

SEATIMES

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



December 2019

LUMBER TO OCEANIA IN PRE-CONTAINERSHIP DAYS

This story appeared in a magazine, name unknown, in the summer of 1993. The words "SEA LETTER" appeared at the foot of the pages. The author is Harlan Soeten. He was born in Chapple, Nebraska in 1914 and, like many seamen born in the Midwest, had a longing for the salt air and the open ocean. He rode freight trains to San Francisco during the Great Depression, determined to get a seagoing job. The Embarcadero was a much different place when he arrived in

1931. As he wrote later, there were 360 American flag vessels calling at San Francisco regularly, not counting tankers. "It was adventurous and exciting just to be in San Francisco," he wrote later. "Those were the days to be a sailor." However, the 17-year-old Harlan couldn't get a berth on a merchant ship, so when he was old enough, he joined the Navy. After Navy service, he signed on as a merchant sailor and got married. When he signed off his last ship, he found himself "on the beach," as seamen say, out of work in Philadelphia. Times were tough. Seagoing jobs were scarce, and sailors had a hard time getting work ashore. As he recalled years later, he saw an ad in a Baltimore paper: "House painters wanted. No seamen need apply."

Mr. Soeten got a job on a dredge working on rivers and canals. Later, he worked his way up to Mate on tankers. In 1942, he was Second Mate on the San Francisco-based freighter Kahuku when the ship was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine in the Caribbean. He also sailed as a Deck Officer in the Pacific during the war and after the war, on ships carrying lumber, sugar and general cargo all over the world, said his wife, Alexandra.

In 1952, he became an executive in an Oakland shipyard. Mr. Soeten then went to the San Francisco Maritime Museum as a curator. He made up and wrote most of the exhibits telling the story of the museum ship 'Balclutha', conducted many oral history interviews and did much of the research and interpretive work at the museum.

He wrote extensively about life at sea in the days when San Francisco was a major port for American-flag ships and many of his stories were published in magazines and newspapers. Mr. Soeten was 93 when he died in 2008.

<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Harlan-Soeten-curator-of-Maritime-Museum-dies-3294396.php>

Note: This is an American story and some of the words and terms may be foreign to you. Also, remember that none of the lumber loaded to the ship was packaged. All of it was loose.

Lumber to Oceania: The arrival of the containership in mid-1950 brought an entirely new concept to merchant shipping operations. The cost to build and operate these super-large vessels, and the sophisticated terminal installations required for their loading and unloading, limits their service to voyages between major ports. Turnaround time in port has been reduced from days to hours and smaller ports are served by feeder lines, often barge and tug operations.



The seaman's life on the bridge and on deck has also dramatically changed. I was fortunate enough to have finished my seagoing career before navigation by radar and satnav fixes replaced the sextant, RDF and fathometer, and before multi-

million dollar computerized shoreside cranes replaced cargo booms, blacksmiths and the experience and skills of walking bosses and winch drivers. Sailorizing in the containership era is not much more than tying up and letting go the mooring lines, and standing by an automatic pilot.

After World War II, the Matson Navigation Company resumed their Oceanic Line service to the South Pacific with four C-2 freighters (above). They were named the *Ventura*, *Sierra*, *Sonoma* and *Alameda*. I was Chief Mate in the *Ventura*. Following is an account of a typical pre-containership round-trip voyage to Oceania.

Voyage number three of the *Ventura* ended and number four commenced at midnight, March 20th 1948 while she lay at the Richmond Long Wharf taking on bunkers and cargo lube oil. In the early morning we departed for Newport, Oregon, the first port on the northwest "loop", to load timber for Pago Pago, Suva, Wellington, Sydney and Melbourne.

During the forty-hour run up the coast, the sailors overhauled the deck-lashing turnbuckles and swept up the 'tween decks and holds, stacking the loose dunnage on the foredeck for use if we had to fish-oil the deck before the deckload started to come aboard.

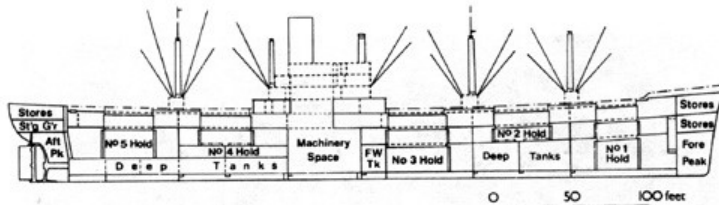
When we arrived off the mouth of the Yaquina River, the entrance to Newport Harbor (left), the seas were too rough for the pilot's small launch to come alongside. For two nights and a day we steamed slowly back and forth off Yaquina Head Light until the seas flattened out enough for the pilot to board. Entering the river we passed under the bridge that carries State Highway #1 over the harbor and almost immediately dropped our starboard anchor, and, with the aid of a small tug, turned around and, now heading out, moored to dolphins. A few buildings in Newport were just visible on top of the bluff on the opposite shore.



The next morning, three barges stacked high with lumber came alongside and amid a steady wet snowfall we started loading. Also coming aboard was our Supercargo, sent down from Matson's Portland office to have general charge of the lumber loading as long as we were in the Portland district. He brought with him a list of the booked lumber and a preliminary stowage plan, prepared by the

freight department in San Francisco.

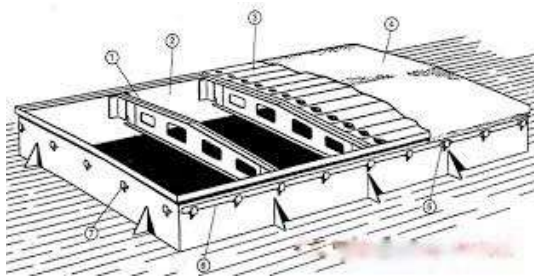
Loading a vessel at four or five different ports with cargo that is to be discharged at six or more other ports without overstowing any, and while trying to keep each hatch's gang hours equal at each port, is the Supercargo's near impossible challenge. If cargo is stowed over cargo to be discharged at an earlier port, it must be offloaded and then reloaded after the overstowed cargo is discharged. Needless to say a happening frowned on by management.



In the *Ventura*, the number three and number four hatches were the largest (in terms of stevedore hours the "longest") and numbers one and five the smallest (or the "shortest"). Even though gangs from a short hatch moved over to "keep the hook moving" in a long hatch through the meal hour, when it came time to shift to the next lumber mill, the hatch that

worked long would often have several thousand feet of lumber to go. The ship had three choices: leave the lumber for the next ship (not likely), delay the shift until all booked lumber was aboard and stowed (which meant arriving late at the next mill with possibly five gangs of longshoremen waiting on full pay), or start "landing" loads, which meant getting away on time but with lumber piled up on deck.

When the Supercargo and the Captain decided to land loads, the loads would be sent on board as fast as they could be hooked on and landed right on deck. The slings were left on and a hitch taken with the long end to hold the load together. The longshoremen at the next mill would then have to stow these loads before starting to load their own.



