



SEATIMES

The Newsletter of the Nautical Professional Education Society of Canada
(Society founded in 1995 by the British Columbia Branch of The Nautical Institute)



January 2016

From the Chairman: I am proud to have been asked to take over as the Chairman of NPESC for the coming year and gladly accepted this position at our AGM.

I have been involved with the Board for the last few years and have enjoyed the opportunity to attend at various functions to make presentations of bursaries and books on behalf of The Society to deserving students.

In addition, I have served on a number of selection committees where we have been tasked with vetting applications, from students attending marine schools in BC, for bursaries and other awards. Throughout all of this I have been very impressed by the calibre of the young men and women that have chosen the sea as the environment in which to follow their career paths whether they be of the engineering or deck persuasion.



It is clear that our future as a viable and safe sea-going nation is in very capable hands and I am glad to be able to be in a position where I can donate my time and efforts to an industry that has given me an exciting, rewarding and varied career both on the ocean and also ashore.

During my time as a deck cadet in the 70's things were very different from the situation that cadets now find themselves, having to navigate through on their way to their first watch keeping certificate and beyond. Back then, the toughest decision I had to make was which of the many merchant shipping companies would I chose to steer me through my apprenticeship. Would it be a tanker company like Shell or BP, a passenger ship company such as P&O, a container company like OCL, a package or bulk shipping company like Blue Funnel, Ellerman City Liners or New Zealand Shipping Company?

I elected to go with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O), a company that could offer me "all of the above" and allowed me to experience, container ships, reefer cargo ships, dry bulk cargo, ferries, passenger ships, gas carriers, product tankers, crude tankers throughout my cadetship. Throughout this experience I was paid a salary and had all of my education and accommodation (while at school) paid for. Indeed, apart from my uniform, I had nothing to worry about financially and my company made all arrangements for me from allocating school time to providing accommodation and booking examinations.

By the time I got to the point where I was taking my second mate ticket I had served on many, many different types of ships, been sent to and educated at a first class school (South Shields Marine and Technical College) and had a bank account that was in the black.

Fast forward to today where cadets are expected to arrange and pay for their own education as well as seek out a shipping company that will be willing to give them a berth on one of their ships and allow them to gain the seagoing experience essential for them to achieve their goal.

These cadets not only must have the desire and drive to reach their goals but must also have the financial wherewithal to attain them and it is for this reason that there is a real need for external sources to provide some assistance to help overcome these hurdles.

One of the main roles of NPESC is to provide assistance to these students to help ease this burden. Having had a much easier ride at that junction in my career I am only too glad to be able to help in whatever way I can to and being involved with NPESC has given me that opportunity.

Over the coming year it is my intention to work with our Board to seek out other avenues of assistance to further increase our ability to provide financial support for these wonderful men and women as they "head down to the sea again.... to the lonely sea and sky"

Richard Smith. jrfsmith@mac.com