

Casualties: NTSB releases preliminary findings into SEACOR Power capsizing

PROFESSIONAL MARINER

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JOURNAL OF THE MARITIME INDUSTRY

**McAllister Towing's
all-female tugboat crew**

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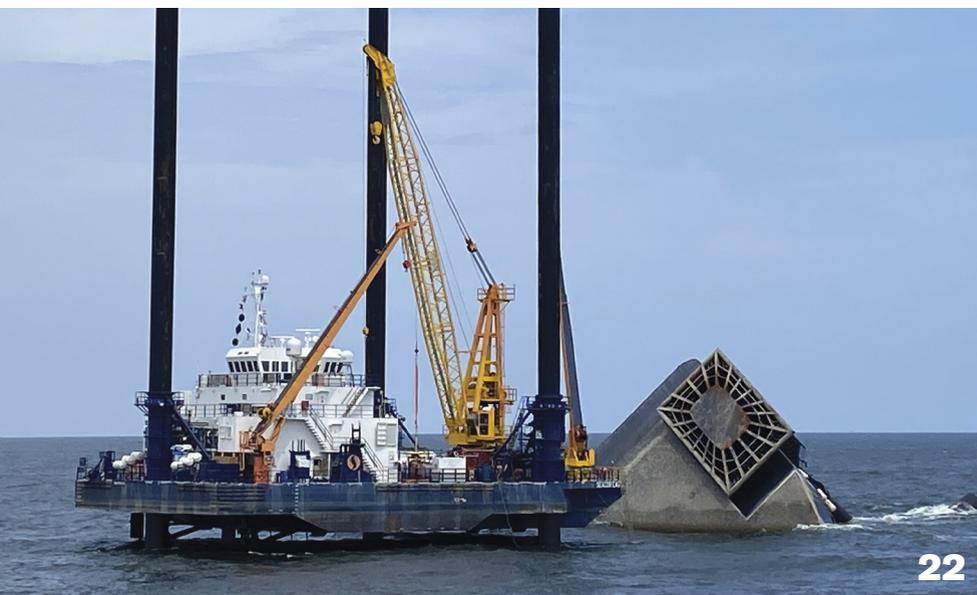
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Andrew McAllister Capt. Sarah Kaplan assists the tanker *Palanca Rio* off the dock in South Portland, Maine. For a week or two each month, Kaplan leads an all-female tugboat crew.

Photo by Casey Conley



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Signals

Changing winds in Washington could boost maritime investment

By David Tyler

President Joe Biden has set lofty goals for offshore wind power over the next decade. Achieving them will require rapid growth in the offshore wind industry, which in turn could generate billions of dollars in new investment and thousands of new jobs.

“First and foremost, what we all need to understand is that this is a generationally changing opportunity for the United States, and in particular the maritime industry,” said Jeff Andreini, vice president of Crowley’s New Energy Division. “It’s like night and day.”

The federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) in May approved the Vineyard Wind project that will site up to 62 wind turbines 12 nautical miles off Martha’s Vineyard, Mass. The project, a joint venture between Avangrid Renewables and Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners, is the first large-scale offshore wind project approved in the U.S.

Other large projects are not far behind. Dominion Energy, which recently built two turbines 27 miles off Virginia Beach, Va., is seeking approval for a 2.6-GW project that

could grow to 190 turbines. The price tag is about \$7.8 billion.

The five-turbine Block Island Offshore Wind project south of Rhode Island was the first project of its kind in the U.S. when it came online in late 2016. The 30-MW project generates enough power for about 17,000 homes.

Many offshore wind projects have been in the works for years. Several states have set aggressive targets for offshore wind, particularly Massachusetts, according to Liz Burdock, president of the Business Network for Offshore Wind. These efforts were slow to gain traction at the federal level as developers awaited key permits and approvals.

“We were at the point where, in late 2020, we had to have the federal permitting process pick up the pace, because we had 13 projects that had submitted their plans” to BOEM, said Burdock. “We were starting to get backlogged.”

Full-time jobs in the offshore wind industry are projected at 19,209 by 2025, according to a study done by the American Wind Energy Association.

The burgeoning industry is still



Orrsted



Left, the wind farm installation vessel Charybdis, shown here in a rendering, is under construction at Keppel AmFELS shipyard in Texas. Opposite page, Block Island Wind's five turbines came online in late 2016.

Dominion Energy

building the infrastructure to support that growth. Andreini cited the need for new supply chains, training for mariners and the establishment of hubs along the East Coast where vessels and crew can be located. The industry also needs a fleet of specialized Jones Act-compliant support vessels. Crowley is opening an office and a maritime hub on the East Coast, where it will keep two-to-four ocean class tugboats and up to eight barges. In June, Crowley signed a contract with RelyOn Nutec to create a training program for the offshore wind industry.

The need for specialized vessels to help build, operate and maintain the wind farms is a challenge for the industry, which needs between 250 and 400 such vessels, according to Andreini. "Somebody has to step in and fill that void," he said.

Specifically, the industry will need crew transfer vessels (CTV) to carry technicians back and forth from the offshore turbines for maintenance and inspections; service operations vessels (SOV) that help with turbine servicing and repair work and serve

as in-field accommodations; feeder support vessels (FSV) to carry deck cargo such as turbines and blades to the installation vessel; and wind turbine installation vessels (WTIV) that physically build turbines.

Construction began last December at the Keppel AmFELS shipyard in Brownsville, Texas, on the first U.S.-flagged installation vessel. Called Charybdis, the 472-by-184-foot ship will cost nearly \$500 million. Its main crane will have a boom length of 426 feet with a lifting capacity of 2,200 tons. Commissioned by Dominion Energy, it can also house up to 119 crew.

Dominion announced in early June that Ørsted and Eversource will charter Charybdis upon delivery, likely in late 2023. The two companies will use the ship to support construction of the Revolution Wind and Sunrise Wind projects planned south of Rhode Island. The two projects are expected to produce more than 1.6 GW of electricity.

As the oil and gas industry declines in the Gulf of Mexico and elsewhere, some expect a portion of

these jobs will pivot into offshore wind. The Biden Administration in June announced efforts to explore offshore wind development in that region.

"There may be a decline in one industry but opportunities for people and companies with skills that are very transferrable" are opening up, said Matt Smith, director of offshore wind at the Hampton Roads Alliance.

“Offshore wind power is the next big market in the U.S. and the next big offshore market. I think in the next five years it's going to overtake oil and gas in terms of revenue generation and opportunity.”

— Bruce Harland, president of Crowley's Wind Farm Program

The rapid pace of offshore wind development that many experts expect in the next decade portends a wave of new opportunity, said Bruce Harland, president of Crowley's Wind Farm Program.

"Offshore wind power is the next big market in the U.S. and the next big offshore market," he said. "I think in the next five years it's going to overtake oil and gas in terms of revenue generation and opportunity."

Bouchard pays crewman fired after cooperating in accident probe

By Bill Bleyer

Bouchard Transportation Co. paid \$375,000 to a mariner fired after cooperating with authorities investigating a fatal 2017 explosion.

Under an agreement with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the payments came from an insurer representing the company and the three executives, Morton S. Bouchard III, Brendan Bouchard and Kevin Donohue.

Bouchard Transportation, based in Long Island, N.Y., did not respond to a request for comment.

OSHA previously ordered Bouchard to pay back wages with interest and more than \$250,000 for emotional distress and punitive damages to the mariner. The settlement was announced as Bouchard, which describes itself as the “nation’s largest independently owned ocean-going petroleum barge company,” undergoes chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings.

Judge David R. Jones of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Texas in February removed Bouchard III as chief executive. Jones installed Matthew Ray, managing partner of Chicago-based Portage Point Partners, as chief restructuring officer to replace Bouchard.

The OSHA settlement stems from an October 2017 explosion aboard the barge *B. No. 255* off Port Aransas, Texas, that killed two crew members. The explosion also discharged about 2,000 barrels of crude oil, causing more than \$5 million in



Casey Conley, file photo

A federal bankruptcy judge has removed Mort Bouchard III, above, as chief executive of Bouchard Transportation.

damage. Du’Jour Vanterpool, 26, of Houston, and Zachariah Jackson, 28, of Salt Lake City, Utah, died in the explosion.

Morgan Jackson, the brother of one victim, also was a Bouchard employee but not aboard the barge at the time. He was later fired after he cooperated with investigators and reported other safety issues.

OSHA concluded that the dismissal qualified as retaliation under the Seaman’s Protection Act. “Employers and vessel owners must know and respect that, under the Seaman’s Protection Act, seamen have the right to report safety concerns and cooperate with the U.S. Coast Guard and other safety investigators,” OSHA Regional Administrator Richard Mendelson said in a statement.

Under its whistleblower policy, OSHA did not name the seaman who received the financial payment from Bouchard.

Besides paying the whistleblower,

Bouchard agreed to remove from its files any reference to the seaman’s termination and provide any future employer only his position and the dates of his employment.

The National Transportation Safety Board concluded that the explosion was likely caused by vapor released when crude oil leaked through a corroded bulkhead.

Bouchard has had other run-ins with regulators. In 2004, the company pleaded guilty to violating the Clean Water Act and was fined \$10 million for a 2003 oil spill that fouled 90 miles of coast in Buzzards Bay, Mass.