If the booked lumber list showed that the same hatch or hatches were going to work long at the next mill, then landing loads wouldn't help. Then all you could do is try to reset the longshore gangs' starting times at the next mill and complain to whoever in San Francisco had made up the preliminary loading plans, when you next saw him.

Another judgment the skipper had to make was whether to take the time to put in the hatch beams. Leaving them out could save half an hour but the beams provided a certain amount of strength to the hull structure, and there was worry that if the vessel ran aground or was in collision while shifting, the lack of hatch beams might become an important issue with the insurance company.

Landing loads, leaving beams out, and leaving the cargo gear "flying" (that is, up) was an option only when shifting in inland waters such as the Columbia River, Humboldt Bay and Coos Bay, and between certain Puget Sound ports. If headed for sea, the hatches were covered and battened down and the booms lowered or topped up and secured in the cradles on the crosstrees. An exception to lowering or topping the booms might be made in good weather months for

short trips down the Coast when they could be left up, squared away in the working position with all the guys, preventers and runners set up tight.

The destination of the different lots was indicated by longshoremen or the ship's Mates painting a stripe every 10 feet or so across the top, and, if necessary, the sides of the particular lot before another port's lumber over it. Each port had a different color. We set pails of water paint out at each hatch for this purpose. Surfaced lumber, which we seldom carried, was marked with colored rope yarns.

We loaded approximately a million board feet of lumber in three days at Newport and were secured for sea, but the swells were rolling in again and with our increased draft there was danger that we would touch on the bar at the bottom of a swell. Until recently, Newport had been only a fish boat and steam schooner port, and the *Ventura* was the first large vessel to load there other than Liberty ships, whose full body would not tend to dive as deeply as the relatively sharp *Ventura*.

Every morning the pilot would go out to the headlands to check the bar and send back word, "Not today, maybe tomorrow." Some port! Bar bound arriving and bar bound departing!

The third morning the swells were down and the pilot thought we would be okay, so at high tide, with everyone's fingers crossed, we headed out. Twice we felt, or sensed, a gentle hesitation as the *Ventura's* stem touched bottom and then we were over and in deep water. The pilot's launch made a couple of passes at the wildly swaying Jacob's Ladder before he decided to accept our offer of a ride to our next port, Warrenton, in the Columbia River, where he took a Greyhound bus back to Newport.

The Columbia River bar is one of the widest and most dangerous bars in the world. Fortunately the seas had continued to flatten and as the *Ventura's* Master, Captain Eugene Olsen**, had a pilot's endorsement for the bar and river as far as Astoria, we went in without taking a State pilot.

Warrenton is a small mill town a few miles in from the river's mouth and ten miles below Astoria. We loaded something less than a million feet in two days and then shifted fifty miles upriver to Westport where in three days we took on about a million feet below deck and five hundred thousand on deck.



Whenever we were on the Columbia River, we loaded during the day and shifted to the next mill at night in time to be tied up and ready to work cargo by six or seven the next morning. Our next and last port in the river was Longview, Washington, where we loaded almost 1,300,000 feet including 400,000 feet on deck.

With all of the lumber aboard, the deckload aft was nine feet high in the wings with the hatch squares left open for loading general cargo in San Francisco. Up forward it was eight feet high tapering to three or four feet at the break of the fo'c'sle head. This reduced height forward was to compensate for the upward

sheer of the vessel's hull lines. "Taking the sheer out" was the longshore expression for it and it worked in reverse in the lower hold space where the height increased forward. Here, to get maximum stowage, the lumber was gradually built up forward so, by the time headroom was reached, the heights were equal fore and aft.

With the deckload secured with chain lashings and turnbuckles every ten or twelve feet, the *Ventura* headed down the river and took departure from the Columbia River Light Vessel, bound for San Francisco.

Upon arrival late in the evening we went directly to Parr Terminal in Richmond where we loaded two tiers of drummed lube oil on deck aft of number five hatch, then shifted to Pier 32 where in two days we loaded general cargo in numbers three and four upper and lower 'tween decks, Pago Pago redwood lumber on the number four hatch, and about 200 bags of U.S. mail in the Special Cargo locker in number three upper 'tween deck. Before leaving San Francisco, the purser went to the Customs House and changed the *Ventura's* license from coastwise enrollment to registry, and the Shipping Commissioner came aboard to sign the crew on Foreign Articles. That evening we departed for Wilmington (in the Port of Los Angeles), arriving there the following afternoon.



We would be in Wilmington only long enough to top off bunkers, load a "shirt tail" of cargo and embark passengers. The *Ventura* was a made-over Navy AKA, and the passenger accommodations were spartan. Each cabin had three berths, a wardrobe, a couple of chairs and a small wall desk, all standard Navy issue. Large luggage had to go in the Special cargo locker and would not be available during the trip. The passengers were getting transportation, three meals a day

and not much more. The best we could offer in entertainment was an evening game of bridge – the Second Mate and I were fair players – and there were several chess players among the Officers. Not exactly the “Love Boat”!

The Wilmington cargo consisted of one hundred cylinders of pressurized gas, twelve live chickens in four crates for Pago Pago and several cans of movie film for Sydney. One of the sailors volunteered to feed and water the chickens – on overtime. However it turned out that they needed more attention than that to keep them pecking each other to death. Once one started to bleed the others would peck at it and we had to get it out of the crate before it was killed.

To be continued.

Note: The *Ventura* was similar to the picture and the schematic of a C-2 shown on Pages 1 & 2 where there is just one set of gear at hatches 1 & 5. The picture above shows a Matson C-2 with two sets of gear at Hatches 1 & 5.

The United States Maritime Commission designed the C2 Type Ships in 1937-38. They were all-purpose cargo ships with 5 holds. 173 were built between 1940 and 1945. The first C2's were 459 feet long, 63 feet broad, 40 feet depth and 25-foot draft. Speed 15.5 knots. <http://www.usmm.org/c2ships.html>

****** A few years earlier there had been three Captain Olsens in Matson Line. In conversation they were referred to by nicknames derived from vessels they had been Masters of in the old Oceanic and Oriental Line. Captain Eugene Olsen was known as *Bear* from the *Golden Bear*, Captain Carl Olsen was known as *Eagle* from the *Golden Eagle*. The third, Captain William Olsen, was just plain *Bill*.

Availability of Tugs of Opportunity in Canada's Pacific Region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Clear Seas commissioned Nuka Research to characterize both the potential capability and the availability of commercial tugs engaged in usual trade for use as Emergency Towing Vessels (ETVs) in Canada's Pacific Region. These tugs are referred to as “tugs of opportunity” as they are not dedicated to or necessarily intended for rescue efforts.

Because tug traffic patterns remain relatively consistent from year to year, automatic identification system (AIS) data from 2016 were used to identify the tugs active in Canada's Pacific Region and represent typical tug activity. Each tug's location and route were determined from AIS data and its capability was established based on its bollard pull (the force a tug can apply when pulling against a fixed object).

