a full ten months after their great escape, - the scientists used OSCUR to correctly predict that the remainder would follow the Sub-polar and 6,800 mile-long Subtropical Gyres of the North Pacific Ocean. The Gyre currents did indeed induce a mass westward flocking of tiny plastic water fowl to Japan. From there, they promptly doubled-back to Alaska, thereby completing an approximately oval circuit (one that roughly marks the extent of the filthy Pacific Garbage Patch*. Upon their return to Alaska (by now it was the end of the 1990s), many of the ducks haplessly drifted northwards, decelerating into the Bering Strait to become trapped in slow-moving pack ice. Ebbesmeyer forecast the toys patiently sitting on their frozen tails for five or six long years before next reaching the North Atlantic, where warmer waters would finally thaw the ice and bring liberation; further adventures might then reasonably be expected to take place in Canada, Greenland and New England - ending with the Gulf Stream ushering a warm north-westerly paddle towards the British Isles. All of this has now come to pass, exactly as Ebbesmeyer said. Expect the ducks to turn up on British beaches any day now – by which point, the hardly little critters will have travelled 17,000 miles.
Oceanographers generally use more hi-tech toys to monitor ocean currents such as buoys fitted with satellite tracking devices. But these are expensive and that means only a few hundred can be deployed in one place at a time. "It is more accurate to use satellite buoys," agrees Ebbesmeyer, "but you can also get useful results from very large numbers of inaccurate drifters." Of those there is no shortage. As well as tracking the ducks and their friends, Ebbesmeyer and Ingraham have followed the journeys of 100,000 toy cars and balloons, 34,000 ice hockey gloves and 5 million pieces of Lego. They have also collected information about 33,000 Nike shoes that fell into the ocean near the coast of California in 2002. In 1990 80,000 shoes were lost further out in the Pacific. Within two years they were washing up as far away as Hawaii. The shoes were still wearable but it was almost impossible to find a pair that matched.
http://waterworlds.wordpress.com/2008/04/16/28-weird-water-stories-case-of-the-rubber-ducks/
* http://science.howstuffworks.com/great-pacific-garbage-patch.htm

National Capital Merchant Navy Veterans Day of Remembrance -- September 3rd 2008

The National Capital Merchant Navy Day of Remembrance was held in Ottawa at the National War Memorial at 1100 hours on 3 September 2008. There was a good crowd and the weather was very warm and clear. The Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs, laid a wreath on behalf of the Government of Canada. Captain Jeff McCartney from the Capital Division of the Company laid the Company wreath. Messrs. Leslie White and Eugene McDonald read the Acts of Remembrance and laid wreaths on behalf of their respective associations the League of Merchant Mariner Veterans of Canada and the Canadian Merchant Navy Veterans Association. Mr. Stephane Ouellette [ouellette.com@sympatico.ca], who is the Project Director of The Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project, was the Master of Ceremonies.
Following the ceremony a reception for veterans and their guests was held in the Government Conference Centre.

Veterans' Appreciation Day – Nov. 6th 2008 This day is celebrated each year during Veterans' Week in the National Capital. The focus of this event takes place at Billings Bridge Plaza Shopping Centre in Ottawa where various military and veterans groups set up public displays. Usually, there is an entertainment program; however, this year the program was cancelled because of unexpected commitments related to the war in Afghanistan. A shorter program consisted of a Pipe Band, a procession to the mall's Centre Court, the reading of the Act of Remembrance, the Last Post, two minutes of silence, the Lament, the Reveille, the reading of "In Flanders Fields" and the singing of "O Canada."
Every year the Capital Division sponsors a Merchant Navy display. The Capital Division encourages its members to visit our display and show support for our veterans.



Dave Jenkins, Brian Thorn, Hal Roberts & Michael Hubbard

Thanks to all our Members & Guest who helped make this year's Veterans' Appreciation Day a memorable event.

Type approval for new water ballast treatment system. Oslo: DNV has issued its very first type approval certificate for a treatment system, which will reduce the spread of organisms through ballast water. The system has been developed by the Swedish company Alfa Laval.