In 2014, the New York Power Authority accused a Bouchard tugboat and barge of damaging an underwater cable near Hempstead Harbor by dropping an anchor on it.

Bouchard and 51 subsidiaries in September 2020 filed petitions to restructure through the Chapter 11 bankruptcy process. That followed an earlier announcement last year that the company had obtained financing to settle multiple claims from dockage firms and employees who said that they had not been paid.

Bouchard Transportation was founded in 1918, and its first cargo was a shipment of coal. By 1931, Bouchard acquired its first oil barge. Over the past century and five generations of family ownership, Bouchard expanded its fleet to 25 barges and 26 tugs operating in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean Sea.

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US supports accelerated IMO greenhouse gas goals

By Gary Wollenhaupt

The United States has signed on to the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) new goal of achieving zero emissions from international shipping by 2050.

John Kerry, the Biden Administration's Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, in April announced the U.S. supports aggressively reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the maritime industry. He said the country will work toward eliminating them by 2050, rather than at the end of the century as outlined in the initial IMO strategy announced in 2018.

The IMO's initial decarbonization plan will undergo review by IMO member nations at the 76th meeting of the Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) in June. At that meeting, known as MEPC 76, member states will consider additional guidelines and requirements under MARPOL Annex VI, some of which may take effect as early as 2023.

The European Commission has previously pushed the IMO to be more aggressive in cutting emissions and has called for the shipping industry to eliminate greenhouse emissions by 2050, rather than only a 50-percent reduction as called for in the initial IMO Strategy.

"The international shipping sector produces a level of greenhouse gas emissions that is equivalent to the emissions of a major national economy," Kerry told a conference hosted by the Ocean Conservancy in April. "But the technologies that we

need to decarbonize shipping are known to us. They need investment, and they need to be scaled up.

"It is incumbent on all nations to send a clear signal to industry, so they will make the right investments in a clean future," he continued.

With the commitment, the United States joined Saudi Arabia as the only countries that have formally pledged to work toward the IMO's greenhouse gas objectives.

The U.S. commitment came after European Union and British officials sent a letter to President Biden in March urging the U.S. to address shipping emissions under the 2015 Paris climate agreement. The letter included the IMO's recommendation that responsibility for all ship emissions should be split between the country of origin and the country of destination.

Kerry's statement suggests the United States is closely aligned with many European IMO member states when it comes to reducing emissions from the shipping industry. The announcement included the term "zero emissions" rather than "net-zero emissions," which suggests the Biden administration supports the complete elimination of greenhouse gas emissions from shipping by 2050, without resorting to market-based offsets.

The U.S. Department of State's Shipping Coordinating Committee, in conjunction with the U.S.



Coast Guard, held a public meeting to discuss the various agenda items to be covered at MEPC 76, including greenhouse emissions from shipping. If the IMO's efforts are successful, the industry can expect more stringent ship emissions and efficiency requirements under MARPOL Annex VI on a more aggressive timeline.

Some international shipping lines, such as Maersk, have already developed strategies that exceed IMO standards due to pressure from customers, cargo owners and shippers who support emission reduction efforts.

The U.S. Congress is also addressing the issue. On April 15, 2021, the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee held a hearing on decarbonization of the maritime industry. Through industry testimony, Congress has recognized that decarbonization of the maritime industry is a massively complex undertaking.

The hearing focused on four primary objectives: developing an active U.S. presence in international standards bodies, federal investment in ports and shoreside infrastructure, development of alternative fuel technologies, and identifying costs associated with complying with new standards.

Professional Mariner magazine appoints new editor

Professional Mariner magazine has a new editor at the helm.

Publisher Dave Abrams appointed associate editor Casey Conley to the top editorial post effective



June 1. He replaces Rich Miller, who last fall announced his intention to retire. Miller will stay with the magazine in a consulting role.

“I’ve been reading Casey’s articles for years now, and I am confident that his past experience as an investigative reporter and writer have prepared him well to move up into the editor’s role,” Abrams said. “As editor of *American Tugboat Review* and *American Ship Review*, Casey has experienced what it takes to pull a publication together from beginning to end.

“Rich has done an outstanding job in setting up Casey for success, and I am thrilled Rich will remain with our team on a part-time basis,” Abrams continued.

Conley came to *Professional Mariner* with a background in newspaper reporting. He started writing freelance articles for the magazine in 2010 and joined the staff full time in 2016 as associate editor. In that role, he oversaw coverage of maritime casualties and edited *American Tugboat Review*. Last fall, he took over as editor of *American Ship Review* as well.

“*Professional Mariner* is unique for its special focus on mariners and maritime safety,” Conley said. “This industry faces new challenges and opportunities ranging from automation to offshore wind to alternative propulsion. We will continue to provide original reporting on these and other topics affecting people who work in this vital sector.”

Miller became editor in May 2016. He led the magazine during a period of rapid change in the maritime and publishing industries. Under his leadership, *Professional Mariner* improved its website and social media strategies. The magazine pursued aggressive coverage of the *El Faro* sinking, piracy on the high seas, and the rise of hacking and other cyber-threats. He assigned and edited stories addressing difficult topics, including sexual harassment faced by female mariners.

“My time at *Professional Mariner* has been extremely rewarding, both as a contributing writer and as editor,” Miller said. “My goal was to follow the lead of previous editors John Gormley and Dom Yanchunas, delivering compelling news coverage to an often overlooked but critical segment of the North American economy: the men and women who work on the water. I am confident the magazine will continue to serve its readers well under Casey’s direction.”

Conley assumes the editor’s post during a time of transition for *Professional Mariner*. Abrams’

company, Maritime Publishing, acquired *Professional Mariner* and its sister publication, *Ocean Navigator*, in March 2021. Maritime Publishing also relaunched the West Coast magazines *Pacific Maritime* and *Fishermen’s News*.

Miller’s departure from a full-time role at *Professional Mariner* coincides with the retirement of longtime Gulf Coast correspondent Brian Gauvin. Gauvin’s excellent reporting and photography documented the lives and work of countless mariners. Many of these stories appeared in the popular “Vessels at Work” section in the center of the magazine. His photos appeared on the cover more than 100 times.

Professional Mariner is hiring for a staff writer to replace Conley, and is recruiting freelance writers to reach all corners of the maritime industry.

Despite these changes, *Professional Mariner* remains focused on its core mission of reporting news that is relevant, timely and valuable to mariners. We are committed to making this information available in whatever format our readers and subscribers prefer. To that end, the company will soon re-launch the website with new features and a format that is easier to navigate.

“*Professional Mariner* subscribers have high standards. So do we,” Conley said. “We will continue to produce the best maritime journalism while highlighting the men and women who keep this industry going.”

Towing

Story and photos by Casey Conley

Job well done knows no gender on Maine-based McAllister tug

Palanca Rio backed away from the terminal on a damp and dreary spring morning in Maine. Capt. Sarah Kaplan, helming the tugboat *Andrew McAllister*, stretched her

line and began pulling aft to swing the tanker's bow to port.

The ship, carrying only ballast after offloading its asphalt cargo over the preceding day, spun more than 90 degrees without

difficulty. Within minutes of getting underway, it was centered in the Fore River and beginning its outbound transit from Portland.

"I'm sorry we didn't have a more interesting

job for you," Kaplan said as the ship started moving ahead toward the open waters of Casco Bay.

The undocking maneuver was typical for McAllister Towing's Maine tugboat crews,



Capt. Sarah Kaplan operates the 6,000-hp *Andrew McAllister* in South Portland, Maine. She joined McAllister as a captain more than two years ago.



Left, deck hand Kelsea Anair works with a *Palanca Rio* crewman to get a line onto the ship. Below, Capt. Jake Forgit helps the 1,800-hp *Roderick McAllister* working off the tanker's port side.

who are accustomed to assisting tankers calling on the Fore River terminals. But the voyage itself was somewhat unique given the all-female crew aboard the 6,000-hp *Andrew McAllister*.

Kaplan, a two-year captain with *McAllister*, was joined on the voyage by deck hands Keely Ryan and Kelsea Anair. The three work different schedules, but once or twice a month they align for a week at a time.

"We like to have fun," Kaplan said after the tug returned to the company dock in downtown Portland. "We don't take ourselves too seriously, but we do our jobs well."

Andrew McAllister

got underway from the Maine State Pier at about 1100 for the noon job working the Marshall Islands-flagged *Palanca Rio*. The 437-foot ship was docked at Global Terminal, about two miles away on the South Portland side of the river.

Kaplan steered the tugboat around the pier's eastern edge and turned west in the Fore River.

The vessel passed the city's working waterfront that is still home to bustling fish markets, seafood exporters and lobster wholesalers.

The past year has been challenging for Portland, as it was for many smaller ports across the United States. Fewer



tankers called on the region as demand fell for gasoline and other petroleum products. The lack of cruise ships, large and small, weighed on the local maritime sector and the city's tourism industry.

The pandemic-related disruptions came amid

historic changes in the region's shipping needs. The Portland-Montreal Pipe Line, which used to bring a dozen large tankers a month, now draws just a few ships a year. The paper and wood products trade has slowed dramatically, although there is some optimism it

Right, deck hand Keely Ryan tosses a line onto the tugboat *Fournier Girls* at McAllister's dock in downtown Portland, Maine. Below, Ryan and fellow deck hand Kelsea Anair assist docking pilot Brian Fournier back onto *Andrew McAllister*.



will bounce back in a different form.

