



# The Foghorn

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



May 2021

## From the Master Captain Marshall Dunbar



Good Day Everyone,

Here we are into May and another year where a Battle of the Atlantic ceremony did not occur in conjunction with Merchant Navy Veterans. This of course, is a result of the current pandemic situation and the requirements for social distancing and keeping our veterans and everyone safe and healthy. Thoughts and moments of silence are observed, as to honour those courageous persons who sacrificed so much for our country. It is at these times, we realize that seafaring is not just a career but it might also be a calling to protect ones country. We must rely on our politicians and diplomats to work tirelessly to ensure that we do not need to make that call and that we remain at peace rather than in an armed conflict.

The above action was driven by the love of country. In a recent speech by the Singaporean Minister of Transport, he addressed the need to attract talent into the maritime industry. His suggestion was that our industry needs to focus on the love of the sea / ocean and this will generate interest and then what path a person may take would become more evident. It is an interesting thought process. Many of us came to work in this industry because someone else led them towards it and that will always be a factor in the decision making of a career path. I think that there are people in this country who would chose this career if we captured that love of the sea with the great opportunities that exist within the industry. It is something to consider and we must always be looking for ways to develop the next generation as choices abound for someone who is willing take the not so predictable choice of livelihood.

I wanted to thank all who joined in on last month's virtual meeting and attended the Divisions Annual General Meeting. Election and appointments resulted in the following: Master – Captain Dunbar, Deputy Master – Captain Roe, Divisional members are Council Captains' Knight, McLea and Kehoe. Appointments of Treasurer – Captain Wilkie and Secretary – Captain Calvesbert.

Many thanks to everyone and join in on the conversation by attending a meeting.  
Safe sailing.

Marshall

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on May 12<sup>th</sup> beginning at 1900. Our guest speaker will be Sheila Paterson of COVE, (Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship) <https://coveocean.com>, speaking about the “Stella Maris Multi Sensor Seabed Platform”.



Contact information for the ZOOM meeting will be sent out shortly.



### **Meeting of April 14, 2021**

This was our Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers.

Our Divisional Master (National Vice President) is Capt. Marshall Dunbar and Deputy Master is Capt. Doug Roe. Our Treasurer and Membership Chairman is Capt. Greg Wilkie and Secretary is Capt. Jim Calvesbert.

Under old business was a request by Capt. Edgar Gold for an up-date on the Capt. Angus McDonald Scholarship and his concern that action be taken before time overtakes this initiative. Information is being added to the re-designed website which should be available by the end of June.

The 2022 AGM will take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2022 and was announced prior to the adjournment of the AGM.



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From the regular business meeting mention was made that there are a great number of senior officers' positions available within the Canadian fleet due to retirements and personnel leaving the sea for shore positions.

Also noted was a concern that MMC has identified for quite a while. That being the transfer of responsibility for inspections to the classification societies as opposed to Transport Canada Ship Safety Branch. The Coast Guard fleet is now utilizing ABS (the American Bureau of Shipping) for this purpose.



It was noted that the work can be transferred but that the ultimate responsibility for compliance remains with the federal government. That responsibility cannot be transferred.



## National Meeting of April 22, 2021

The website re-design team comprised of Captains George Iskander (Capital), Marshall Dunbar (Maritimes), David Dyke (VI), and Stephanie Connor (Consultant) reported that strong progress has been made and that the new site should be on-line by the end of June. A draft version was shown, and the main page contains a carousel of vessel pictures although a note was made that they were all foreign registered. A search for suitable photos of Canadian vessels will take place.

Our MMC Position regarding the Shortage of Seafarers and subsequent letter to the Minister of Transport was presented at the recent CMAC by Capt. Ivan Lantz. Copies were also sent to John Higham, the acting director of Personnel

with the Transport Canada Marine Personnel Branch.

Discussion took place regarding the need for a single source federal marine emergency response person in important ports to attend to, and avoid, unnecessary delays with all issues. This was brought forward by Capital Division

A considerable period was spent discussing a means of increasing recruitment and retention of members of MMC as previously discussed at our Division meeting in March. Follow-up discussions will take place.



## Annual Dues Renewal Time

As everyone is aware, our annual dues run from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> and they remain the same as last year. Full membership is \$300 and Senior (over 65) is @150 and cadet membership is \$20.