Tugs were divided into four categories for analysis:

Category	Number of Tugs
All tugs present	232
50 metric tonnes (MT) or greater (minimum capability needed for emergency response)	76
70 MT or greater (able to respond in 21 knot winds (93 rd percentile conditions)	35
90 MT or greater (most able to provide effective response)	12

The proportion of time tugs in each category are likely to be present was determined by frequency of travel in 40 x 40 km grid cells on a map and the frequency with which tugs crossed analytical passage lines drawn on the map of the region. Tugs are most commonly found in near-shore waters from Vancouver to Alaska. Tugs of all sizes follow this general pattern of movement, but larger tugs are present in all areas with less frequency.

Tugs with bollard pull greater than 70 MT were present less than 10% of the time on average within any area. On average, the 35 tugs in this category crossed passage lines with the following frequencies:

- Hecate Strait near Prince Rupert every 1.4 days (34 hours);
- Queen Charlotte Strait near Port Hardy every 1.1 days (26 hours);
- Strait of Juan de Fuca every 2.0 days (48 hours).

When comparing winter and summer, there were only minor seasonal differences in the distribution of tugs with greater than or equal to 70 MT bollard pull.

In 2016, there were no tugs of opportunity able to rescue the largest ships in severe conditions (sustained winds greater than 33 knots or 99th percentile conditions), including large and very large container ships, LNG carriers, passenger ships, and bulk carriers. In less severe conditions, more ship types were rescuable. In sustained winds of 27 knots (95th percentile), tugs of opportunity would have been capable of rescuing all except the large and very large container ships, but it is not known whether any tugs of opportunity would have been available if needed with sufficient time to respond.

This report demonstrates how often tugs of a certain capacity may be available based on historical data but does not assess all factors that would determine the outcome of an incident requiring an emergency tow.

Published July 9, 2019. https://clearseas.org/en/research_project/availability-of-tugs-of-opportunity-in-canadas-pacific-region/

It should be “Suji”: Two letters appeared in the May 1976 edition of Sea Breezes in response to an earlier letter. They referred to a favourite task of many a Cadet.

1. I have read with interest Mr. Braynard’s letter under the heading “Sugeying or Soogeeyng?” I have pleasure in advising him as follows: -

1. The correct spelling is suji
2. The origin of the word is from the Hindustani “suji-mutti”, which literally means “caustic earth”.

In the vessels operated by British India Steam Navigation Co. Ltd., prior to their merger into the P&O General cargo Division, the word “Sujiing” (pronounced “soogeeyng”) was a well-known term, and in each vessel the Cassab (Storekeeper) had his own particular brand of suji, which was made from caustic soda, soft soap and water in varying amounts and was used to wash down superstructure paintwork.

As all orders and discussions between the deck officers and crew were in Hindustani, it was necessary to be fully acquainted with all nautical terms and words in Hindustani.

If the vessel was in the tropics, her running gear and general maintenance up to standard, and particularly if the vessel was shortly to enter her base port, probably Bombay or Calcutta, then the Chief Officer’s order of the day to the Serang (Bosun) would be “sujiwuji”, i.e. make the ship spick and span.

2. In answer to Mr. Braynard’s question on “soogey”, may I make the following comment? “Soogey” was a watery mixture of caustic soda or lye. This is the basis for most of our soaps. It was used to wash down bulkheads and most painted surfaces. It caused a chemical dermatitis of the hands on the seamen who used it, “soogey hands”. Basically it is a strong alkaline detergent and you get red hands from a bucket of “soogey”.

Wind Power Returns to the Shipping Industry. The industry explored the idea of using actual sails, but modern turbine-based wind power will significantly reduce emissions: Global shipping is a hidden but potent contributor to global climate change. Between 3.5% and 4% of global greenhouse emissions are due to the shipping industry. Huge cargo ships burn a particularly dirty type of fuel, and require lots of it to move long distances. Now, in an effort to improve their image and save money on fuel, some transportation companies are going back to their sailing roots. Wind power is making its way back into the shipping industry.

An early discussion of using wind power to increase ships’ efficiency by Neil Bose and James MacGregor was published in 1987 in the journal *Wind Engineering*. To sell wind power to the maritime industry, Bose and MacGregor emphasized the potential fuel savings. They focused in particular on fishing vessels. While typically smaller than cargo ships, these vessels’ towing of heavy nets increases their energy costs.

The industry explored the idea of using actual sails to aid fishing fleets. The idea was deemed impractical, because of the difficulty of providing the needed stability for sails on larger ships, the crew effort required, and the inability to control the direction of the wind. (Some of these objections might be overcome on cargo vessels, which move along stable trade winds.)

Ships operating offshore are exposed to relatively consistent winds, allowing for increased energy efficiency without sacrificing any control.

Bose and MacGregor settled on examining mounted turbines on fishing vessels, which would operate as a supplement to the engines, creating a hybrid. Ships operating offshore are exposed to relatively consistent winds, allowing for increased energy efficiency without sacrificing any control. As a bonus, turbines don’t take up much deck space. However, a few technical details needed to be worked out, such as the best place on a ship

to place a turbine for convenience and stability. It was also important to limit upfront costs or the fuel savings wouldn’t be worth it. When all was said and done, Bose and MacGregor calculated that a turbine drive ship could save between 20% and 25% on fuel costs.