"This is the first full year that we haven't moved a forestry product from Portland in forever," Capt. Brian Fournier, who leads McAllister's Portland office and the Portland docking pilots, said while transiting to *Palanca Rio* aboard *Andrew McAllister*.

Other trends within the port are more positive. The city's container facility at the International Marine Terminal does a robust trade with Iceland through the Eimskip shipping line. Bottled water, frozen fish and numerous other products move back and forth between the two nations. The 459-foot,

Portugal-flagged container-ship *Pictor* was docked at the terminal as *Andrew McAllister* passed by.

Minutes later, the tug passed under the Casco Bay Bridge marking the edge of the harbor. *Palanca Rio* lay about a mile ahead, berthed starboard side to the terminal that runs perpendicular to the river. Kaplan came alongside and Fournier climbed aboard the ship carrying a stack of periodicals for the crew. Anair got a line onto the tanker while Fournier made his way to the bridge.

The ship got underway shortly after noon with *Andrew McAllister* positioned at the port bow and the 1,800-hp *Roderick McAllister* work-

ing off the stern. The two tugs worked initially to keep the ship from moving side to side in either direction.

“They just keep me safely in the channel and as straight as I could possibly go,” Fournier explained later. “I don’t want the stern or bow getting too far off that pier because there is not a lot of water.”

Fournier issued a series of engine commands as the ship backed off the terminal. Kaplan acknowledged each with a short whistle rather than over radio, a local tradition that started before the advent of VHF. Fournier released

Roderick before *Andrew* began backing to swing the bow counterclockwise, to the east. Before long, the ship was centered in the channel and ready for departure.

Kaplan is a Maine Maritime Academy graduate who spent eight years moving oil barges for Kirby on the West Coast. A Maine native, she returned home about five years ago to work for a marine construction company on the coast.

The job change gave her the chance to go home on most nights instead of commuting cross-country every six weeks. She joined McAllister full time after first

serving in a relief role. “I like it,” she said of the ship-assist work. “I just wish we were busier.”

Joining McAllister provided her first full-time ship-assist experience, and *Andrew McAllister* is her first tractor tug. She considers the vessel “a tank” that uses its heft effectively when docking and undocking tankers and other ships calling around Portland. What it lacks in agility it makes up for in power.

“Most of what we are doing (in Portland) is sticking to one side (of the hull) and just pushing and pulling,” she said.

Ryan grew up on boats in New England, and her

“We like to have fun. We don't take ourselves too seriously, but we do our jobs well.”

Capt. Sarah Kaplan

Deck hands Kelsea Anair, left, and Keely Ryan share a laugh aboard *Andrew McAllister* while hauling in the towline. The winch is a JonRie Series 250.





Left, Andrew McAllister and Roderick McAllister assist the Irving tanker *Acadian* off the dock in South Portland, Maine. Opposite page, the all-female crew of Ryan, Kaplan and Anair pause alongside the McAllister dock in downtown Portland.

mom came from a fishing family. Ryan took a traditional “hawsepiper” route into the industry, starting her career as a deck hand on tour boats in Hawaii. She earned enough sea time to qualify as a small boat captain.

“I then drove tour boats and later workboats and small tugs in Pearl Harbor,” she said. “I was able to get onto the (P&R Water Taxi) Tiger Tugs in Pearl Harbor as a deckhand, which gained me the sea time I needed to eventually test and upgrade to my 500-ton mate’s license.”

Ryan returned to New England during the pandemic and was hired by McAllister last fall. “Portland is a gem,” she said of the city’s scenic harbor. “It’s like the Hawaii of

New England. It is so beautiful here.”

Anair, who grew up in Maine, graduated last year from Maine Maritime and is preparing to test for her 1,600-ton license. She said her classmates had multiple women, and many are preparing for careers at sea.

Although it is not common to have an all-female crew on an American tugboat, the U.S. towing industry is adding more female sailors all the time. Roughly 160 of the nearly 1,000 students at Marine Maritime are women, while at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, women account for about 200 of the 1,000 or so students.

Details on the total number of female mariners working in the Jones Act

trade could not be found.

Kaplan, Ryan and Anair admitted that working on an all-female tugboat crew was unusual, but each has worked alongside other female mariners elsewhere in their careers. Ryan worked with capable female captains in Hawaii, but considers her mom her biggest inspiration.

Kaplan, who worked alongside excellent female mariners at Kirby, said she focuses on being a good mariner, period.

That is the culture McAllister is trying to create, said Fournier, who handpicks his crews based on their skill and competence rather than their gender. “We are a small port and a small company,” he said. “Everyone

gets along, everyone is treated equally, and everyone is expected to do the job at the same high level.”

Andrew McAllister kept its line on *Palanca Rio*’s port bow as the ship sailed toward the Casco Bay Bridge at 4 knots. The channel is mostly straight between the Global Terminal and the bridge except for a short dogleg.

The bascule bridge dutifully swung upward as the tanker approached. Fournier, comfortable with the ship’s heading, released Andrew McAllister a quarter mile from the span. Anair and Ryan hauled in the line while Kaplan tucked in along *Palanca Rio*’s port side. She let the ship pass through the bridge’s narrow opening and then followed behind it.

At this point, Fournier handed over the conn to the sea pilot on board, who would guide the ship out to the pilot station 7



miles past the iconic Portland Head Light. Fournier walked to the boarding ladder and climbed down as Anair and Ryan held it in position against the ship's hull.

Palanca Rio continued to its next port while *Andrew McAllister* returned to the Maine State Pier. The crew took a short rest before heading deeper into the Fore River for another tanker-assist job later that evening.

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Dominion Energy

East Coast ports gear up for offshore wind development

By Nick Keppler

The Luxembourg-flagged *Vole Au Vent* helped build Dominion Energy's Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project off Virginia Beach. Its two turbines are now producing electricity.

President Joe Biden wants the United States to generate enough offshore wind energy to power 10 million homes by 2030, and his administration is looking to assist the burgeoning sector.

Specifically, the administration has proposed \$3 billion in federal loans, quicker permitting and the establishment of an offshore wind power priority zone off New York and New Jersey. The plan also calls for \$230 million in port upgrades to support and facilitate large-scale offshore wind projects.

The administration in May

approved Vineyard Wind, the first major U.S. offshore wind project, which aims to build roughly 60 turbines 14 miles off the Massachusetts coast. A network of East Coast ports are preparing their facilities to support these projects as they move toward construction.

"I think, as with anything, it would be better if we were further along," said Matthew Tremblay, senior vice president of global offshore markets for ABS. "The investment is happening. ... I think that as we see development happen, the ports will rise to meet the needs."

Not any port can be a port for the wind energy industry. Turbine components require an infrastructure that can accommodate their massive size and weight. Blades extending 120 feet and nacelles weighing 400 tons cannot be trucked on highways. As such, ports need space to manufacture them on site or assemble them after they arrive by water.

Once on ships, many parts are delivered standing, so bridges, even tall ones, could render a port unsuitable. The heavy materials call for greater ground-bearing capacity than

most ports have. Typical capacities in U.S. ports are five tons per square meter, according to the Department of Energy. Monopiles, the skyscraper-like foundation of wind turbines, require bearing capacities that exceed 20 tons per square meter. Then there is the task of creating space for a new industry that deals in gigantic parts while still meeting the needs of other port users.

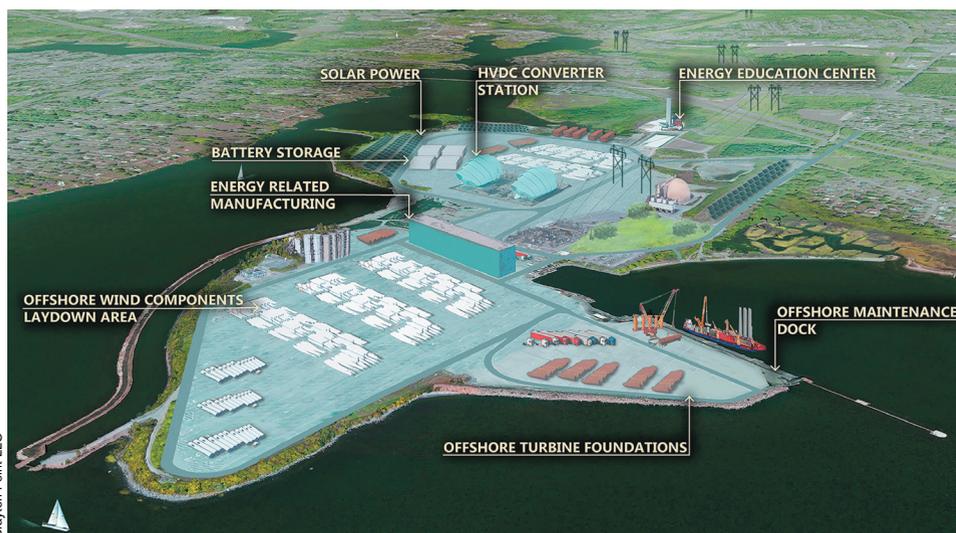
Rhode Island's Port of Providence, the launching site for the Block Island Wind Farm completed in late 2016, had some built-in advantages. There are no bridges blocking any area over the port, and the soil can support turbine parts. "Because of use of the



Brayton Point LLC

port over the years, we had an opportunistic bearing capacity," said Chris Waterson, general manager of Waterson Terminal Services, which operates the Port of Providence.