E-transfer is the easiest method and can be sent directly to our Treasurer, Capt. Wilkie at [wilkieg@gmail.com](mailto:wilkieg@gmail.com) The bank account is set up to automatically deposit transfers, so that there is no requirement for a "secret password".

The end of March is normally considered the period of grace so it would be appreciated if you can renew, or contact, the Treasurer as soon as possible.



## Excessive working hours onboard in the spotlight

Sam Chambers April 27, 2021

The Mission to Seafarers has published the latest Seafarers Happiness Index report for the first quarter of 2021.

The report highlights three main themes: the consequences of a lack of recognition for seafarers as key workers, the onboard challenges of working hours and crew tension, and the benefits of onboard connectivity and port welfare services.



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The first quarter's responses revealed lingering worries about the ongoing crew change situation. Additionally, the issue of when and how seafarers will be vaccinated also came to the fore.

Seafarers consistently spoke of the pressures to work excessive hours. Furthermore, respondents raised issues of fraudulent record keeping, seeing seafarers working 14 to 15 hours every day but being forced to sign a monthly working slip which complies with working hours. In addition, the workload and the tasks being asked of crew also take a heavy toll, particularly in relation to pressures to reduce manning and rest periods not taken.

Tensions between mixed nationality crews further highlighted criticisms of manning models, particularly with regards to the impact of Covid-19. It was reported that some nationalities are not allowed ashore or allowed crew changes, while others are, which further impacts crew wellbeing.

Encouragingly, progress is being made with more seafarers able to get online and connect with loved ones back home. More shipping companies are working to provide crews with access to wifi.



## Halifax Port Authority Annual Meeting - May 19, 2021



The Annual Meeting of the Halifax Port Authority will be held online this year on **Wednesday, May 19 at 9:00 a.m.** This meeting will be open to the public through a live feed. A link and joining instructions will be posted to the Port of Halifax website "[About us](#)" page.



## Safety at Sea v. Fatigue and Overwork Prof. Capt. Edgar Gold, AM, CM, QC, PhD, FNI Brisbane, Australia

As it is considered a major maritime safety issue, overwork and fatigue of seafarers has been causing concern in the shipping industry for some time. The usual response has been that this problem would not occur or be greatly reduced if masters stopped operations or refused to sail if the crew had exceeded legally prescribed working hours. Such response most often originates from 'experts' who are no longer at sea, working in a 9-5 shore job, or retired. Although masters have the legal right to say 'no' when crew members are required to work excessive hours and/or if seriously fatigued, actually taking this step is easier said than done. There are now a number of operational, commercial and cultural aspects at play which are very different from earlier times.

Firstly, under long-established IMO rules the crewing requirements for vessels are set out without taking in to consideration the vessels' trade. In other words, the deck officer complement of a large tanker that berths in ports six times per year, is basically the same as for a large container ship that will make



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hundreds of port calls, often close together, in a year. Obviously, fatigue and overwork is much more likely on the container ship. Smaller vessels in coastal services with many port calls are even more likely to have this problem as they are permitted to have a reduced officer complement under international law. Some companies, but not many, recognise this problem and provide additional officers, coastal pilots and other assistance in order to alleviate on-board pressures. But this is done at additional costs on a purely voluntary basis, although it may have some cost-effective advantages. Nevertheless, if additional crewing is one of the solutions it would involve substantive changes to international law which would not be easy to achieve. Even if it could be achieved it would probably not help a fatigued master who after arriving in port has to face dozens of agents, officials, surveyors etc. before he or she can finally get some rest.

Secondly, under recent, widely-accepted ILO rules the hours of work/rest are now legally set out. They are reasonable rules that, certainly, look good on paper. Such rules are similar to those prescribed in aviation where an aircraft cannot fly if a flight crew has exceeded its permitted hours or until a new flight crew is made available. Of course, shipping is very different. In many cases today ships with crews that have exceeded ILO requirements will proceed, even if they may not wish to do so, as the berth in port will be urgently required by waiting vessels or for other operational reasons. I am familiar with some isolated cases where the master has actually anchored the vessel after leaving port so that a seriously fatigued crew, in breach of ILO rules, can have some rest. This happens rarely.

