



# The Foghorn

Newsletter of the Maritimes Division of the  
Company of Master Mariners of Canada  
www.mastermariners.ca



June 2021

## From the Master Captain Marshall Dunbar

Good Day Everyone,

One thing that we all want is to go home safely every night or after each hitch on the ship. We accomplish this by a variety of methods and some are obvious and others not so.

We take for granted the ones that are always in place (design of equipment, protective equipment, etc.). Then there are the ones that we consciously do; look before we cross the street, shoulder check before changing lanes, three points of contact on a ladder, keep fingers out of rotating machinery, etc.). Most of the above is from experience or “common sense”, even when we seem to believe that this is now lacking as there are so many rules and regulations in place for things we “just know”.

Yet, we see reports where something has happened and it really should not have occurred and then investigations show that the root cause was human error. There are reasons why we make mistakes: fatigue, lack of understanding of the task, new to the job or industry, complacency or just not following operating procedures.

One thing that does help prevent accidents is training. We often want to pass on or defer a training course as it takes time away from time off or maybe during the workday. Training does work and that is why we do it and need to continue to do it on a regular basis. It teaches you what needs to happen for certain jobs or emergencies, it reinforces your previous training, it keeps you updated on new methods and it does teach teamwork.

FFS often utilises Survival Systems Training Limited (SSTL) for training requirements. I was contacted by John Swain (President and Owner) of SSTL to see if it was possible to visit the Asterix. They are looking to build their own ship mock up as to add this part of fire fighting training into “in house” instead of using other facilities. I figured it would be a good opportunity to assist them and show off the ship. John was joined by his Operations Manager Dan Latremouille as I showed them around the Asterix and they took measurements of certain aspects (doors, escape hatches, etc.) which will allow them to accurately replicate these features

in their ship mock up. They were very appreciative of the opportunity, commented numerous times on the ships capability, its cleanliness and the fact that we often use their training facilities.

I hope how we assisted SSTL proves to be beneficial in their training of ships staff and maybe someday someone from FFS will use their ship mock up as part of their fire fighting training.

Remember to keep training (shore staff included) and that it will benefit yourself, your co-workers and your families. As I mentioned at the start, we all want to go home safely and training will help us all accomplish that important part of our day.



Marshall Dunbar, Dan Latremouille and  
John Swain

If you are wondering why I have no hard hat on, we were just leaving the vessel and mine stays onboard while they took theirs off with them!

Thanks

Marshall



## The Five Rs: Embrace remote technology, depend on people

My Two Cents By Captain Jack Gallagher

The Newsclips on Monday had an article on embracing new technology and allowing more



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things to be done remotely. Being a consultant who works globally, with many projects fully completed from the comfort of my home office, I couldn't agree more but I did take issue with the following paragraph in the article and felt it required a response.

**“Probably its biggest potential contribution is to safety, enabling managers to know in real time if the vessel diverts from its passage plan and is at risk from grounding or collision and advising the crew to take action.”**

A remote layer of management or operational oversight is not a solution to shoddy navigational practices and frankly many shipowners are getting exactly what they deserve in this regard. Despite the laudable goals of the STCW all training and certification is not created equal. Shipowners who push the drive to the bottom for wages and standards are reaping what they sow. Sadly, they can insure the risks, and they feel that it is cheaper to buy the insurance than run a great operation.

There are still far too many casualties where seafarers are fatigued as required hours of rest are not respected.

Many flag and coastal states do not take a thorough approach to casualty investigations. This lack of thoroughness means that we do not understand the real underlying problem. If a collision occurs, did the officer of the watch properly understand their obligations under the COLREGS? If not, was it a training deficiency? If they did understand, why weren't they followed? Was there a culture on board of not posting lookouts if overtime was to be incurred? Was there commercial pressure to meet an ETA? Was there an inability to understand and interpret the information available? If we collectively do not take the time to determine where the systemic problems are, we are fools to apply a layer of shoreside oversight to try and correct it.