Still, with no manufacturing space, turbine components had to be shipped from Europe and assembled there. Ørsted U.S. Offshore Wind and the utility Eversource plan to build



Brayton Point LLC

a \$24 million manufacturing facility at the port.

The installation of wind farms on a scale to meet the Biden administration's goals will require a network of capable ports rather than a single hub. A report from the

Left, Brayton Point Commerce Center occupies the site of a former coal-fired power plant. A rendering, above, shows how Brayton Point could be organized to support offshore wind projects.

Mass., and the nearby New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal. Others include the ports of Bridgeport, New London and Norfolk in Connecticut.

Tradepoint Atlantic is a former steel mill turned into a 3,300-acre logistics center on a peninsula in Baltimore County. Ørsted has plans to modify the ground to increase bearing capacity and develop a staging center, with equipment able to move turbine parts.

The 200-acre New Jersey Wind Port, built on an artificial island in Salem County and scheduled for completion in 2023, represents the state's attempt to capitalize on a geographic advantage that puts it in the center of the span where most of the nation's wind farms will be built.

"The [New Jersey Economic Development Authority] did a lengthy analysis," said Jonathan Kennedy, managing director of the NJEDA. "We looked at 40 sites and nar-

rowed it based on technical specifications.”

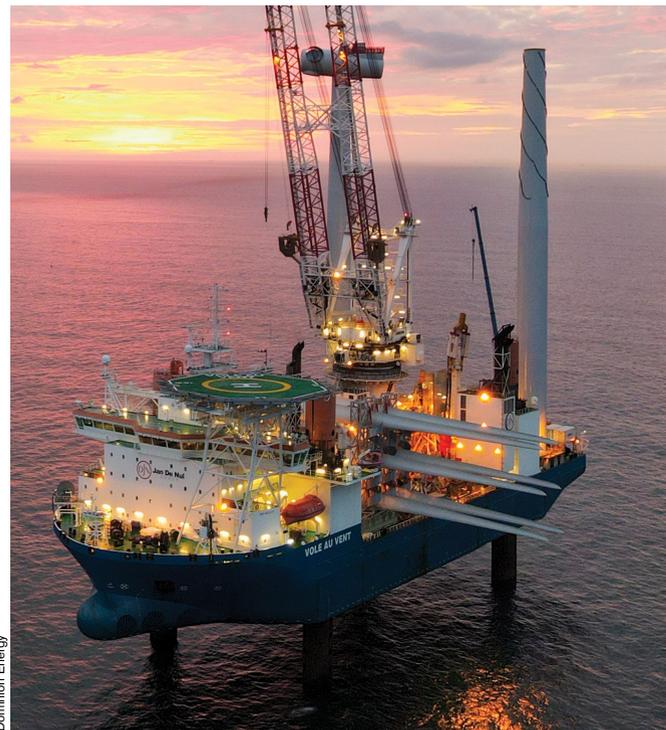
Plans include a 25-acre manufacturing area and a 30-acre marshaling yard where turbines can be assembled. Kennedy hopes it will be a hub for projects across the Eastern Seaboard.

Brayton Point Commerce Center, located at the tip of Somerset, Mass., in Mount Hope Bay, was previously home to a coal-fired power plant that closed in 2017. Last year, a brownfield redeveloper completed upgrades to adapt it into a wind energy hub. The facility can support heavy-lift

port operations and receive deep-draft vessels.

The 29-acre New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal was approved a decade ago and built specifically to be the nation’s first energy hub port. The semi-public Massachusetts Clean Energy Center runs the facility. It will handle most of the needs for the Vineyard Wind project.

“The idea of hubs is extremely exciting because it has created collaboration between the states,” said Ross Gould, vice president for supply chain development for the Business Network for Offshore



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Wind. "It's a great way to create a domestic supply chain."

The Port of Virginia, in Norfolk, also offers promise. The port "is 30 minutes to the open ocean, never freezes and still has plenty of other land along the rivers for manufacturing and assembly," the ABS report notes. Also, the port has no air draft or horizontal clearance restrictions.

Other ports are getting upgrades in partnership with the wind energy companies. Ørsted and Eversource have an agreement with the city of New London, in Connecticut, to modify its port for wind

Opposite, ports need the right facilities and attributes to support offshore wind development. Turbine pieces are heavy, and bridges could obstruct ships carrying tall equipment.

development. On the other end of the state, Vineyard and New York City-based McAlister Towing and Transportation plan to create a 18.3-acre waterfront industrial property in Bridgeport that can do some of the outfitting of wind turbine pieces. Vineyard Wind plans to use Bridgeport as a port in support of its 800-MW project.

Most wind energy activity is currently limited to the East Coast, although authorities are exploring the viability of similar projects in the Gulf of Mexico. The deeper waters and environmental protec-

tions of the West Coast make it unsuitable for wind turbine installation. However, floating farms are realistic possibilities.

"I think [port operators] still view it as being a few years out," said Tremblay, with ABS. Floating wind farms offer energy generation capabilities comparable to in-ground ones, he said. However, they are more expensive, as operators have to moor them. That segment of the industry needs to "be brought up to scale" before port owners and other stakeholders see a profit after the expensive and costly upfront investment. •

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At Work



Crescent Towing crews use power and finesse to get the job done in Mobile

Photos and story by Casey Conley

Having the right tool for the job can make all the difference, and that is certainly the case for Crescent Towing's Mobile, Ala., tugboat crews.

The company's 20 or so full-time mariners primarily run the 92-foot tractor tugs *Lisa Cooper* and *J.K. McLean*. The two 5,225-hp tugs entered service a decade ago.

"This boat has power and maneuverability," said *Lisa Cooper* Capt. Ronnie Walker. "There is just about nothing in this harbor we can't handle."

Most of Mobile's port facilities are located along the Mobile River near the city's downtown. Commodities moving through the port include metals, coal, lumber and

agricultural products. The city's container ports handled more than 424,000 TEUs in 2020, according to Alabama State Port Authority data.

"We've been getting ships in the 960-foot range regularly, but the 1,000-footers and the 1,100-footers are coming," said Travis Stringfellow, general manager for Crescent's Mobile operation.

Crescent's crews move between 35 and 45 ships in a typical week. Shipping activity in the region could pick up even more once the 45-foot channel is deepened to 50 feet. Meanwhile, a newly-opened roll-on, roll-off terminal should attract vehicle carriers to the region.

"I just enjoy pulling on 'em and

pushing on 'em, however we have to do it," Walker said of the larger ships starting to call on Mobile. "With these boats, it takes the work out of your hands. The boat does the work for you if you know how to run it."

Walker, a 35-year Crescent employee, leads a four-man crew working a seven-day rotation. His son, R.J. Walker, is the mate, while Ricky Shumock is the engineer. Jose Ojeda is the deck hand.

"This man right here, he can probably tear down everything on this boat," Walker said of his engineer.

The 5,225-hp *J.K. McLean* chugs north in the Mobile River on its way back to the company dock at the Port of Mobile.

Capt. Walker is a third-generation tugboat captain. He followed in the footsteps of his father, Joe Tucker, who retired from Crescent about 15 years ago. R.J. Walker joined his father in the business.

“It has its ups and downs sometimes,” R.J. Walker said with a knowing smirk aimed at his father, who laughed at the joke. “But I love it. I have been doing it 14 years and I couldn’t see myself doing anything else.”

Many of Crescent’s crews started as deckhands and worked their way up to engine or wheelhouse jobs. It’s a model that’s not unique in the industry, but one Walker said leads to close-knit crews who know their jobs well.

“I know when the boat cranks up, my deck hand is coming,” Walker said. “I know what my engineer is capable of ... and when we get another guy on board, chances are I’ve worked with him somewhere down the road. To me, you couldn’t ask for anything better than that.”

Lisa Cooper SPECIFICATIONS

Operator: Crescent Towing
 Builder: C&G BoatWorks (now Blakeley BoatWorks)
 Designer: Jensen Maritime Consultants
 Dimensions: 92'x38'x17'
 Mission: Ship escort and assist

Propulsion:
 Engines: (2) GE 6L250, 2,612 hp
 Z-drives: (2) Rolls-Royce US 255
 Generators: (2) John Deere 4045 series, 99 kW
 Bollard pull: 65 tons

Deck equipment:
 Bow winch: JonRie Series 230
 Stern winch: JonRie Series 200



Above, Capt. Ronnie Walker (from left) leads a four-person crew that includes his son and mate, R.J. Walker, engineer Ricky Shumock and deck hand Jose Ojeda. Below, JonRie outfitted *Lisa Cooper* and *J.K. McLean* with winches on the fore and aft decks.



Above, engineer Ricky Shumock demonstrates the engine control system on *Lisa Cooper*. Right, Capt. Ronnie Walker said *Lisa Cooper* can handle just about any job in the Port of Mobile.



Casualties



Coast Guard photos

NTSB: *SEACOR Power* capsized as crew prepared to drop legs

By Casey Conley

Facing an unexpectedly strong storm, crew aboard the lift boat *SEACOR Power* began lowering the vessel's retractable legs in an effort to ride out the weather.

Moments later, the 234-foot vessel rolled over as the helmsman turned into the wind, according to preliminary report on the April 13 capsizing in the Gulf of Mexico.