Based on data from the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the rate of new unwanted fish, shells and micro-organisms introduced into new areas is continuing to: "increase at an alarming rate, in many cases exponentially, and new areas are being invaded all the time." The IMO has identified the introduction of new species via ballast water as: "one of the four greatest threats to the world's oceans."

Together with Alfa Laval and the Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA), DNV has overviewed the intensive tests to ensure that the product is ready for installation on board ships. The system is one of the very first systems worldwide to meet the thorough requirements and obtain approval.

The IMO has adopted a new Ballast Water Convention that is expected to come into force in the next few years after the required number of ratifiers has been achieved. The effect of the convention and thus the IMO's ambitions cannot be achieved without available technology. As soon as the convention has been ratified, systems to prevent the spread of organisms through ballast water will be mandatory. In a transition period different systems for exchanging the ballast water will be accepted, while ballast treatment systems will be required from 2012 - 2016, dependent of ship size and age.

"Right now, global trade is increasing by more than ever before and more ballast water is being transported across all oceans. At the same time, we have never had better information on the consequences of introducing new organisms to new areas. All those involved have to take responsibility for reducing these problems. By approving this new system, another step has been taken to solve a major environmental problem," says Kåre Klokk, head of section at DNV Maritime.

The type approval certificate has been issued on behalf of the Norwegian Maritime Administration and confirms compliance with the Marine Environment Protection Committee Circulars MEPC.125 (53) and MEPC.126 (53).

Author: Per Wiggo Richardsen July 15th 2008

E-Mail: Date: Thu, 07 Aug 2008. Following is my sea phase report as requested. Once again, thank you very much for the scholarship I was awarded last week. This financial support will definitely help with my 4th year tuition. Sincerely, **Patrick Vipond**.

BCIT Marine Engineering Cadetship with Teekay Shipping. During my first year at BCIT, and with very little shipping industry knowledge, I was interviewed for a Cadet position with Teekay Shipping. A small group had applied and after being hired, along with one of my classmates, we completed our first academic year and then waited to hear about our first sea phase. I was assigned to meet the *Hamane Spirit* in Hong Kong. The *Hamane Spirit* is an Aframax class, diesel powered, 105,000 DWT crude oil tanker. We took the shore launch with the ship's agent through Hong Kong harbour late at night to meet the ship. Bobbing past everything from container ships to squid fishing boats, we arrived as the ship was bunkering lube oils and fuel. Once onboard we met the Chief Engineer who gave us a tour of the engine room. He laughed at the looks on our faces as we stared, wide eyed, at all the huge machinery. The next morning the 2nd Officer gave us a safety tour around the ship. We then went down to the engine room to start work. The machinist was about to rebuild generator cylinder heads with the 2nd Engineer, so we were able to help out doing basic work. The ship was sailing for Hawaii to discharge its cargo. During this voyage we had our first fire and lifeboat drills. It was interesting to see the whole drill process on board for the first time. When we arrived in Hawaii there was a line up of vessels to discharge which allowed us to go ashore a few times during the four days we spent waiting. We were also involved in scavenge space cleanings of the main engine. Cleaning this oily carbon residue out of the air intake pipes of the engine was not much fun but, when you look back on it, it was a necessary part of any engineering cadet's sea phase. When it was our vessel's turn to discharge, we were able to watch how the ship was manoeuvred into position to hook up to the pipeline. The Chief Engineer explained the tanker operations and how it affected the engine room. This being our first discharge, we saw how the boiler was run to provide steam for the cargo pump turbines as well as how the exhaust is used to provide IG to the cargo tanks. After Hawaii, the ship sailed across the Pacific to Los Angeles and San Francisco, then back across the Pacific to ports in Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Australia and Malaysia. During this time we slowly learned the intricacies of how an engine room works and about ship life. Our trip ended after five months in Yosu, South Korea.