Third, even though command provides a firm legal basis for saying 'no' under circumstances where ship safety is involved, actually doing this is far from easy. Ships are today in almost constant, direct contact with their operators and commercial pressures are considerable. Such pressures will be placed on any master who attempts to slow or retard the vessel's progress regardless for what reason. It is not simply a matter of having the courage to face or reject such pressures. This is not a recent or modern problem either. In 1953 the British passenger ferry *Princess Victoria* sank with heavy loss of life when the master sailed the unseaworthy

vessel after being told he would be instantly dismissed unless he did so. There is even more likelihood of this sort of pressure occurring today as many masters and senior officers are even more vulnerable and fearful of losing their jobs. The great majority of such crew members today originate from countries, especially in Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern Europe with cultures that have great respect for, or fear of, authority and find it difficult to make the hard decisions that might be expected. In other words, these persons are uncomfortable in 'bucking the system' and will sail in order to satisfy their employer, charterer or port authority—even against their better judgement. This may well be the cause of a number of maritime accidents today. But saying 'no' is simply not as easy as it might have been in earlier days.



## Seafarers Wages Joseph Loot, Mission to Seafarers

So it seems seafarers will have to wait longer, at least 2 years, for a possible increase in their wages (despite their difficulties, such as long working hours, and contributions in keeping the shipping industry operating in good and bad times) --

[https://gcaptain.com/negotiations-over-seafarers-minimum-wage-increase-break-down/?subscriber=true&goal=0\\_f50174ef03-767070bd53-139901029&mc\\_cid=767070bd53&mc\\_eid=e3eacde30](https://gcaptain.com/negotiations-over-seafarers-minimum-wage-increase-break-down/?subscriber=true&goal=0_f50174ef03-767070bd53-139901029&mc_cid=767070bd53&mc_eid=e3eacde30)

One of the prescriptions in the success of negotiations is to focus on interest rather than position (Fisher and Ury, 1981). The post-negotiation statements of both parties (shipowners and seafarers) reflect their conduct in the failed negotiations. This is no surprise in the contentious bipartite labour relations. This was even the same relations when the MLC was negotiated, which was more complex with the participation of the State in the conventional tripartite labour relations. For a summary of Fisher and Ury's prescriptions to principled negotiations, see--

[https://na.eventscloud.com/file\\_uploads/fd90f7b5575b6d9229dfb17bf132b299\\_ER2017\\_Collabo](https://na.eventscloud.com/file_uploads/fd90f7b5575b6d9229dfb17bf132b299_ER2017_Collabo)



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[ratingwithSchools\\_SandyMislow\\_Handout-PrincipledNegotiation.pdf?pix=sy\\_0\\_0](#)

Wage is a major factor contributing to seafarer happiness. Although not one of the three focus areas, the latest edition of The Seafarers Happiness Index (2021) published by the Mission to Seafarers identified wage as a stress issue (p. 11). While the study may not represent the international seafarer labour force (study method not available), the question of constant "stagnation" of seafarer wages was a key issue raised by the respondent-seafarers (p. 4). Perhaps knowing the result of the latest minimum wage negotiations may affect the happiness barometer. For more on the Happiness Index, see this dedicated website--  
<https://www.happyatsea.org/>

Happy to serve!

Joseph



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

Letter to Halifax Mission volunteers from the Manager.

*Today I share a letter I received from a founding member of the Company of Master Mariners, who sent us a fairly substantial donation as a result of seeing the letter written by the Imedghassen Captain in the Foghorn. We thank the Company of Master Mariners for their continued support.*

*Another representation of how the good work you are all involved in touches the lives of seafarers of the past and future, whilst in turn affording on some level financial sustainability for our mission.*

*Thank you very much.  
Helen*

Followup from the Maritimes Division. Capt. Gold's letter to the Mission is below and we wish to congratulate him for his recognition and generosity.



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**Prof. Edgar Gold**

**CM, AM, QC, PhD, DSc, FNI**  
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Brisbane, QLD 4000, Australia  
Tel: 61-7-3831-5034. E-Mail: edgold@bigpond.net.au

29 March 2021

*5 SUBSTANTIAL  
DONATION*

Helen Glenn  
Manager  
Halifax Mission to Seafarers  
P.O. Box 27114  
Halifax, NS, B3H 4M8  
Canada

Dear Helen,

Having just seen the latest issue of the Company of Master Mariner's 'Foghorn' I was extremely touched by the letter addressed to you by the master of the Algerian vessel MV Imedghasen. As a long-time seafarer and master I fully appreciate the difficulties faced by master and crew during their lengthy stay in Halifax which was so greatly eased by the help provided by your mission. In appreciation my wife and I attach a modest contribution which, I am sure, will be used for further good causes in your work.