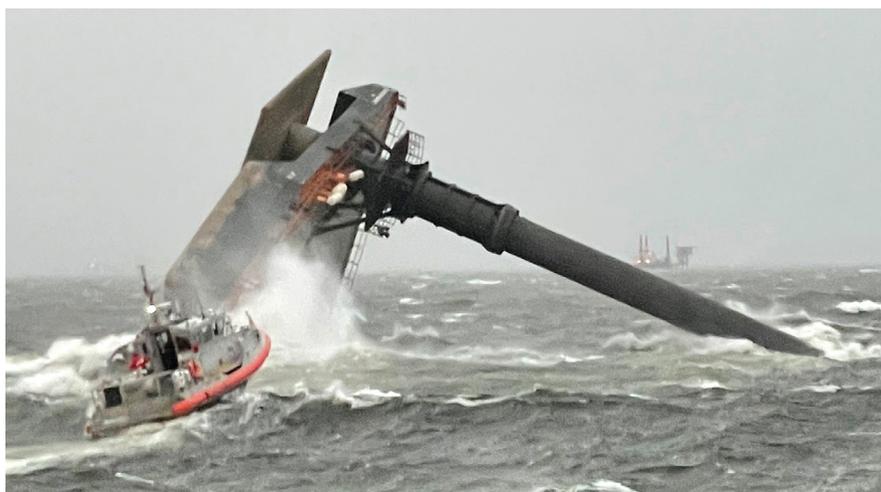
"Before the turn was completed, *SEACOR Power* heeled to star-

board and capsized," the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said. "Several personnel were able to escape out onto the

exposed port side of the *SEACOR Power* deckhouse."

Six people died in the incident and seven are missing and

Above, SEACOR Eagle works as a staging area near the wreckage of SEACOR Power. Right, the ship capsized in April while lowering its legs to ride out severe weather, the NTSB said.



presumed dead. “Some who had been clinging to the vessel were washed into the water, and six were eventually rescued,” the report continued, describing a massive search and rescue effort that involved nearby good Samaritan vessels and the U.S. Coast Guard. “One survivor suffered a serious injury.”

SEACOR Power departed Port Fourchon, La., at about 1330 with nine crew, two galley workers and eight offshore oil workers on board, the NTSB said. The

Salvors have removed nearly 20,000 gallons of fuel from the lift boat. Another 4,500 gallons of hydraulic fluid remains on board.



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vessel was headed to a Talos Energy platform in Main Pass Block 138, located east of the Mississippi River. Such a voyage normally would take 18 hours at 4 knots.

The ship received a weather forecast at 0702 that morning calling for 9- to 12-knot winds with 3-foot seas for that afternoon — conditions that were well within *SEACOR Power's* operating parameters. The National Weather Service issued a severe thunderstorm watch for Port Fourchon and surrounding areas at 1206, and at 1427 the service warned of thunderstorms and strong winds offshore. It is unclear if the ship or its crew received these or other updated forecasts before departing.

Actual conditions were substantially worse than those projected in the 0702 report. A rain squall passed over the vessel at about 1330. As the squall moved out, visibility fell, winds picked up sharply and seas became volatile. A weather phenomenon known as a wake low generated winds exceeding 80 knots, with seas reaching 12 feet.

SEACOR Power's retractable legs had just started to descend when the ship capsized, the report said. Accounts from survivors reported in local media suggest crew had no warning of the impending danger.

Capt. David Ledet, 63, of Thibodeau, La., was one of the six people whose bodies have been found. A lawsuit filed on behalf of his widow alleges *SEACOR*

Power left port “under the direction and control” of SEACOR Marine and Talos Energy.

Despite warnings about the weather, the suit alleges the defendants “put their profits over the safety and lives of their employees and crewmembers and ordered *SEACOR Power* to leave Port Fourchon en route to a Talos Energy LLC drilling site east of Venice, La.”

SEACOR Power's superstructure is separating from its hull. Salvors plan to remove the vessel in sections using a submersible barge.

Numerous other lawsuits have been filed by survivors of the incident and families of those who died. SEACOR has filed suit to limit liability from the incident. SEACOR and Talos did not respond to an inquiry about the ongoing lawsuits.

The Coast Guard suspended the search and rescue campaign on April 19. Soon afterward, salvage crews led by Donjon-SMIT began efforts to remove the partially submerged vessel.

Workers used a method known as hot tapping to cut holes into tanks to remove remaining fuel. Crews pumped out nearly

20,000 gallons of diesel using this process, the Coast Guard said. Another 4,500 gallons of hydraulic fluid will be removed after the vessel is raised.

In mid-June, salvage crews reported the wreck remained in its original location but had rotated on the seafloor. They also determined the vessel is cracking and the superstructure is separating from the hull.

“As a result,” the Coast Guard said in a salvage update, “the vessel will have to be raised to the surface and brought to shore in separate sections.”

Donjon-SMIT intends to lower a submersible barge under large sections of the wreck and then pump out water to bring the barge, and that section, to the surface. This method will help preserve the structural integrity of each section, the Coast Guard said.

The Coast Guard expects the largest sections of the wreck will be removed by July 1, although weather could delay the work. New changes in the ship's structural condition also could affect that time line.

A Coast Guard spokesman in New Orleans referred inquiries about the salvage to Donjon-SMIT, which did not respond to an inquiry.

The NTSB and other agencies are continuing to investigate the sinking. The final report explaining what caused the incident likely will not be available for a year or more.

Fire disables U.S.-bound containership off California coast

By Casey Conley

The containership *NYK Delphinus* lost electrical power and propulsion after a fire damaged the engine room while it was operating off the California coast.

Crew reported the fire at about 0500 on May 14, when the 964-foot ship was about 50 miles west of Monterey. The fire left the vessel adrift in the Pacific Ocean for more than a day until assist tugboats arrived.

Baydelta Maritime's tugboat *Delta Deanna* ultimately towed the Liberia-flagged containership to the Port of Oakland in a response that involved at least six other tugs at different points. The ship arrived at terminal berth 22 in Oakland during the evening on March 17.

The cause of the fire is under investigation, and the U.S. Coast Guard has not released details of its origin. Ship operator Ocean Network Express (ONE) said the fire started in the engine room but did not elaborate.

"Full investigations are ongoing in close cooperation with all relevant authorities," ONE said in a May 20 statement to its cargo customers. "It is expected to take some time for further inspection and possible repairs before any cargo operations can be allowed to take place."

None of the 24 crewmembers on board reported injuries, the Coast Guard said. It's not clear how much damage the ship

sustained or how long the fire burned. The incident did not result in pollution.

NYK Delphinus was awaiting an open berth at the Port of Oakland when the fire started, according to

ONE. The ship's last port call was in Vancouver, British Columbia. Crew used the ship's fixed CO2 system to extinguish the fire, said Michael Gallagher, senior managing director of Witt O'Brien's,

Crews used a fixed CO2 system to extinguish the engine room fire aboard *NYK Delphinus*. Tugboats towed the stricken ship to the Port of Oakland.



Coast Guard photos



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which oversaw the incident command response.

Crew reported on May 15 that engine room temperatures were falling steadily and that smoke was no longer visible, the Coast Guard said in a news release. At that point, the master determined the fire was contained. By then the ship had drifted and was 80 miles southwest of Big Sur.

The fire appears to have damaged the ship's generators or electrical plant. ONE said in a May 21 notice that refrigerated containers on the ship had no electricity "due to unavailability of power supply on board the vessel."

Resolve Marine led the immediate response, including coordinating the rescue tow back to shore. Baydelta's *Delta Lindsey* and Foss Maritime's *Jamie Ann* and *Sarah Avrick* aimed fire monitors at the hull to cool the ship, the Coast Guard said.

The 6,778-hp *Delta Deanna* performed the tow while multiple other tugboats helped control the ship en route to Oakland. The tow got underway at about 1100 on May 16, moving northerly toward San Francisco Bay.

Delta Deanna, formerly chartered to Foss Maritime (which named it *Caden Foss*), came off charter in late 2020. Helmed by Baydelta Capt. Mike Peery, *Delta Deanna* used a three-part towing arrangement to pull *NYK Delphinus* to safety. It consisted of a soft line running through the ship's bullnose linked to a shot of chain and 1,500 feet of towing wire.

"That tug, for us, was really the best equipped harbor tug in California (and) was the obvious choice to send out to do the primary towage," Baydelta General Manager Shawn Bennett said.

"And she did great."

The 110-foot *Delta Deanna* has an electrically-driven Rapp double-drum towing winch on the stern and Rapp towing pins. It's 10 feet longer and has a higher bow than

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Crew aboard *NYK Delphinus* kept a careful watch on the soft line throughout the voyage. They greased it hourly to minimize friction and chafing that could threaten the connection. The voyage generally went smoothly and the ship reached Oakland before a batch of bad weather arrived, Bennett said.

The biggest challenge, he said, was keeping a vessel of that size with a significant sail area moving straight ahead. “That ship, especially with that much windage, has the potential to start to sail off on

its own,” Bennett said.

He praised Peery for leading the voyage and successfully guiding the ship into San Francisco Bay. He also acknowledged excellent cooperation between the tugboat captains on the return voyage, and with the pilots once the ship approached San Francisco Bay.

Inspectors boarded the ship west of the Golden Gate Bridge to ensure the fire was out and the vessel was structurally sound.