After the grounding of the Exxon Valdez there was a big boost in companies that were developing electronic charts. I heard several of them declare that “if our system was in use the accident would not have occurred because the officer of the watch would have received at least two separate warnings”. To the uninitiated this might have seemed like a great solution but it

begs the question as to what would prompt an inattentive watchkeeper to take the time to properly enter into the electronic chart system the requisite information to set up the alarms. Inattentive watchkeepers are just as likely to be inattentive with new technology. Expecting a machine to fix failings in human performance is never the right answer.

We are undoubtedly moving towards greater automation and autonomy in the marine sphere. Much of this can be very good and we can offload tasks that are dangerous, repetitive or boring. We must, however, continue to think critically and thoughtfully about how we move forward. Many would take the paragraph quoted from the article as a reasonable and practical solution to the problem of continued groundings and collisions but I would argue that this is a thoughtless solution dreamt up by a technology provider. This is exactly the reason that Master Mariners of Canada needs to be part of the discussions related to MASS and hope that voices of experience and reason can carry the day to ensure a considered and safe approach to the embracing of new technology.

The above thoughts are mine alone and not those of the Master Mariners of Canada.  
Jack Gallagher, Hammurabi Consulting



## **The Five Rs: Adding two more cents to Jack Gallagher's two.**

*By Captain George Iskandar, Capital Division*

First of all, Jack is right on target, and I offer the following essay in support.

My younger son served as a Navigator on the USS Hawes FFG-53, a missile frigate with helicopters.

During one of the “annual parent days,” I flew to Virginia and, together with all the other parents, boarded the frigate for a full day out at sea. Between the barbecue and tours, we visited with our sons or daughters at their workstations.

Since my son was a navigator, I was allowed on the bridge. The bridge was overloaded



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with electronic equipment and manned by what seemed like an endless array of men and officers.

During one of the breaks, my son asked me what I thought, probably expecting me to be in absolute awe.

My response with all due respect was, "I am surprised you guys get to your destination without collisions or allissions." Surprised, he asked, "what do you mean."

So I remarked "that somebody was taking bearings on the port side shouting the bearing to an officer who relayed it to a navigator. The other side of the bridge took other bearings, calling them to another officer, who passed the bearing to another navigator. The captain sitting in his chair was giving wheel orders to another officer who relayed it to the helmsman. Another officer was giving speed instructions and forwarded them to an assistant helmsman. (The twin-screw variable pitch propellers and the wheel were on the same panel.) Two other officers were supervising seamen attending to the Radars. While busy as a beehive, there was no coordination of the orders, and nobody was on the lookout."

After gaining his thought, my son replied, "Actually, Dad, unfortunately, the Navy has had several incidents, most of which were determined to be human error."

Two recent collisions were,

The collision between USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62) and Motor Vessel ACX CRYSTAL.

and

The collision between USS JOHN S MCCAIN (DDG 56) and Motor Vessel ALNIC MC

### **The US Navy summary of findings on the USS FITZGERALD was as follows:**

"The Navy determined that numerous failures occurred on the part of leadership and watchstanders as follows:

- Failure to plan for safety.
- Failure to adhere to sound

navigation practice.

- Failure to execute basic watch standing practices.
- Failure to properly use available navigation tools.
- Failure to respond deliberately and effectively when in extremis."

### **Summary of Findings on the JOHN S MCCAIN by the US Navy**

- The Navy determined the following causes of the collision:
- Loss of situational awareness in response to mistakes in the operation of the JOHN S MCCAIN's steering and propulsion system while in the presence of a high density of maritime traffic.
- Failure to follow the International Nautical Rules of the Road, a system of rules to govern the maneuvering of vessels when the risk of collision is present.
- Watchstanders operating the JOHN S MCCAIN's steering and propulsion systems had insufficient proficiency and knowledge of the systems.

Several souls perished in these two incidents without reason.

So ladies and gentlemen, the moral of the story are that you can have all the world's most advanced and expensive electronics, and you can also overman your ships. Still, if one omits proper training, it is all for naught, and many lives will be lost once again.





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Capt. Jack Gallagher  
www.hammurabi.ca

As a marine consultant I have enjoyed a wide variety of assignments over the twenty-one years I have been running my company. This past year brought an interesting project that I had never envisioned.