As a foundation member of the Company of Master Mariners of Halifax and long-time resident of Halifax, now long-retired and living in Australia, I am, of course, very familiar with the great work your mission has done for many years, but more so during these difficult times.

With kind regards  
Sincerely

Capt. Edgar Gold, CM

EG/g

Encl.





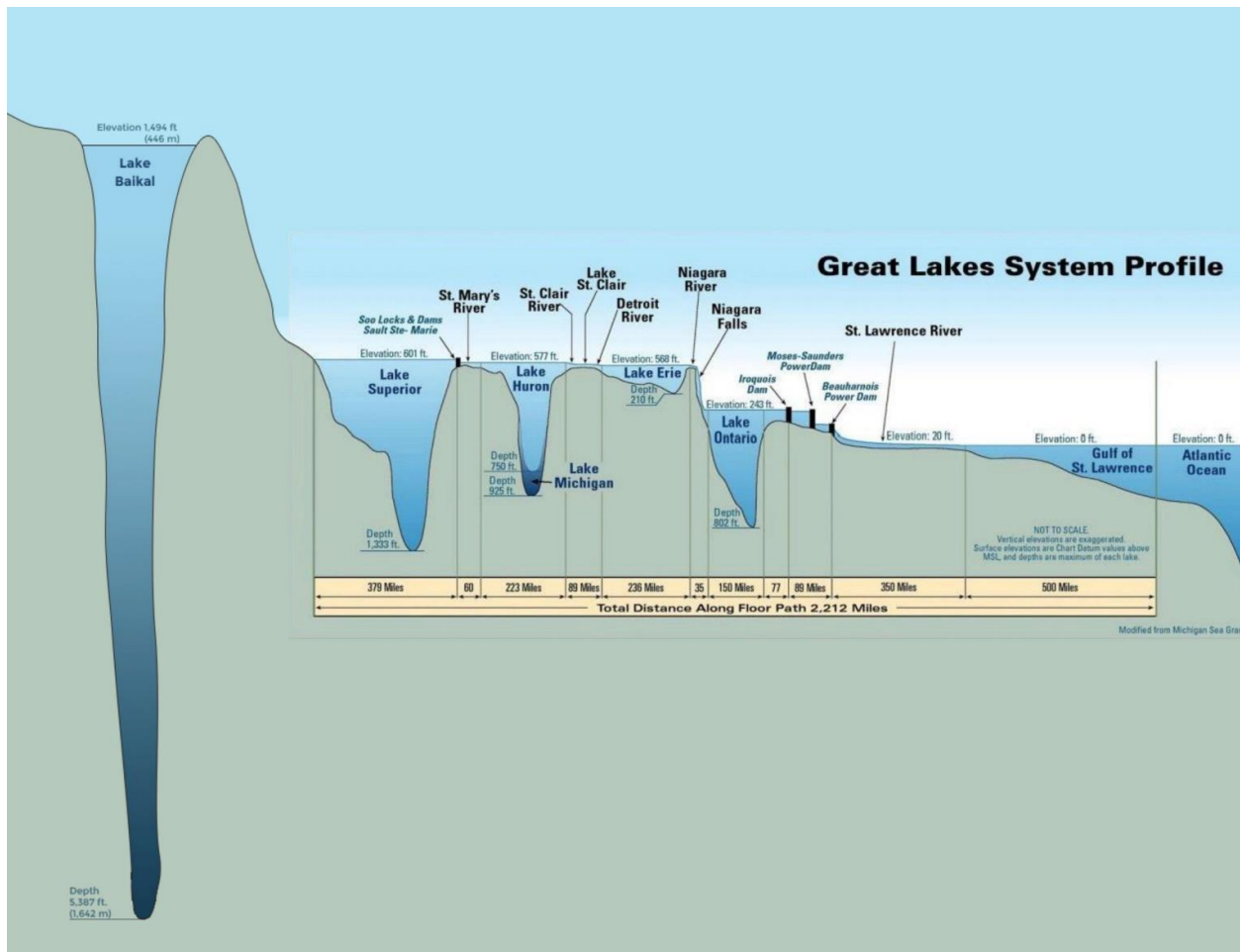
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I know that we have all seen similar drawings in the past, but I thought that a comparison with Lake Baikal was worth repeating it.