Bennett said *Jamie Ann, Sarah Avrick* and *Delta Lindsey* got lines up on *NYK Delphinus* during the return voyage to stabilize the tow and keep the ship moving ahead in

a straight line. More tugs arrived to help bring the ship into San Francisco Bay.

As of mid-June, *NYK Delphinus* was still at the Port of Oakland. ONE did not respond to an inquiry from *Professional Mariner* about the fire or damage to the ship.

Attempts to reach Resolve Marine for comment on the overall response were not successful. However, Gallagher of Witt O’Brien’s said the effort went smoothly.

“Even in covid-restricted times it was a well-organized team, and I think the result was something everyone could be happy with,” he said.

A Tugboater's Life

Bob Ojala, author of *Sweetwater Sailors*, first novel, *A Tugboater's Life*. is based on real-life characters and “mostly” true events. A contemporary romance between an ex-Coast Guard Bos’n Mate and his high school sweetheart, working in his wife’s family business, a Great Lakes Marine Construction Company. Tugboaters will love the drama, and tugboater’s wives will love the romance.



A Tugboater's Life
5.0 out of 5 stars: Not your typical romance book, billionaire fell in love with an ordinary girl.... Here it's just the characters' road to happiness, dealing with failed relationships, tragedies, long days, and hard work. It's all about friendships and loving relationships to fulfill their lives. I just love how this book showed me that many of those everyday peoples' lives are interesting, even exciting. Highly recommended!

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Crewmember hurt when N.J. ferry grounds in East River

By Will Van Dorp

A high-speed catamaran ferry experienced an unspecified mechanical issue in New York City's East River before running aground in a Brooklyn inlet.

The 150-foot Seastreak *Commodore* had 118 passengers and seven crew on board when it grounded in Bushwick Inlet in Brooklyn on June 5 at about 1615. One crewmember was taken to a hospital for observation. No passengers were hurt, and no pollution was reported.

Ferry operator Seastreak said in a statement that the aluminum catamaran "experienced a mechanical issue that caused the vessel to lose engine power and steering" several miles short of the East 34th Street terminal in Manhattan.

The captain appears to have directed *Commodore* to "drift into Bushwick Inlet on the Brooklyn side of the East River and [come] to rest along the shore," Seastreak said.

The incident happened on a bright, sunny day in New York as Seastreak *Commodore* neared the end of its scheduled run to New York from Atlantic Highlands, N.J. A small crowd gathered near Bushwick Inlet, the future home of the USS Monitor Museum, to observe an oyster monitoring event when the ferry decelerated and turned into the narrow inlet.

George Weinmann, who was sitting nearby, recalled waving his arms and attempting to warn the captain out of the shallow Inlet. His wife, Janice, called 911 and took video as the ferry powered through the 90-foot-wide midpoint of the inlet and came ashore near a ramp on the inner south side, striking obstacles as it did so. "Only the portside jet was propelling the boat," the couple told *Professional Mariner*.

The ferry's captain, who was not identified, alerted passengers of the impending impact. Prior to grounding, he used the ferry's public address system to warn passengers several times to sit down and brace for impact, Seastreak spokesman Tom Wynne said.

The ferry began listing to port after it came to a stop. The grounding drew more onlookers. One was Rob Buchanan, an oyster monitor who had been in the inlet only a short time before the ferry incident.

Working with a local group called Billion Oyster Project, he had used a canoe to check on an eco-dock supporting oyster reef structures. After stowing the canoe upriver, he heard the commotion and returned to the inlet, where he saw the oyster dock had overturned as the ferry came in.

Multiple agencies responded to the damaged ferry. Three Coast Guard boat crews began rescue efforts with the New York City

Fire Department (FDNY) and New York City Police Department (NYPD), the Coast Guard said.

FDNY and NYPD responders reached the stricken ferry within four minutes, the fire department said. On social media, the FDNY described a "well-coordinated operation by multiple Fire Department Marine units and NYPD Harbor launches" to remove passengers and take them to the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Emergency responders initiated de-watering operations in the damaged portside hull after the passengers disembarked. According to Wynne, the Seastreak spokesman, a salvage diver patched an 8- to 10-inch hole in the portside hull below the waterline. Later, *Commodore* was refloated and taken to a local shipyard where it was removed from the water for permanent repairs.

The incident remains under investigation by the Coast Guard and National Transportation Safety Board. Neither has released details about the nature of the mechanical problem, or the cause of the grounding.

Seastreak officials praised emergency responders for their quick arrival and the speed with which they disembarked passengers from the damaged ferry. A timeline for the vessel's return to service was not available.

Golden Ray salvage resumes after wreckage catches fire

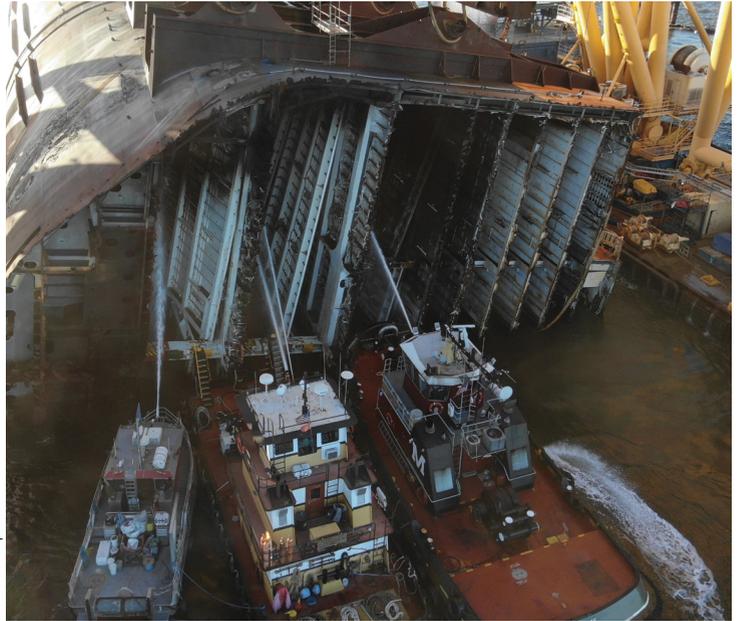
By Casey Conley

Salvage work has resumed near Brunswick, Ga., following a fire inside the *Golden Ray* wreck that burned for roughly seven hours.

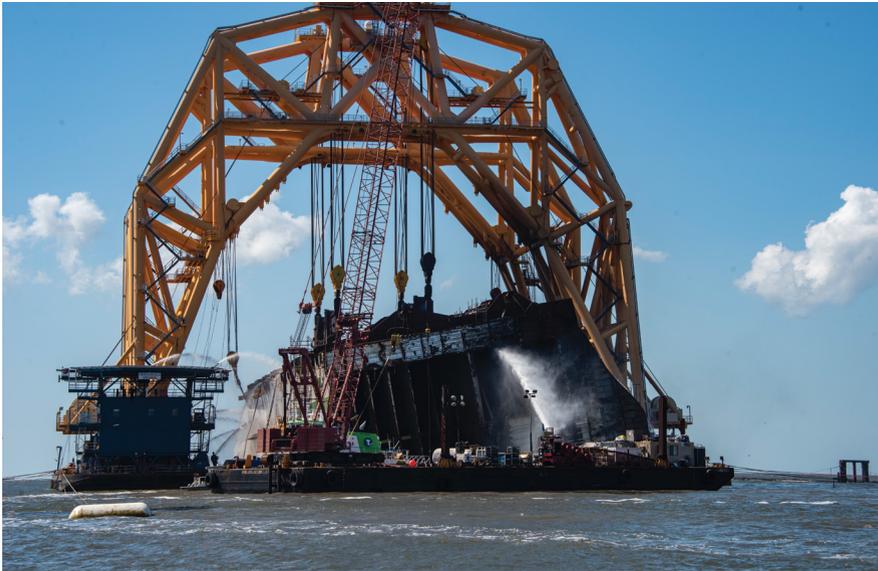
Workers noticed smoke emanating from the capsized vehicle carrier around noon on May 14. At the time, crews were using cutting torches and preparing to separate two sections of the ship, according to U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Michael Himes, a spokesman for the multi-agency unified command.

Ignition happened despite fire suppression efforts, he said,

Right and below, tugboats and the heavy-lift vessel *VB-10,000* helped extinguish flames inside the *Golden Ray* wreck. The Coast Guard said strong winds fed the flames.



Coast Guard photos



which involve spraying seawater around areas where torch cutting takes place.

“Despite that, we believe that (hot work) started a fire that was able to move through the rest of the wreck due to high winds,” Himes said in a phone interview.

No one working on the salvage project was injured. The incident remains under investigation.

Golden Ray rolled onto its port side before dawn on Sept. 8, 2019 while outbound from the Port of Brunswick loaded with roughly 4,200 vehicles. Nineteen

crewmembers and a pilot escaped the vessel without serious injury, although four were stuck inside the hull for more than a day.

The Coast Guard conducted a preliminary analysis suggesting the ship had too many vehicles placed on higher decks and not enough ballast water given the placement of the cargo.

The official cause of the capsizing in St. Simons Sound remains under investigation by the Coast Guard and the National Transportation Safety Board.

The salvage operation to remove vehicles and the 71,178-gt ship is one of the most complex in modern history. Up to 400 workers and 50 vessels are involved in the effort, which involves cutting the ship into eight sections for removal.