After our second year at BCIT we were assigned to join the *Matterhorn Spirit* at the Fos tanker terminal in France. The *Matterhorn* is also an Aframax class, diesel driven, crude oil tanker but was slightly larger at 115,000 DWT plus it had A1 ice class certification. The ability to travel in areas that required ice certification meant that during the winter months while we were aboard it transported crude mostly out of the Primorsk, Russia tanker terminal. These cargos were taken to ports in Spain, Denmark, and Holland. This ship was also much newer than the *Hamane*, as the *Matterhorn* was a 2005 build. Because of the newer design, it had an electronically controlled camshaftless main engine and more automation in the control of the generators and auxiliary boilers. My classmate and I were split up and assigned to help the 3rd and 2nd Engineers for a month, and then switch back and forth. My first month was spent with the 2nd Engineer learning more about running and maintaining the generators. Also, on this trip we took a more active role in the running of cargo operations during watches in the engine room. After the month was up I switched over to working with the 3rd and helped him with the air compressors, fuel oil and lube oil purifiers, fresh water generators and regular boiler maintenance. There was also cargo watches to do during this stint too.

Both of these cadet phases with Teekay Shipping were excellent learning experiences. Both sets of ships crews were very helpful in showing us how everything worked. I look forward to going back to Teekay after gaining my 4th class motor license to complete the final sea phase of the BCIT Marine Engineering program. **Patrick Vipond**

Patrick Vipond was the winner of a Scholarship from the Nautical Professional Education Society of Canada.

Improved shipbuilding standards gets IMO approval: The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has approved improved shipbuilding standards aimed at passenger and cargoships. According to The Economic Times, the new construction rules are designed to increase a vessel's chance of surviving an accident.

During a meeting headed by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (Amsa), it was decided that the new rulings would come into place, pending final approval in November, and that they would be applicable to vessels with keel laying after January 2009. Based on the new standards, all ships will have to be built with a double bottom unless it can be demonstrated that a comparable level of safety can be achieved.

Another new rule introduced pertains to lubricating-oil circulation tanks, which must now be kept no less than 500mm from the keel line of the vessel to prevent the oil escaping in case of a grounding leading to engine failure. There will also be guidelines for the crew on how to ensure a vessel survives an accident.

The incident which first sparked talk on introducing new standards was the sinking of the 2,398GT 'Explorer' in November 2007, which hit an iceberg in the Antarctic. http://www.baird-online.com/ August 22nd 2008

The Royal National Lifeboat Institute operates more then 230 lifeboat stations around the coast of Britain. But did you know there are four stations on the River Thames? Did you know there is one on Loch Ness in Scotland? A search and rescue service for the River Thames was announced on January 22nd 2001. The RNLI was asked by the Government to provide lifeboat cover, the first time specifically covering a river rather than estuarial waters. This came as a result of the findings of the Thames Safety Inquiries into the collision between the pleasure cruiser *The Marchioness* and the dredger *Bowbelle*, which resulted in the loss of 51 lives in 1989. In 2002 a lifeboat station was established at **Tower Pier**. A 40-knot E class lifeboat was placed on service when the new search and rescue arrangements for the tidal reaches of the River Thames came into operation. The station is manned continuously to provide an immediate response and is coordinated by the MCA from a PLA operations room at the Thames Barrier. Two of the three-person crew at each station are full time and the third crew member is a volunteer. This enables the boats to arrive at any incident within 15 minutes. New facilities on the Thames at Waterloo Pier were completed in 2006.

Loch Ness is now home to the first RNLI lifeboat on the inshore waters of Scotland. HM Coastguard had been co-ordinating search and rescue activities on Loch Ness since the early nineteen-eighties. Two auxiliary Coastguard units were stationed at Fort Augustus and Drumnadrochit for communication with a Co-ordination Centre in Aberdeen. In the early days, the Coastguard requested the use of private boats for rescue activities, as there was no dedicated provider on the Loch. Eventually a rescue boat for Loch Ness was based at Temple Pier, Drumnadrochit. The first boat was a 5.5 metre RIB powered by a single 74 HP outboard engine. This craft was capable of 30 knots and was equipped with VHF communications and rescue equipment. Coastguard volunteers were specifically trained in rescue boat activities and in 1996 a boathouse and base was established at Temple Pier. In 2006 the Coastguard recognized the fact that the RNLI, who were the main providers of lifeboats in the UK, now had a policy for operating on non tidal waters. An agreement was concluded in 2007 for the transfer of rescue boat activities to the RNLI, which has resulted in the provision of an Atlantic 75 lifeboat taking up duties with many of the existing coastguard crew from 2 April 2008. http://www.rnli.org.uk/