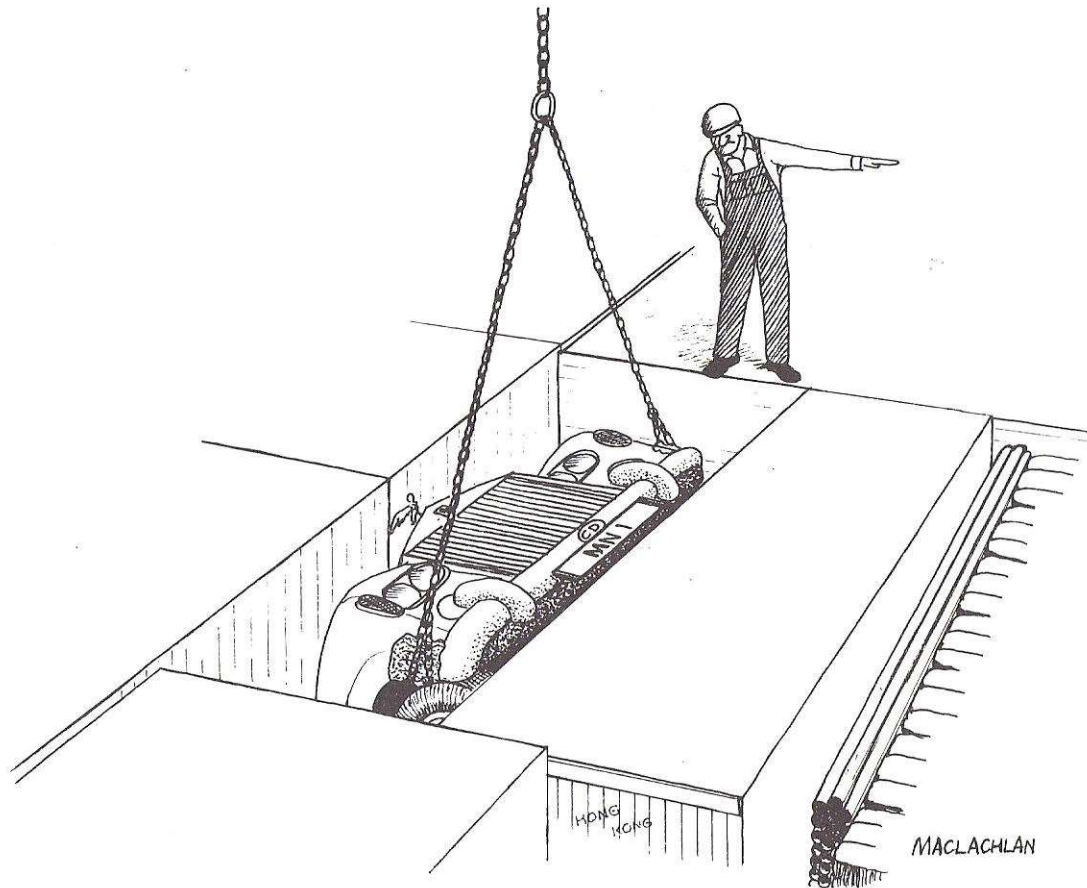
Ten years later, in 1996, **Billy Roesler and his colleagues** discussed an even more innovative way to harness the wind. Writing in *SAE Transactions*, the team turned to the world of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for ideas. Virtually eliminating the need to sacrifice any deck space, Roesler’s team proposed harnessing enormous UAVs to cargo ships, basically using a kite the size of a commercial airliner to help tug the ship along. With automatic controls, the kite can fly whatever pattern is required to catch the most wind and generate the most thrust. There are a few technical difficulties, particularly how to launch and retrieve the kite, but the idea has undergone considerable testing.



The new versions now entering service rely on turbines, not kites. The new designs are supplemented by solar panels, and many of the problems identified by Bose and MacGregor have been resolved. With the improvements, the modern wind-assisted ships will cut fuel consumption and emissions by 30%. It's a start.

<https://daily.jstor.org/wind-power-returns-to-the-shipping-industry/> By: **James MacDonald** November 7, 2019

Handling General Cargo



"Difficult stowage situations call for creativity from longshoremen."

The ship that came back from the dead: The death of author Richard Hughes recalls one of the most dramatic survival stories in the annals not only of the Blue Funnel Line but of the British Merchant Navy as a whole. This was the story of how s.s. *Phemius*, with a crew of 61, was battered for four days by a 200-mile-an-hour hurricane in the Caribbean in November 1932. Richard Hughes turned it into a novel under the title "In Hazard", a work that has been described as "a finer book about the sea than even Conrad's 'Typhoon'".

Phemius (7,614 grt) was struck by the hurricane shortly after navigating the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti. She was carrying general cargo from America to the Far East via Panama. Within hours her funnel, weighing 30 tons, had been blown overboard and the engine room put out of action.

Thereafter she was at the mercy of winds, which the Master, the late Captain David Evans, said reached indescribable violence – beyond human conception. Later the hurricane swept across Cuba and massive seas that hit the coast drowned 2,500 people.

Reef: Pitching and rolling helplessly, *Phemius* was driven in a northwesterly direction, somehow passing through the Serranilla Reef*, to a point about 120 miles from Jamaica.

Hatch covers were ripped off most holds and the vessel shipped 1,200 tons of water, developing a 20° starboard list. Mr. Lawrence Holt, a Director of the Company, said afterwards that another 200 tons of water in the holds would have sunk the ship. The terrifying wind and huge seas also carried away three derricks, the bridge apron, a gangway and

ventilators, wrecked two lifeboats and stove in two others. During the early stages, when engineers were fighting a losing battle to restore power to the ship, they had to cope with burning oil running out of the furnace. Rain and spray, which reduced visibility to nil, put the wireless room out of action for three days.

Throughout their ordeal the crew had little or no food or water because the flooded accommodation prevented them reaching the stores. Four times the ship lay temporarily in the calm spot at the centre of the hurricane – and four times she was thrown back into the turmoil. During these short lulls, *Phemius* was overwhelmed with hundreds of birds and insects. "They landed on our bodies, and the decks and bridge were so crowded with small birds that it was almost impossible to walk without crunching them under our feet", said Captain Evans. "Large birds landed on the ship in such numbers that they added to the danger of our list".

Silence: Added to this was the oppressive heat, the dead silence of the storm's centre, and a depressing barometer. These were moments to test the nerves of any man. Then, the fury of the storm was unleashed again on the ship – the blast carrying the birds and insects to destruction.

What saved *Phemius* and her crew from a similar fate was the leadership and courage of Captain Evans. When the ship was spun around so that her listing side was exposed to the onslaught he made the crucial decision to pour oil on the sea.

"The effect of the oil was almost beyond belief", the Master reported later. "Towering seas tearing along direct for our exposed side crumpled up within 10 feet of the ship and, although we could not entirely escape them, they landed on board in heavy volumes of dead water. Without question the ship would have foundered had the pouring of oil not been carried on continuously".

Pouring the oil was a tremendous feat for the crew were suffering from bruises, exhaustion, hunger and thirst. Yet they kept it up for two days, hauling five-gallon drums of oil across the sloping decks in almost impossible conditions. Among the heroes of this operation were three cadets, Joseph Timms, Bernard Tallack and Frederick Henderson.

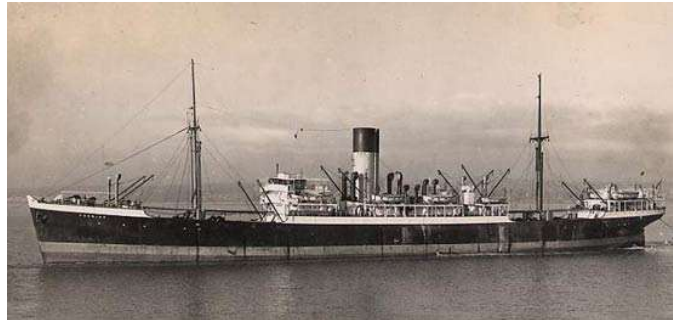
On the fifth day the weather moderated. The wireless room was dried out with blowlamps and *Phemius* sent out her position. The message that she had survived the hurricane caused a sensation in newspapers at home and abroad.

Search: For days there had been fears that the ship had foundered. A massive search and rescue operation had been mounted, including eight US Navy ships and submarines. Then came the weak signals from *Phemius*. It was like a ship coming back from the dead. A salvage vessel reached her on the sixth day and towed her to Kingston, in Jamaica.

Afterwards there were many tributes to Captain Evans. He was given a civic welcome by the Mayor of Liverpool, was awarded Lloyds Silver Medal for meritorious service, received a piece of silver plate from the Board of Trade and an award from the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society.