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lift vessel performs the cutting using a 400-foot chain. The twin-barge catamaran has two 240-foot-tall gantries and a lift capacity of 7,500 tons. It is the largest heavy-lift vessel built in the United States.

As of late May, crews working under primary contractor T&T Salvage of Galveston, Texas, had removed roughly half of the 656-foot ship, Himes said. At least 1,000 vehicles also were removed.

“We ... go like a typewriter, from end to end,” he explained. “The sequence was bow, stern, section 2, section 7 and now we are working on section 3. We are approaching amidships. Including this one, we have three cuts left.”

Workers were in the process of separating the third and fourth sections when the fire started. It happened during pre-cutting operations that involve using 6-foot torches along the cut groove for section 3. This work directs the cutting chain away from areas of thicker steel in its path, the Coast Guard said.

The actual ignition source is not known, although Himes suggested one or more vehicles still inside the wreck caught fire.

The fire response began immediately after workers noticed smoke coming from the ship. Tugboats and support craft operating nearby aimed monitors into the wreckage and against the hull to cool the vessel. A deluge system installed within *Golden Ray* operated during the fire response, as did the off-ship firefighting

system on *VB-10,000*, Himes said. The fire was extinguished early in the evening of May 14.

“We continued our fire suppression efforts outside the wreck long after fire was determined to be controlled,” Himes said, noting that those efforts included cooling the boundary of the wreck.

The fire shut down salvage operations for 13 days. Authorities inspected *VB-10,000* and other equipment, as well as the wreck, before cutting resumed on May 27. Cutting paused again in mid-June for equipment maintenance, officials said.

“We are confident that we can safely resume cutting operations after carefully assessing all of our equipment and the wreck itself,” Coast Guard Cmdr. Efren Lopez, federal on-scene coordinator, said after the fire. “We are completely focused on our goal of safely removing the remainder of the *Golden Ray* while safeguarding the surrounding environment and the shipping channel throughout the process.”

Authorities reported plastic debris washing up on shore in larger quantities than normal after the fire. Crews scoured the shoreline and removed any material they encountered.

Separately, the ship began discharging oil five days after cutting resumed. It is not clear if the discharge, which caused small quantities of oil to reach nearby beaches and marshes, was related to the fire.

Bulker leaves channel, grounds near entrance to North Carolina port

By Casey Conley

A foreign-flagged bulk carrier loaded with agricultural products ran aground near Morehead City, N.C., and it required help from multiple tugboats to refloat.

The 590-foot *Kite Bay* became stuck May 25 at about 0700 on the sandy bottom in Beaufort Inlet. The vessel grounded completely outside the navigation channel near the entrance to the port, Coast Guard spokeswoman Katherine Blue said.

The service is investigating the incident, which did not result in pollution, injuries or damage to the ship. The Coast Guard has not determined the cause, and its ongoing probe limited the information it could discuss publicly.

“All I can say is that it was coming in from the anchorage and it grounded,” said Lt. John Packard, a Coast Guard investigator.

Kite Bay, registered in the Isle of Man, is owned by the Greek

shipper Pioneer Marine, which did not respond to an inquiry about the grounding. The 5-year-old ship was built by Guoyu Shipyard in Yangzhou, China.

Kite Bay was inbound to Morehead City from nearby Wilmington, N.C., following an overseas voyage from Istanbul, Turkey. The ship was entering the harbor from an offshore anchorage under the control of a pilot from the Morehead City Pilots Association.

The bulker left the channel to the east side and grounded near Shackelford Banks. The pilots group declined to comment on the incident.

Two Moran Towing tugboats based in Morehead City responded soon after the grounding. The 1,600-hp *Fort Macon* and the 2,800-hp *Peter G. Turecamo* remained on the scene for much of the day. The tugs helped free the ship at about 1730 with the rising tide.

The two tugboats “assisted to prevent *Kite Bay* from moving farther into the shoal while the vessel de-ballasted,” Blue said.

“The tugs held (it) in place for a considerable amount of time. It was a combination of the tug assist and the high tide that allowed the ship to float free.”

After refloating, *Kite Bay* transferred to a nearby anchorage for a Coast Guard damage assessment. The vessel was ultimately cleared after authorities determined there was no damage, Packard said.

Coast Guard officials recently surveyed the area of the grounding to verify the presence and location of aids to navigation (ATON). Packard said that is a standard practice for casualties of this kind.

AIS data shows *Kite Bay* arrived in Morehead City on May 27. The ship departed the next day for Darrow, La., on the Mississippi River.

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Images courtesy BMT Group

Simulator advances meet pandemic demand for remote training

By Alan R. Earls

In an era where movies and video games use computer-generated images to create realistic scenes, it should be no surprise that the same technology has found a home in maritime training.

This has long been the dream across multiple industries. For instance, one of the first government computer research programs after World War II aimed to provide navy pilots with a realistic simulator that would let them hone their skills without putting them right into the cockpit.

Even before the covid-19 pandemic, technology and training organizations were hard at work strengthening simulation technology and broadening the training it covers.

“Simulator technology can have many applications that are mostly motivated by the ability of technology to improve the workflows while staying cost-effective,” said Andrey Kazakevich, head of production at software development company HQSoftware, based in Tallin, Estonia and New York City.

After all, providing an immersive augmented reality/virtual reality presentation of a product or training simulation often costs less than holding an in-person, real-world experience. After the initial setup is covered, recurring expenses are minimal.

His company has worked with an energy firm that builds floating production storage and offloading units for the oil industry. To give a presentation of the unit, HQSoftware developed an augmented reality-powered 3D model that demonstrated the scale and the detail of

the project through a mobile app.

For companies focused on the maritime training and simulation space, the state of the art has advanced at a breathtaking pace. At VSTEP, a maritime simulation company based in the Netherlands, the focus is on enhancing the user experience and providing “unencumbered access” to its maritime simulation software, said Stephen Kelly, senior business development, Americas. With access to VSTEP’s cloud-based NAUTIS maritime bridge simulator, for example, mariners are no longer restricted to training at a physical location. They can access its simulations from anywhere, at any time.

“In concert with our push to the cloud, we aim to prepare the future mariners for the types of technology they will encounter while at the helm of a vessel,” Kelly said. In partnership with Smart Ship, VSTEP is working to integrate tactile feedback into its simulations. NAUTIS bridges transfer crucial information to the maritime operator through forces and/or vibrations during complex operations

that can increase situational awareness. Kelly believes this “haptic” feedback will make training safer and more efficient.

Many maritime incidents are traced back to human error. Integrating the tactile response into the NAUTIS maritime simulators can provide intuitive feedback, allowing for automated learning. “The merit of haptic feedback goes beyond training and can also be incorporated in actual vessels to guide sailors through their voyage,” Kelly said. “The technology has the potential to

First, there are new and emerging hydrographic standards for data visualization and exchange such as the International Hydrographic Organization S-100. “These new marine data standards open-up opportunities and requirements for maritime and navigation simulators to display more granular and dynamic data, including bathymetry, surface currents and water level information,” Thompson explained. This will in turn accelerate the introduction of more precise passage planning, under-keel clearance man-

among other sources, to re-play incidents. Mariners using the program can pause and take control, switching from a passive reconstruction to a fully interactive simulation using a real-world event as it happened in real time. This will let users test other scenarios as part of a powerful “lessons learned” exercise.

Working remotely is a new normal for many industries, especially in education and training. The covid-19 pandemic has further reinforced the need for remote solutions, allowing mariners to train



The BMT Rembrandt bridge mission ship simulator combines leading hydrodynamic engines and ship models with 3D visualizations. It is available as a desktop computer program or a full bridge simulator with console.

minimize risks and reduce chances of accidents as it can render guidance to captains during their sailing by providing tactile feedback when they make a wrong move or are too close to shore.”

Phil Thompson, director of simulation, training and surveys at BMT Group, said there are two factors driving maritime simulations — in addition to the value of remote learning.

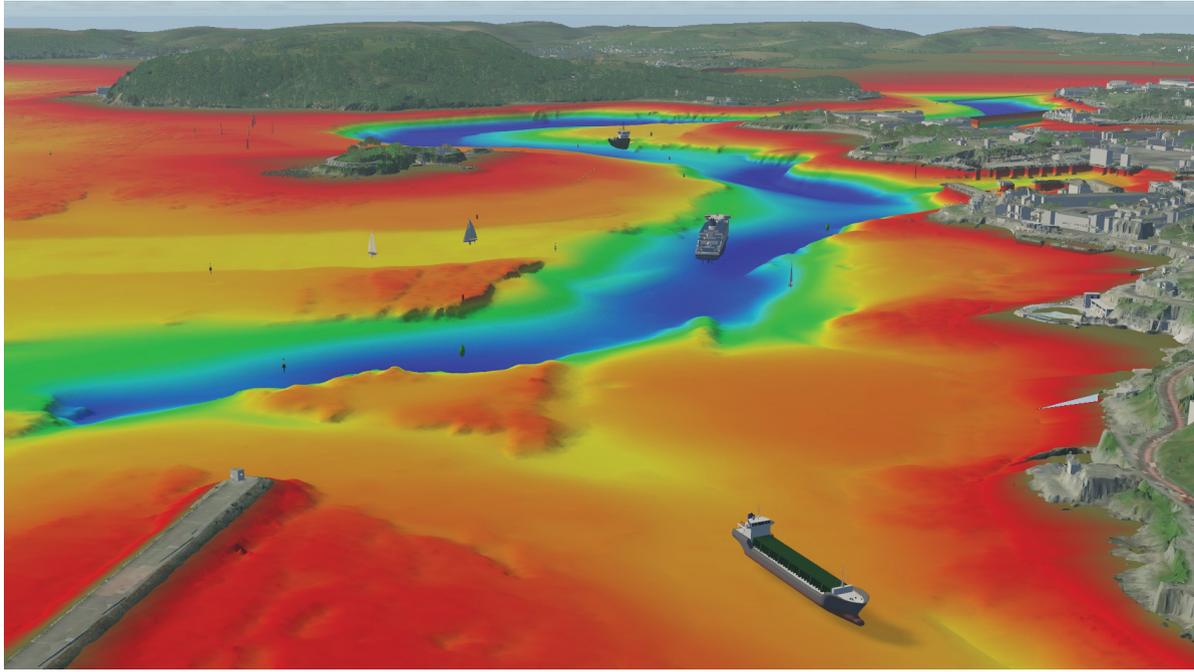
agement and simulation-based training platforms. He believes it will accelerate the synthetic environment modeling of increased levels of autonomous ship navigation.