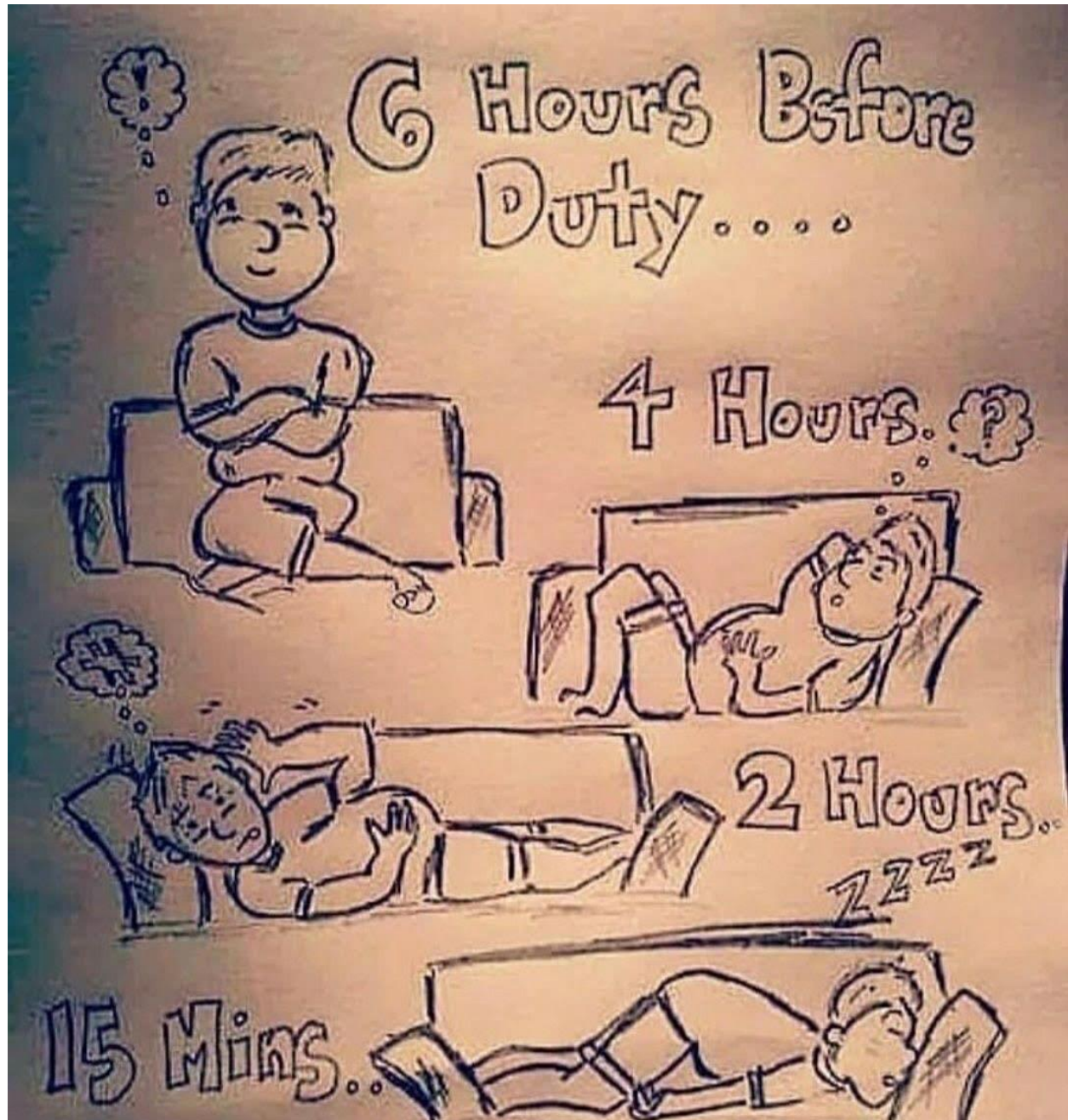
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Seem familiar?



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