This story, written by the late Captain Allan Cabot, appeared in the May 2003 edition of "From the Bridge", the newsletter of the Company of Master Mariners of Canada. <http://www.mastermariners.ca/from-the-bridge/>

* **Serranilla Bank** ([Spanish](#): *Isla Serranilla, Banco Serranilla and Placer de la Serranilla*)^[2] is a partially submerged reef, with small uninhabited islets, in the western [Caribbean Sea](#). It is situated about 350 kilometres (220 mi) northeast of [Punta Gorda, Nicaragua](#), and roughly 280 kilometres (170 mi) southwest of [Jamaica](#).^[1] The closest neighbouring land feature is [Bajo Nuevo Bank](#), located 110 kilometres (68 mi) to the east. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serranilla_Bank



The Swedish Club - Navigational Claims: The Swedish Club has spent many years compiling and reviewing information on navigational claims, which the Club defines as "collisions, contacts and groundings".

The aim of "Navigational Claims" is to use that experience to provide those crewing a vessel with the knowledge that they need to avoid major pitfalls that we have seen occurring all too often.

This publication aims at not only highlighting the most common errors, but more importantly focuses on providing suggestions on how to prevent claims, increasing the safety of those on board and reducing vessel casualties.

November 21st 2019

Read all about it at:

https://www.swedishclub.com/media_upload/files/Publications/Loss%20Prevention/Nav-Claims-2020WEB.pdf



Aging fleet and declining ridership plague Alaska's public ferry system: The *MATANUSKA*, one of the original mainline ferries launched along with the state system in 1963, recently received about \$40 million of

work to repair damaged steel and upgrade some systems to current safety standards. Its sister ship, the *MALASPINA*, is scheduled for a long-term layup in January. Repairing the *MALASPINA* is estimated to cost upwards of \$16 million, but that bill could approach the *Matanuska's* total after examination in dry dock.



The above is from a larger article that appeared in the November 18th 2019 "Collection of Maritime Press Clippings" www.maasmondmaritime.com. There is probably nothing of interest for us in the article except that the picture of the *MANATUSKA* was taken, in 2011, by one of our Members, **David B. Willows** © □

Christmas at Sea: *This dinner took place in 1987 aboard the "Lairg", a vessel running in the "Crusader Service" of the Blue Star Line, linking the West Coast of North America with Australia and New Zealand. Captain A. W. Kinghorn tells this story in his book "Away to Sea" (ISBN 1 872006 12 4).*

The ship sailed from Pago Pago on December 17th bound for Los Angeles, eta December 29th. Christmas therefore would be at sea. Captain Kinghorn's Chinese crew had not seen an English Christmas and although the two cooks could now roast and carve a turkey, they were unfamiliar with the "trimmings" and the way we would want it done. *Could my wife help, please, and show them how?* She was, of course, delighted.

We had bought many of the necessities in Vancouver, Coos Bay and Auckland earlier in the voyage, but we made our own streamers out of crêpe paper. Two good-quality artificial Christmas trees were found on board, some decorations and even a box of crackers. Our own purchases included a green circular wreath for the Captain's front door. The Chief Steward, astonished by our preparations fingered this plastic wreath and proclaimed it "Almost like really!" As Christmas approached the ship took on a festive air although decorating the saloon was left until Christmas Eve. Bread sauce was made in our bedroom on a small electric heater. The sherry trifles were also made in our cabin, likewise the shrimp cocktails, which the Third Engineer's wife helped my wife to prepare. The Chief Steward carefully translated reams of instructions into Mandarin for the cook. Questions were answered, such as, "When to make the rum sauce?" "When must potatoes be ready?" etc. etc.



Christmas dawned fine and clear but heavily overcast with a fresh north-easterly, whipping whitecaps off a grey swell, coming from right ahead. The ship was pitching but, fortunately, not rolling. With time in hand I could afford to ease our speed to ensure nothing would be spilt.

White tablecloth, red table decorations, tall red candles, gleaming silver and glasses, crackers at each place, streamers overhead and Merry Christmas in snow upon the large sideboard mirror. Her Majesty the Queen smiled upon us from her picture on the bulkhead. First came the shrimp cocktails in stainless steel coupés, and then steaming hot soup. The turkeys, carved to perfection in the galley only a few steps from the saloon were placed in two heaps, white meat and dark, upon a large oval dish and brought into the saloon. Dinner plates came hot from the galley with parsnips, potatoes, carrots and Brussels sprouts to be placed two by two on the side table. The Captain's wife transferred turkey slices and chipolatas to each plate, two by two, whilst the Captain bore these plates, two by two, to each person sitting – service with a smile! Stuffing, bread sauce, cranberry sauce and gravy were all to hand, as was the wine, the Chief Engineer in charge



of it. Thus everyone got their main course hot and together, followed by Christmas pudding with steaming white rum sauce. At a get-together on Christmas Eve in our cabin nostalgic comments were passed about the puddings of long ago with silver threepenny bits. So today's portions included a 20p piece each, wrapped in greaseproof paper. We were touched to discover that somehow our portions, miraculously, contained a pound in each.

Christmas dinner at sea is always a time for toasts. The first, always, being – “the Queen”, drunk remained seated, naval fashion. Wives, sweethearts, absent friends – all were toasted in turn and not all of us remained dry eyed. Coffee completed the meal. My wife had in the past catered for many Christmas family dinners, but here she surpassed even herself – everyone said so.

The weather improved as we approached Los Angeles, and as we made our way into the harbour the smooth sea was crowded with yachts, almost as though they were escorting us in. In Californian shirt and long shorts, smoking a big cigar, our genial pilot climbed aboard from his cutter. “Compliments of the season, Cap – how was your Christmas?”

*The picture above shows the **Lairg** after it had been renamed **Napier Star**.*

All hail the intelligent ship? Not all ‘intelligent’ advances in ship systems can actually wear that moniker with pride:

“This computer/software/equipment/machinery/car/toaster (choose whatever is applicable) has got a mind of its own!” How often do you hear this said by some wrathful person trying to get some stubborn device to work? And with all our equipment getting more intelligent by the minute, it is a complaint that will be heard a lot more in the future.

Sometimes, it seems, our equipment is too clever for its own good. Recall the incident on the Mississippi when a bulk carrier's engine unaccountably stopped, causing the ship to collide with a shopping mall in New Orleans. Pilots tell me about engine management systems that like to shut down the main engine if the depth of water under the keel makes the sensors worried. It probably means well, as it doesn't want silt in the intakes, but the person controlling the ship would rather it kept the machinery running at a time when it is badly needed and didn't try and think for itself.

You ought to be able to trust your machinery, not worry about what it might do next, but so many ship systems are interconnected that this illustration of “the machinery knows best” is not uncommon.

But the clever designers of intelligent equipment aren't going to go back to basics when they have amazing things to sell us. I was reading about the arrival on the marine scene of auto-docking systems, which will take all the angst out of ship manoeuvring in tight places, leaving the bridge team to sit with smiles on their faces, perhaps catching up on the paper work, while the sensors and computers dock the ship, or take it away from the berth.