Debris-dumping by Great Lakes ships churns debate: TRAVERSE CITY, MICH. - Day after day, ships depart Great Lakes ports after picking up or delivering loads of iron ore, coal and other cargoes. Reaching open water, crews wash the decks with high-powered hoses. It's called "cargo sweeping," because residues that spill onto decks during loading and unloading are swept overboard. The U.S. Coast Guard estimates that 1 million pounds of such debris is washed into the Lakes every year.

The long-standing practice would appear to violate clean-water laws and regulations enacted in recent decades. But federal officials have given cargo residues a series of exemptions since the early 1990s. Now, the Coast Guard is deciding whether to continue them. The agency was scheduled to issue a new rule by the end of September 2008. Several options are on the table, including a ban on cargo sweeping. But regulators also could let it continue, while requiring stepped-up record keeping so they can learn more about effects on the aquatic environment.

Canada's federal government altered its shipping law in 2007 to allow cargo sweeping and is considering amending a fishing law to do likewise, said Mark Mattson, a Toronto-based investigator for the Waterkeeper Alliance. His coalition is among conservation groups that want cargo sweeping halted, saying it's just another form of littering.

But shippers say requiring them to collect the residue, move it onshore for treatment and flush it into municipal wastewater systems would impose ruinous costs. A Coast Guard report last month estimated the price tag at $51.8 million up front, plus $35.7 million a year -- more than the annual profit for the entire industry.

"What some are proposing could mean the end of Great Lakes shipping and the movement of cargo by more expensive and less eco-friendly modes of transportation," said Glen Nekvasil, spokesman for the Lake Carriers Association, which represents U.S.-flagged freighters on the Great Lakes.

The Coast Guard report said cargo sweeping apparently does little if any ecological damage. Jim Weakley, President of the lake carriers group, likened it to "hosing down your driveway." But environmental advocates say the jury is still out.

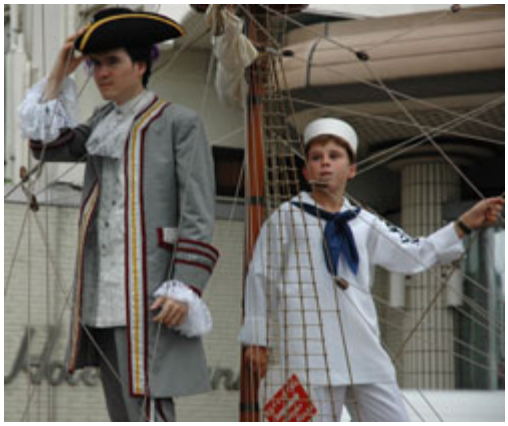
More study is needed of potential long-term effects -- particularly on bottomlands that provide habitat for fish and macroinvertebrates at the base of the food web, said Joel Brammeier, vice president for policy with the Alliance for the Great Lakes in Chicago.
Cargo sweeping has been standard operating procedure since the earliest shipments of iron ore from Michigan's Upper Peninsula during the 1850s mineral rush, says the Great Lakes Maritime Task Force, an industry coalition. Bulk dry cargo hauled across the lakes consists primarily of iron ore, coal and limestone, but also includes smaller quantities of cement, salt, sand and grain. In most ports, the freight is moved on conveyor belts between a ship's cargo hold and onshore storage facilities. As that happens, bits and pieces spill onto the deck or tunnels beneath. Besides contaminating other types of cargo, the residues and dust create unsanitary conditions and slippery surfaces, Weakley said. So the material is flushed overboard from the deck or pumped from tunnels in the lower hull. Brammeier bristles at the suggestion that it would destroy shippers. Many industries have mended their ways to protect the waterways on which the regional economy depends, he said. "The future of the Great Lakes depends on protecting and restoring them, not on century-old assumptions that we can stress the system but never reach its breaking point," he said.
By JOHN FLESHER, Associated Press (Star Tribune. Minneapolis-St Paul, Minnesota) September 13, 2008