I was asked to assist Transport Canada with a legal case involving a fatal collision between two fishing vessels. My original brief was to look at the application of the collision regulations in relation to the case and give my professional opinion as to which rules should have applied and whether the vessels had properly applied the rules.

After completion of my preliminary report my mandate was expanded to look at “the ordinary practice of seamen” and to discuss some technical matters related to the vessels, their visibility and where they should have seen one another at various times leading up to the collision.

Transport Canada and the federal Department of Justice charged one of the vessel masters both under the Canada Shipping Act and the Criminal Code. I was subpoenaed to attend court to provide expert opinion on these matters in relation to the criminal charges.

One of our divisional MM members, Stu McLea had been through this process before and offered me some great insight to the process. Firstly, the court must decide whether I am qualified to offer opinion to the court. During this qualification process, I was sworn in and on the stand while both prosecution and defence counsel asked me about my experience and qualifications. This can be a fairly smooth or a very difficult process depending on whether one side does not want the witness qualified.

For me, the process included going through my qualifications, projects I had worked on that were relevant and there was quite an emphasis on the Master Mariners of Canada, positions I held in the organization and our professional development program. Lawyers, judges, accountants, project managers, amongst many others are professions where continued proficiency is a norm of the business. Practitioners know that they must complete so many hours or credits per year and keep their

professional body apprised that they are keeping up to date. Some organization will perform audits to ensure that continuing education is current.

In this circumstance the court well understood when I stated that Master Mariners of Canada is a professional association with a mandate for awareness, education, and advocacy and that I have served on the national executive for ten years. They accepted easily that we have a professional development program, and I was using this as a means of maintaining currency in my profession.

Interestingly, once the court qualified me an expert my duty was then only to the court and not to either side. I was required to pre-read two relevant cases and sign a document to that effect as well as assure the judge that this requirement was well understood. This meant that my testimony had to be my best professional judgement regardless of who it helped or hurt and without any regard of who engaged me to be there.

I expect that soon we will see shipping companies in Canada and organizations like the Coast Guard see the benefits of our program and will mandate employees to not only join our organization but to maintain currency through our professional development program.



## Port of Halifax Annual Meeting

Captain's Update – Annual Meeting  
May 25, 2021

The Annual Meeting for the Halifax Port Authority was held virtually again this year. The Annual Report is now available on our website and I encourage you to please take a look.

It has been a remarkable year. Between the loss of wood pulp exports in January, rail blockades in February in Central Canada, and then the onset of COVID-19 in March which resulted in the loss of cruise in March and other setbacks, it was clear 2020 was going to be a battle.



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Fortunately, our team, which includes the full range of port partners, was able to pull together and fight the good fight. When COVID first hit, our priority was safety above all else, and after that, keeping goods moving through our international gateway. I am proud to say that here we are, 15 months later, and we have still not had a reported case of COVID-19 amongst the HPA workforce. We've processed over 188 containers of COVID-related cargo quickly through our gateway through our Fastlane Operators Initiative in partnership with the terminal operators and CN.

The Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market was temporarily closed starting in March, and we rolled out a strategy to reopen it in phases. We received feedback from the community that it would be nice to allow access to the cruise seawall since it wasn't being used for cruise ships, and that became a major piece of our effort to reinvigorate the Seaport District while following public health guidelines. By June, the cruise brow was open to the public for the first time in years, and we worked with our major tenants on the property to allow them to expand their patio space.

On the infrastructure side, it was a very productive year. PSA Halifax installed a new ship-to-shore crane, the largest in Eastern Canada. That was quickly followed by the completion of the South End Container Terminal extension which now has a continuous berth length of 800 metres with 16 metres depth.

The infrastructure was necessary to support the arrival of larger vessels to our international gateway, and on that front, we continue to set records. The first of the 14,000 TEU vessels arrived in March 2020, followed by the arrival of the 15,000's in September, and then on May 17, 2021, the Port of Halifax proudly welcomed the CMA CGM Marco Polo. At 16,022 TEU and 396 metres overall length, this is the largest containerized cargo vessel to ever call a Canadian port, and the first vessel call of this size on the East Coast of North America.