But what will this do for the ship-handling skills of the humans? This was a comment made by a ferry Master in a discussion about this brilliant technological leap forward, as he pointed out that his skills came with practice, and if he wasn't allowed to handle the controls, he wouldn't know what to do when the machine went berserk and he was called to intervene.

The fancier the equipment we get, said a somewhat sceptical Chief Engineer, the more that can go wrong. Confirmation of a sort came from The Shipowners' Club survey into Ship Alarm Systems (see Page 10), which have turned the average bridge or engine control room from a place of peace and concentration to a cacophony of noise, with alarms going off all the time. Most of the time there isn't anything about which they should be alarmed; it is that they are too delicate for their own good and unsuitable for the sort of rough life they will get aboard a ship.

Right environment: A friend told me of some sophisticated control equipment that was installed in the engine room of one of his ships, which never worked properly. It was very expensive, so he took the matter up with the Managing Director of the manufacturer, who was apologetic on hearing that his gear was misbehaving, but was then appalled to



“Don't worry – it's just the kettle boiling!”

hear that some ill-advised person had installed into such a hostile environment as a ship's engine room, when it was designed to operate in an air-conditioned, non-vibrating environment, safely ashore. You wonder how often this sort of thing goes on, then you hear all the alarms when you put the main engine astern and there is a bit of vibration. And then, when something really goes wrong and sets off the alarm for real, nobody will believe it.

People are constantly telling us of the arrival of the intelligent ship, stuffed full of digitalisation. But will it be any better, and will it make life simpler for the crew? Will it be sufficiently robust? I have been ashore for many years, but recall sailing on ships that were more than thirty years old and with much of their original equipment installed, still functioning perfectly. But this laptop that I am writing this on is three years old and

(I am told) badly needs an upgrade – which probably means an expensive replacement.

Don't think that this is hankering for a return to the past and a simpler pace of seafaring life. There is no doubt that we have seen many wonderful advances, not least being the far more reliable machinery that doesn't need the maintenance old equipment did. But we ought to think about what is really needed to keep a complex structure in operation for a reasonable time, without having to upgrade its software and systems, at considerable cost, at regular intervals. You want equipment that doesn't have a mind of its own, but will do what you want, without too much fuss, or alarm. Now that would be an intelligent ship.

Michael Gray. *theSea*. Nov/Dec 2019. www.missiontoseafarers.org
Cartoon by Michael Grey.



Dealing with a persistent ringing in the ears. The Shipowners' Club's survey identifies some worrying trends when it comes to the silencing and ignoring of a range of alarms from shipboard equipment: As vessels and equipment on board become increasingly smarter, seafarers are required to learn additional skills for the ongoing operation and maintenance of these new forms of technology. The installation of additional and new technology on board should always be done with the intention of enhancing the seafarer's ability to safely and efficiently navigate and operate the vessel. However, with more equipment comes the potential for more alarms.

In 2017/2018 The Shipowners' Club's Loss prevention team ran a survey in conjunction with the Department of Psychology at Royal Holloway, University of London, to investigate whether alarms on the bridge affected the attention and focus of bridge watchkeepers.

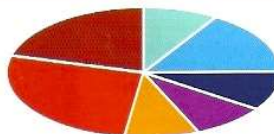
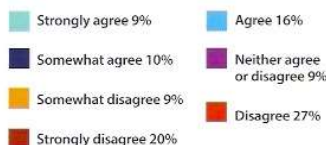
The survey was conducted by a questionnaire, which was circulated widely throughout many industry media such as The nautical Institute's publications, the UK Chamber of Shipping, Intermanager, ISWAN and the Club's media channels. After careful collation, we are now pleased to present our findings to our members, the survey participants and the wider industry.

Submissions were mainly from Masters and were from a wide variety of vessel types. Participants were first asked about the alarms themselves: "Are false alarms a problem and are alarms graded to alert the watchkeeping personnel of more urgent situations?"

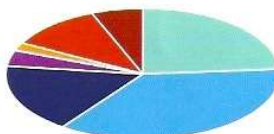
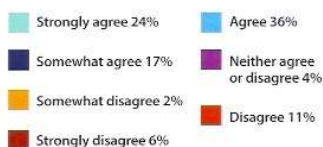
The responses revealed that 89% of participants thought false alarms were a problem and in a follow-up question 66% said the alarms were not easily detectable. Additionally, 57% of responses disagreed that alarms were graded by sound. This finding was further supported by a high number of free text comments that corroborated this view.



Alarm sounds are graded, such that alarms indicating more urgent situations sound more urgent than other alarms



Alarms that reoccur frequently are sometimes ignored/silenced and not actioned, as they are not considered a priority when carrying out other duties



The survey participants were then asked to comment on their knowledge of alarms and the systems they represent. It was positive to note that 85% of participants agreed that they were aware of the alarms and the systems.. However, when reviewing the free text comments, 50% of participants reported some frustration with the format of the alarms themselves. The issues disclosed mainly concerned the sounds being the same tone for all alarms and there being no distinguishing factors between alarm systems.

Turned off: When asked for comments on the statement: "Alarms that reoccur frequently are sometimes ignored/ silenced and not actioned, as they are not considered a priority when carrying out other navigation/ watch-keeping duties", some

responses confirmed the statement. This may relate to the issue highlighted in the previous responses regarding the difficulty of distinguishing between alarms.

The results from this statement could be taken as indicating that 77% of crew do not want to be disturbed from their watchkeeping duties. This could be interpreted as a positive result; however, this result also presents a

danger that the crew will not recognise the importance of the alarms sounding and could be unaware of a developing emergency. The results from these questions present a reoccurring theme regarding the grading of alarms to assist the watchkeeper.

Another factor that appeared frequently in the free text answers was the crew's readiness to silence alarms without investigation due to 'alarm fatigue', caused by repeated alarm soundings for no apparent reason. When asked, 45% of the respondents agreed that this happened. When this was analysed by the level of role, 44% of Masters, 41% of Chief Officers, 48% of Second Officers and 60% of Third Officers agreed, showing that this practice was prevalent among all ranks.

A further concern is that, with respect to the Bridge Navigational Watch Alarm System, 24% (56) of participants reported that they never or seldom engaged this system.

To conclude, the survey evaluation identified that the main issue raised was frequent alarm fatigue followed by the alarms being hard to identify and then the design of the alarms system or bridge itself.

It is evident from the feedback of these seafarers that the current regulations and arrangements relating to bridge alarm monitoring and systems can be improved upon to allow crew to fully utilise the benefits of the technology being made available to them. Doing so would improve the working environment of seafarers and may assist with the reduction of related claims.

<https://www.shipownersclub.com/investigating-the-effects-of-bridge-alarms/>



SHIPOWNERS

Charts - who needs them? NOAA – sunseting of raster & paper charts

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued a notice announcing that it is undertaking a five-year program to end all raster and paper nautical chart production. Comments are due by 1 February 2020. [84 Fed. Reg. 62512](#) (11/15/19)

[\[https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-11-15/pdf/2019-24807.pdf\]](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-11-15/pdf/2019-24807.pdf).