Ports hope for green push from hybrid tugboat http://nbbusinessjournal.canadaeast.com/journal/article/490175
Published Monday November 24th, 2008
LOS ANGELES - For all of its 21st-century advancements, the shipping industry drags a lot of old technology around.
Giant vessels are so sophisticated that they require only a handful of crew members. But the ships still burn a thick, dirty sludge called bunker fuel while at sea, and slurp diesel to provide electrical power while in port.
Inefficient yard tractors and cranes guzzle fuel and spew exhaust as they stack containers. And tugboats, pound for pound the most powerful vessels on the water, waste most of that muscle idling or cruising. Now, as seaports try to raise their environmental standards, some companies are finding business opportunities.
Foss Maritime Co. of Seattle, for instance, has developed the Prius of tugboats, which consumes less diesel and generates less pollution by using batteries for all the vessel's low-power needs. Foss calls it the world's first hybrid tug and expects to deliver it to the Port of Los Angeles early next year (see FTB August 2007).
The idea had been kicking around Foss' offices since 2006, based on the knowledge that tugboats tend to run on full power only 7 percent of the time and waste their 5,000-plus horsepower by idling 50 percent of the time. Knowing that railroads were moving to electric propulsion, Foss initially looked at the switching locomotives, which are used to move trains inside rail yards. There was one big problem. "The batteries were too heavy. They would have sunk the boat," Foss Chief Engineer Rick McKenna said.
The solution came from the oil industry. Canada's **Aspin Kemp & Associates** had expertise with "ultra-deep-water" drilling rigs that are held in position with "dynamic positioning thrusters" instead of anchors. The thrusters have to power up quickly to keep the rig in place.
The engineering company designed a way to run the diesel engine and the electrical motor generator through the same drive shaft, McKenna said, enabling Foss to switch to smaller batteries and smaller diesel engines. "It drives like a normal tug," McKenna said. The system's design would enable most existing tugboats to switch to the diesel-battery setup through a retrofit. Foss is hoping that will be a key selling point.
A Prince Edward Island company, **Xero Point Green Technology**, is developing the power system for the tugboat, dubbed the Eco-Tug, in partnership with Aspin Kemp.
The hybrid technology used to develop Foss' Hybrid Tug is environmentally responsible—without sacrificing horse power or manoeuvrability. With its efficient combination of batteries, generators and main engines, the Hybrid Tug is both powerful and green.
Reducing Emissions. Improving Air Quality.
The Hybrid Tug is expected to significantly reduce emissions compared with the operating duty cycle of the conventional Dolphin tugs in San Pedro Harbour, including a reduction in nitrogen oxide, particulate emissions, sulphur dioxide and carbon emissions. This exceeds the EPA's Tier 2 emissions requirement for marine engines. This tug design was awarded the EPA's Clean Air Excellence Award for Clean Air Technology in 2008. Along with less pollution, the hybrid offers improved fuel economy and lower maintenance costs. It is also quieter than its Dolphin sister tugs, when operating on batteries that can be recharged using shore power.
Hybrid Conversions
The flexible hybrid technology can be used to convert existing tugs of all types to hybrid vessels with lower emissions, improved fuel economy and lower maintenance costs. The Foss Engineering team can convert a standard tug to a hybrid tug, accommodating many tug designs and propulsion systems.