We have a reliable workforce here in Halifax and willing partners. We have a strong community sense here. Saltwater is in our veins. We know how to handle these big ships and turn them around efficiently and reliably.

Work continues on the rail solution that will get most of the port-related trucks out of the downtown. We are working with several groups including the Government of Canada, Province of Nova Scotia, Halifax Regional Municipality, CN and the terminal operators.

A formal agreement for a rail solution construction plan has been signed by the Government of Canada and the Halifax Port Authority under the National Trade Corridor Fund, and I would just like to say how much we recognize and appreciate the federal contribution toward this project which will help to improve environmental sustainability and optimize trade flows through the Port of Halifax. Construction could begin as early as this year on the Fairview Cove truck gate and marshalling yard. We are in the planning stages for a new Marine Container Examination Facility and associated access route to Fairview Cove Container Terminal.

Having the proper infrastructure and landside assets is important, but so is having the right people and connecting with the larger community in a way that is meaningful and collaborative.

The Port Community Liaison Committee was developed to foster meaningful communication and information sharing between the Port and members of the public, and to gather feedback from those affected by port operations and projects. Sara Colburne is serving as the independent chair of this committee and the group has had several meetings since its inception last year.

We are progressing our diversity, inclusion and engagement strategy that will help to ensure that all Nova Scotians are reflected in what we do and who we are. We are moving toward supplier diversity and building relationships that will get underrepresented and racialized groups into the supply chain.

It all points to sustainability. For us, sustainability is the balance of economics, community integration and the environment. As we move forward, we will be conducting business in a way that meets the needs of the present while contributing to the well-being of the future.



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If you haven't yet had the chance, please visit the Sustainability Planning section of our website and take the survey posted there. Your feedback is very important to us as we plan for the future.

During 2020, the total impact of the Port of Halifax on the Province of Nova Scotia was over \$3.6 billion in economic output with the direct portion being \$2.3 billion. This level of activity generated direct and spinoff positive impacts of \$1.8 billion in GDP, \$1.1 billion in labour income and over 18,775 jobs.

Looking ahead to 2021, I can tell you that we are seeing very strong containerized cargo throughput in the first four months. Positive factors include the continuation of ultra-class vessel calls at PSA Halifax, the new MSC service at PSA Halifax and new Hapag AL5 service at Ceres-Halifax. In June, vessels on the EC5 string calling at Ceres will be upsized from an average of 6,400 TEU to 8,500 TEU.

For our cruise industry, there is strong interest amongst the cruise lines in returning to Halifax. We are seeing plenty of early-stage berth requests for 2022 and beyond. The fundamentals of tourism remain strong; we remain a safe, welcoming destination with natural beauty and authentic experiences to offer.

We have found a sustainable operating model for the Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market that focuses on what people love – a vibrant weekend Farmers' Market. The move to Pavilion 22 has been very successful and we will build a dedicated open-air space for the summer months.

And finally, through 'The PIER' at the Seaport, we are bringing partners together in a living lab environment to create the conditions that allow us to collectively solve the big problems facing supply chains and Port Cities. Founding partners have been announced, and transformation of the building is well underway.

As President and CEO, I will continue to bring together all the different players who make up Port City Halifax to find the proper balance between a prosperous and collaborative today, and a sustainable tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Captain Allan Gray  
President and CEO  
Halifax Port Authority



**Mission to Seafarers**  
**Helen Glenn, Manager**

We are hopeful of hosting another **TAKE OUT BBQ** on June 24<sup>th</sup> with the usual team hopefully in place. Norman will be barbecuing and Susan coordinating in the kitchen with helpers. Details to come.

**International Day of the Seafarer is on June 25<sup>th</sup>.** Unless, something different arises we will celebrate by delivering donuts that week to visiting vessels, hopefully with a little funding from our Can/Fil friends of the Mission – I'm not yet confident how involved they will wish to be at that time. Again, depending on provincial guidelines.



F.W.E. for this edition  
Capt. Jim Calvesbert, Editor