Federal Register / Vol. 84, No. 221 / Friday, November 15, 2019 / Notices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Sunseting of Raster Nautical Charts

AGENCY: Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NOAA is undertaking a five-year program to end all raster and paper nautical chart production. Ultimately, production of all NOAA paper nautical charts, raster navigational charts (NOAA RNC®), and related products, such as BookletCharts™ will cease. NOAA is seeking feedback from chart users and companies that provide products and services based on NOAA raster and electronic navigational chart (NOAA ENC®) products. This information will shape the manner and timing in which the product sunseting process will proceed. More detailed information regarding this transition is available from <https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/publications/docs/raster-sunset.pdf>.

DATES: Comments are due by midnight, February 1, 2020.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments on the Sunseting of Raster Nautical Charts through NOAA's ASSIST feedback tool at <https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/customer-service/assist>, or via mail to:

National Ocean Service, NOAA (NCS2),

ATTN Sunset of Raster Charts, 1315

East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910–3282.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Coast and Geodetic Survey Act of 1947 and the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act requires that NOAA compile and distribute nautical charts and other nautical publications. These statutes do not specify a particular format for chart products. NOAA and its predecessor agencies have produced paper nautical charts of the U.S. Coasts, its territorial waters, and the Great Lakes since the mid-1800s. NOAA has produced electronic navigational charts (ENCs) since 1993.

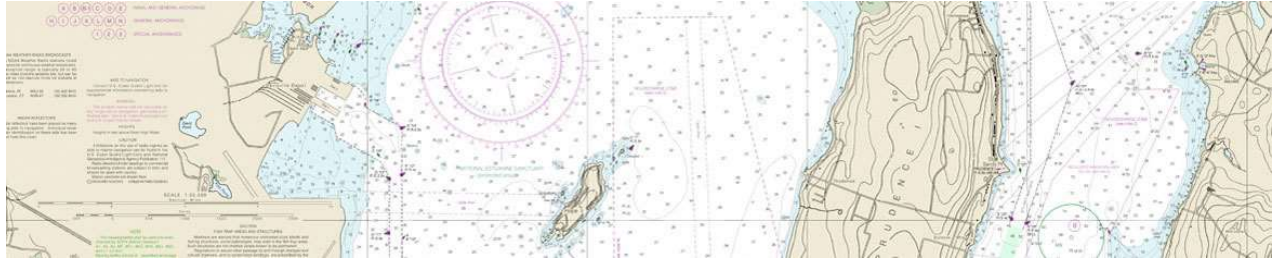
The International Maritime Organization now mandates that all large commercial vessels on international voyages use ENCs. In 2016, the USCG started allowing regulated commercial vessels on domestic voyages to use ENCs in lieu of paper charts. Recreational boaters are also increasingly using electronic chart displays.

Use of NOAA ENCs surpassed paper nautical charts in 2011. ENC sales increased 425% since 2008, while sales of paper charts are now half of 2008 levels. The current NOAA nautical chart product suites comprise 1,258 electronic navigational charts (NOAA ENC®) and 1,007 NOAA raster/paper nautical charts. NOAA has started a multi-year program to create a standard gridded layout and increase the scale of ENCs. This will increase the number of detailed NOAA ENCs to about 9,000. NOAA is undertaking a five-year program to end all raster and paper nautical chart production. Ultimately, production of all NOAA paper nautical charts, raster navigational charts (NOAA RNC®), and related products, such as BookletCharts™ will cease.

NOAA is taking steps to provide a NOAA Custom Chart web-based application that will enable users to download and print raster chart backup files created from the most up-to-date ENC data. The NOAA Custom Chart prototype is available from <https://devgis.charttools.noaa.gov/pod>. These chart backup files will look somewhat different from traditional paper nautical charts, but will provide a similar functionality. NOAA seeks comments from the public regarding the raster and paper chart product sunset transition and is particularly interested in:

- suggestions for improving the NOAA Custom Chart web application, and
- understanding other non-navigational uses for paper or raster nautical charts.

Richard Brennan, Acting Director, Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. [FR Doc. 2019-24807 Filed 11-14-19; 8:45 am]



Plotting her own course: Meet the Newfoundland marine Captain navigating her way in a man's world: Charlene Munden is making her mark in the male-dominated marine shipping industry. It's late July and a massive ship is squeezing through the St. Lambert Lock in Montreal. The length of nearly four hockey rinks, the *Tim S. Dool* is a familiar sight in the St. Lawrence Seaway. The ship is built to navigate the Great Lakes, canals and a network of locks that gradually lift vessels like this more than 180 metres above sea level. Once inside the lock on Montreal's South Shore, the doors are closed and 90 million litres of water is pumped in. Within minutes, the *Dool* rises 4½ metres, and slowly carries on to the next lock.



Munden performs one of the more delicate — and dangerous — navigational tasks during a voyage through the St. Lawrence Seaway. In the canals, just metres separate these building-sized ships as they pass each other. (Bruce Tilley/CBC)

Ships like the *Dool* deliver the commodities that help keep North America's economy humming, and on this day is weighed down with more than 27,000 tonnes of iron ore pellets from the Labrador Trough.

Reaching the heart of North America: It's a process repeated many times before the *Dool* reaches the Great Lakes, and the heart of North America. It's an amazing feat of engineering, but it's so common around here that it barely elicits a second glance from passers-by. There's something unique about the *Dool* on this day, however. You have to look to the bridge, high inside the large white superstructure near the stern of the ship. From a distance, behind a row of windows, you can see a silhouette of a person, hair pulled into a ponytail. Meet Capt. Charlene Munden, Master on board the *Dool*.

She's from a tiny Newfoundland outpost and is making her way — quite literally — in a man's world.

"Right now we've got 20 on board. There are three women — the rest are men — [and] the other two are cooks," Munden says as she greets her two guests, a CBC News crew that will follow her for the next two days.

They call her “Cap or Ma’am”: Her gender is not the only thing that sets her apart in this industry. Her crew calls her Cap, or Ma’am, and since Oct. 6 she’s added another title: Mother, but more on that later. On this voyage, Munden is six months pregnant. “They’re all treating me like they’re all dads now,” she says of the crew. “They’re taking good care of me here.”

The ship is making its way from Port Cartier, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, to a steel factory in Hamilton.

The ship is not home, but for Munden it’s the next best thing. “I think it suits my personality,” she says. “I’m not a big people person.”

She’s a rare find: Dozens of Canadian-flagged bulk carriers navigate the Great Lakes, but you could seat all the female Captains inside a compact car — and still have room for another passenger.

Munden is an inspiration to the other women on board.

“She’s bringing [women] way forward into the future,” says Paula Morley, a native Cape Bretoner who has worked 32 years on the Great Lakes.

Morley, the Chief Cook on the *Dool*, knows how difficult it can be for a woman to work in the shipping industry.