Briton is Japanese tradition (From a report by Mio Yamada, Japan Times. http://www.japantimes.co.jp/)
On Aug. 10, on the eastern shore of Izu Peninsula, the usually laid-back city of Ito was showing signs of hustle and bustle. Near the beach, street stalls served traditional snacks and drinks while other vendors delighted children with goldfish, candy and brightly coloured masks. Further into town, locals and visitors gathered and waited along the streets in anticipation of the city's pride and joy — the parade celebrating its annual three-day summer festival.
When the parade began to move, a group of men and women in pristine sailor outfits pulled out the main attraction: a Lilliputian replica of a 17th-century sailing ship with a slightly bemused Englishman in period costume at its helm. Ito City,

while known for its hot springs and beach resorts, holds its biggest festival in honour of a foreigner, British navigator William Adams, one of the first Western influences on Japan. Adams arrived here in 1600 as the pilot of a Dutch expedition ship that had been forced to abandon its charted course for South America. Believed to be the first Briton to have sailed to and settled in Japan, Adams is now known as *Miura Anjin* (pilot of Miura), *Anjinsama* (the pilot) or the more romantic "*Blue-eyed Samurai*." If none of those rings a bell, he is perhaps better remembered in the West as the inspiration for John Blackthorne, the protagonist of James Clavell's best-selling novel "Shogun", played by Richard Chamberlain in the popular 1980s TV adaptation of the novel.

Anjinsai (Anjin Festival) began in 1947. It celebrates a former Royal Navy navigator who impressed Lord Tokugawa Ieyasu so much that he was freed from Osaka Castle, where he had been imprisoned after resident Portuguese Jesuit priests claimed he was a pirate. When Ieyasu became Shogun in 1603, he made Adams a foreign affairs adviser and instructed him to teach government officials everything from geography, astronomy and mathematics to weaponry and shipbuilding. In return, he was given a fiefdom, bestowed with the authority of a samurai and re-named Miura Anjin.



Known for overseeing the construction of the first Western-style ship in Japan, Adams helped facilitate one of the earliest exchanges of Western culture and knowledge.

This year, the leading actor of Anjinsai was played by Frank Thomas, research officer for the Defence Section of the British Embassy in Japan. Thomas' role in this production, however, was a little less glamorous than Chamberlain's. First, he attended a formal ceremony in the convention centre, with speeches from Ito Mayor Hiromi Tsukuda, Ambassador Designate Philip de Heer of Holland, Third Secretary of Mexico Jose Louis Delgado, U.S. Commander Capt. Daniel L. Week and British Defence Attaché Capt. Gareth Derrick. Then, after a quick costume change, Thomas, accompanied by Capt. Gareth Derrick's 12-year-old son, Edward, stepped aboard the miniature wooden ship for 90 minutes of waving. The ship, which is rolled out every year, is a replica of the *San Bueno Ventura*, and its background explains the multicultural crew of representatives at the festival. Built by Adams in Ito, the *Ventura* was lent to a Spanish crew that had been shipwrecked in Japan on its way to Mexico in 1609. The loan of the *Ventura*, which stopped over in California on its way to Acapulco, allowed Ieyasu to demand favourable treatment of the Japanese merchant ships that later visited Mexico and was thus a significant step toward international relations.

Vancouver Island University's (VIU) nautical training expands with new marine institute. The Western Maritime Institute (WMI), an extension of Maritime Education Associates (MEA), has joined with Vancouver Island University (VIU) to offer training in the new six acre facility in Cassidy, near Chemainus on Vancouver Island. The institute will be one of only two places in Western Canada to offer courses in Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boat training (formerly Marine Emergency Duties B-1) and Advanced Fire Fighting (formerly B-2). "The demand for training is huge; every towboat, fishing vessel and ferry needs trained people on board," said Capt. Bob Kitching, founder of MEA and President of WMI. "Training institutions cannot produce enough people to meet industry needs" (see FTB May 2008, Page 9).

VIU and MEA have been offering nautical training in partnership since 2005, but the new institute will expand the scope of training, with a pool capable of holding a lifeboat and a mock-up of a ship's superstructure for firefighting. VIU was formerly known as Malaspina University-College.

The WMI was officially opened on September 11th by Captain William Nash, Director General, Marine Safety, Transport Canada in a ceremony that began with a welcome to the Chemainus First Nations Territorial Land by members of the Snuneymuxw First Nations.