It wasn’t long ago that she would discourage it because it was “pretty rough.” Not anymore.

“There’s a lot of protection for women out here now. Nowadays the men have finally started to realize that it’s unacceptable.”

Women are in demand: Women like Munden and Morley comprise just two per cent of the world’s 1.2 million seafarers. So the industry is trying to bridge that gender gap.

“We’ve got a lot of work to do to drive more awareness, to continuously adapt and adopt our practices to better suit women,” says Chamber of Marine Commerce president Bruce Burrows.

The shipping industry is desperate for workers, with vacancies in every specialty. And companies want to attract more women to help fill the void. “I think tradition is a bit of a barrier,” Burrows adds. “It is an industry that has traditionally attracted men. Add sometimes men haven’t been as accommodating in the workplace to accept women.”

Terry Roberts. Nov. 17th 2019. Terry Roberts is a journalist with CBC’s bureau in St. John’s, NL.

There is far more to this article. You can see it all at: -

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/captain-great-lakes-1.5351286>

See the brand new paint job on the *Tim S. Dool*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O80e2zx9WRg>



November 22nd was the day for this year’s BCIT Foundation Awards Ceremony. It took place in the gymnasium on the BCIT Main Campus. I attended on behalf of the Society to present the NPESC First Year Achievement Award to Dylan Shaver, a Nautical Science Cadet now in his Second Year at the BCIT Marine

**BCIT
ENTRANCE AWARDS AND
SCHOLARSHIPS CELEBRATION 2019**

Campus. It used to be that the student and the donor would be called to the stage to make the presentation. However, that system has changed. The cheque is mailed to the student and the idea for the “Celebration” is for the student and donor to meet. In addition to Dylan, our table had two other Second Year Cadets. Alysha Bacus had been awarded the BC Alumni Association Award and Kyle Clare had won an award from the Ocean Park Foundation Marine Award. Absent on the day were Nautical Science Cadets Mael Pronovost (Port of Vancouver Entrance Award in Memory of Richard C. Pearce), Joseph Kernaghan (Ocean Park Foundation Marine Award) and Dmitry Fedosov (Oak maritime Award).

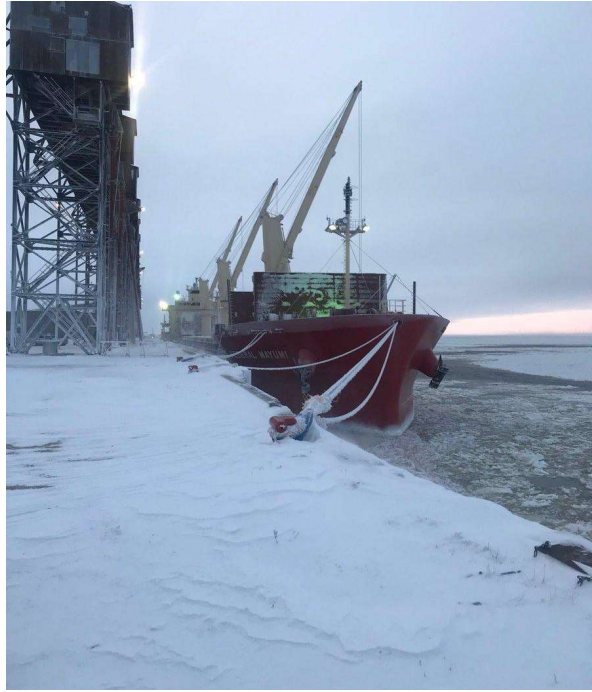


David Whitaker, Kyle Clare, Dylan Shaver, Alysha Bacus, Jeff Otto.

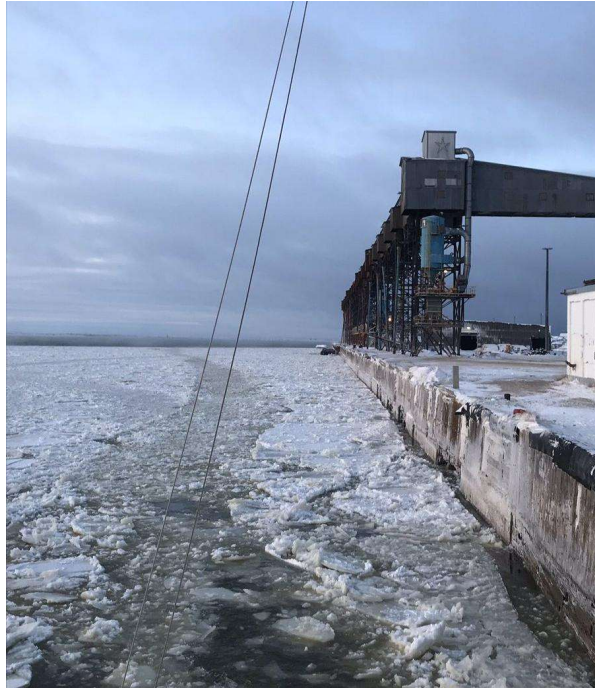
Son of a gun: The phrase originated as 'son of a military man' (i.e. a gun). The most commonly repeated version in this strand is that the British Navy used to allow women to live on naval ships. Any child born on board who had uncertain paternity would be listed in the ship's log as 'son of a gun'. While it is attestable fact that, although the Royal Navy had rules against it, they did turn a blind eye to women (wives or prostitutes) joining sailors on voyages, so this version has plausibility on its side.

Press gangs were rife in those days and many of the seamen were forced into long unwanted voyages, whilst others smuggled their girl friends and wives aboard before the ship sailed. These women were mostly of an immoral nature and were, to my knowledge, the only women to go to sea. Here, the term "Son of a gun" came into being. When a pregnant woman was having difficulty bearing her baby, the expectant mother was taken on deck and laid under one of the enormous cannons, which was then fired. The shock of the explosion usually brought forward the birth, hence "Son of a gun". From "Sea Breezes" July 1996, Page 570: A Naval Heroine.

Report from the Port of Churchill, Manitoba (From: <https://twitter.com/captainjowsey?lang=en>)



November 6th 2019: Still loading in Churchill. Time is running out. Harbour is starting to freeze up.



November 6th 2019: That is it. That is all. Last ship has departed. See you next year.

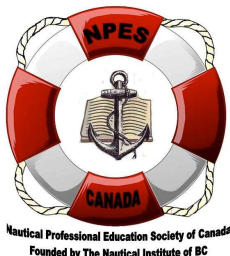
Your Society. Do you wish to make a financial contribution to the Society? Is it time for you to renew your membership? The Annual Membership Fee remains at \$40.00 but any amount that you can donate will be greatly appreciated.

Please make your cheque payable to the NPESC and mail it to: -

Nautical Professional Education Society of Canada,
3648 Glenview Crescent, North Vancouver, B.C. V7R 3E8

Thank you.

Contributions to the NPESC are tax deductible. Charitable Registration # 1039049-20



Articles or comments for inclusion in future editions
of Seatimes can be sent to me at whitknit@telus.net
David Whitaker FNI