VIU President, Dr. Ralph Nilson said the new institute is a significant expansion for VIU. "This is a new chapter in marine education on the Island, and we're fortunate to have Bob and his many years of experience behind WMI," he said. "We know that an average of 75 per cent of this industry is over 55 years of age. It's a great time for young people to get started on a meaningful career path."

"WMI is a win, win and win partnership. The mariner gains with the availability of high quality training on Vancouver Island and throughout Western Canada, VIU is able to increase its service and reach more students, and the partnership injects maritime education into the academic stream," said Kitching, who expects to nearly double the number of student training hours this year. Courses can be viewed through the VIU Centre for Continuing Studies website at www.viu.ca/ccs/courses/marine or at MEA's site at www.maritimeed.com.

Christmas is coming. Perhaps you have friends around the globe and you wonder what their time of day is when you want to phone them. You might wonder what the time is where Santa Claus lives. Well, the **North Pole has, for the longest time, used Greenwich Meantime as its official time zone.** However, this all changed on January 1, 2000. On this day, Santa Claus officially changed his time zone to UTC/GMT +12 hours. In Santa's official press release to timegenie.com, he stated numerous reasons for this change in time. Santa Claus, along with Mrs. Claus, the elves and of course the reindeer, all decided that increasing pressures and competition from overnight delivery companies were hampering their ability to be the first to deliver gifts throughout the world on Christmas Day. As a result, after much debate and discussion, Santa Claus and crew decided that in order to stay ahead and to be first, it would be best to be 12 hours ahead of Greenwich Meantime. This was done to ensure Santa and his trusty reindeer would be in sync with the countries that were located in the first time zone west of the International Date Line.

Additionally, in another shocking and stunning move, Santa Claus took drastic action and implemented what he describes as "Christmas Delivery Time". This is similar to daylight saving time in that the North Pole will now jump one hour ahead from December 1 to January 1 of each year.

Chris Kringle, Santa's official spokesperson told timegenie.com in a recent telephone interview, that Christmas Delivery Time was implemented as some countries in the southern hemisphere, such as New Zealand, observe daylight saving time at the time of Christmas delivery. This in turn means that New Zealand is UTC/GMT +13 on Christmas Day. By implementing Christmas Delivery Time, the North Pole will also be UTC/GMT +13 on Christmas Day. This move, according to Chris Kringle, was strategically done in order to have a competitive advantage over the express delivery companies. The North Pole has two time zones: Santa Claus Standard Time (SCST) is from January 2 to November 30 of each year and is UTC/GMT +12 hours. Santa Claus Delivery Time (SCDT) is from December 1 to January 1 of each year and is UTC/GMT +13 hours. The times of places around the world, available in many languages, can be found at http://www.timegenie.com/

It is incredible just how much maritime based news appears everyday. Some of this makes headlines in the regular news services too. I am thinking in particular of the piracy situation. Just this week Maersk Line issued a directive to its vessels in which they say, "*In order to continuously ensure the safety of our crews as well as vessels and cargo, A.P. Moller - Maersk has updated the policy for vessels entering the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of East Africa. Vessels without adequate speed or freeboard will for the time being avoid the Gulf of Aden and seek alternative routing south of the Cape of Good Hope and east of Madagascar. However, based upon availability of escorts these vessels may join naval convoy transit in the Gulf of Aden*". Also the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has again used the opening of an IMO committee meeting for a reaffirmation of the principles of UNCLOS part VII, which establishes the freedom of navigation on the high seas. It is this freedom that is threatened in an extraordinary way by the state of lawlessness in the Gulf of Aden and which threatens all innocent ships regardless of their flag. Let us hope this situation can soon be resolved.

I'd like to hear from you. Please send any submissions for the next edition of the **FTB** by **February 10th 2009**. They can be sent to me at **whitknit@shaw.ca** or via regular mail to **13375 14A Avenue, Surrey, B.C. V4A 7P9.** Also, don't forget to pass along any changes to your address to your Division secretary so that we can direct future newsletters to you. Each time the notice about the latest FTB is sent out there are always some e-mails returned because the address has changed.

My very best wishes to all of you & your families for Christmas and the New Year. Sincerely, **David Whitaker**