Second, according to Thompson, there are developments in digital forensics and lessons learned in simulator functionality. These allow developers to rapidly create 3D reconstructions of actual incidents at sea using VDR and AIS data,

from home, the company office or anywhere else in the world.

“In the past year, we saw an outstanding interest in remote training possibilities coming from maritime schools and academies as they were forced to close due to pandemics,” Kelly said. As mariners become more accustomed to these programs, and the technology itself continues to improve, remote simulation likely will play a larger role in the com-

Currents, surface depths and other bathymetric data can be incorporated into simulation programs with realistic visuals of ports and harbors from around the world.



mercial shipping industry.

“We see it having multiple roles. Learning and training new skills, evaluation of performance, onboarding new hires, [and] bridging the knowledge gap of the seafarers,” Kelly said.

The emergence of offshore wind power in the United States and other developed economies around the world has driven the need for specialized training in these fields. One example is “Walk to Work” led by the class society DNV to assist offshore facility operators in achieving safe and efficient personnel transfers using gangways. Other

training needs include offshore wind maintenance, installation and sub-sea operations.

“To install, service and maintain these installations, mariners turn to physics-based simulators to mimic environmental and operational conditions so they can complete their work safely,” Kelly said.

Elsewhere in the industry, companies are working to re-create waterways and ports in a maritime environment tailored to the customer’s needs. Bohemia Interactive Simulations, a software company based in Orlando, Fla., is developing virtual training exercises that

mirror actual harbors, ports and waterways where the mariners work.

Oli Arup, senior vice president of product management at Bohemia Interactive, said the company achieves this by identifying and obtaining GIS and model source data, building a process to create the terrain, then refining both the source data and the resulting virtual terrain to meet user requirements. A process that used to take weeks or months of effort can now be available essentially on-demand.

“Within 10 seconds,” he said, “you can train anywhere in the planet.”



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Correspondence

by Capt. George Collazo

By oar and by sail, Coastal interns get a summer of seasoning

You learn to ride a bike by falling. You learn to swim by not drowning. A sailor learns to sail by sailing. And it helps if they sweat at it.

This is the idea behind the Summer Mariner Program at Coastal Transportation Inc. (CTI). As the last U.S. fleet operating “stick ships,” Coastal’s refrigerated freighters travel the Inside Passage of British Columbia, across the legendarily nasty Gulf of Alaska, to service the remote ports of the Alaskan Peninsula and Aleutian Islands. It is a challenge for even experienced mariners, one requiring precise navigation, long hours and dirty hands. For academy students on their first commercial voyage, it is a dive into the deep end of seamanship.

Crash course in seafaring

The typical maritime academy internship places the student on

a commercial boat, observing pros working on deck and in the wheelhouse — maybe with a little participation in the less technical aspects of the work. Coastal’s Summer Mariner Program is radi-

cally different. The interns work as actual paid deck hands. To prepare them for a summer of seafaring, CTI provides a paid crash course in the gritty world of nautical life. At CTI’s Seattle terminal, experienced



Above, *Oyster's* trainees take a break moored to Walkem Islands Light on British Columbia's Inside Passage. Right, trainees build up strength and endurance while learning about tidal currents firsthand during the weeklong *Oyster* expedition.



crewmembers tutor the trainees in operating yard-and-stay gear, driving lift trucks and lashing down cargo.

To top all of this off, the trainees board the company’s training boat, *Curlew*, for a special expedition through the Salish Sea. The trainees (usually a group of three) start engines, handle lines and clean heads, all under the watchful

eyes of CTI officers. The trainees pilot the boat with compass, paper charts and radar — no plotters or GPS allowed.

This steep learning curve of useful seamanship gets steeper. At the north end of the Salish Sea lies Desolation Sound, the jumping-off point to sparsely populated northern British Columbia. Here the trainees leave the steel-hulled *Curlew* and board *Oyster*, a wooden 17-foot-long open boat. No motor, no deck. The next leg of the journey, through a maze of waterways, saltwater rapids and islands, will be done entirely under oars and sail.

What the heck am I doing here?

Row harder. *Oyster*, packed with its crew of four, is ambling along under two pairs of oars. This morning the boat cuts through turquoise waters as smooth as glass, surrounded by immense fir trees and granite shores.

But you screwed up. Yesterday, the skipper gave you the job of planning the route and estimating the time of slack in Johnstone Strait's Current Pass. You got sloppy and failed to triple-check your figures.

Without warning, upwellings

of current break the mirror-smooth water, like bubbles in a boiling cauldron. The shoreline stops gliding past. The boat becomes a cork in a maelstrom. The flood tide, rushing down from Queen Charlotte Strait like an unseen freight train, has arrived, and your stupidity has placed your crew in front of it.

You need to salvage things quickly. Get your crew to safety or be swept down channel by the 5-knot current, or worse yet, be driven up on dangerous Ripple Shoal.

The danger is palpable. The



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oars bend alarmingly as your crew rows hard for a tiny cove with a back eddy. Here, on Helmcken Island, your crew catches its breath and nurses blistered hands. A close call. Lessons learned: Triple-check your figures; never underestimate the power of a tide; and always keep in mind the safety of your crew.

The *Oyster* expedition — five days and 120 miles of rain, swiftly changing currents and adverse winds — is the most intense seafaring experience an academy student will face. *Oyster's* skipper, a veteran CTI navigator, allows his trainees plenty of rope to get into trouble, but not quite enough to hang themselves. Rowing by day and camping ashore by night, they toughen up and develop a sense of responsibility while losing any illusions of competency they may harbor.

In a few days the crew will rejoin *Curlew* in Queen Charlotte Strait and steam back to Seattle, where the trainees will board freighters bound for the Aleutian Islands. When they do, it will be as useful deck hands, with palms already callused. Later, after graduation, these same trainees might sign on with the company as watch officers and navigate their ship through these same treacherous waters, with the important lessons of navigation and responsibility already learned. •

Capt. George Collazo is a port captain with Coastal Transportation Inc. of Seattle. He is an alumnus of the California State University Maritime Academy.

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the ship in Los Angeles the day we were supposed to leave for Japan. He made it okay, but unfortunately for him, his checked bag didn't. Because his license and documents were packed in his checked bag he couldn't sign aboard the ship, so the captain turned to me and said, "You've got your second mate license here. The job is yours." The other guy went home unemployed.

Early in my career working for a large West Coast towing company based in Long Beach, Calif., I commuted by car, a Plymouth Champ I admittedly had not taken care of when I was in school. Crew change happened at noon, so I left my apartment at 1030 to make sure that I had plenty of time. Turning the key, the engine sputtered, shook, and then died. Numerous attempts to restart it failed. Frantically, I ran back into the apartment and called a taxi. Luckily, I had plenty of cash for the fare, as I always had a couple hundred dollars with me on travel day, just in case. I offered the

driver an extra \$20 if we got to the dock before noon, and made it with five minutes to spare. Whether it's a dependable car for a local commute, airport shuttles and taxis, or rides from family and friends, transportation to get you where you need to go is essential for a trouble-free travel day. So is a backup plan in case things go awry.

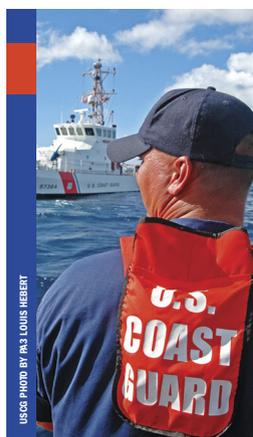
Another caveat is to make sure that you have the contact info for the ship, the terminal where it is berthed, and if at a foreign port the agent, in case there is a problem at the destination airport. I got a job on a ship working in Panama once, and arrived at Panama International Airport in Balboa around 2100, along with a few other joining crew members. No one was there to meet us like they were supposed to, and none of us had the number of the agent, the vessel, or the captain. We wandered around the airport aimlessly, paid some Panamanian "entrance fee" we found out later we didn't need to, and then sat on the sidewalk near the dark, poorly lit pas-

senger drop off/pick up area looking like vagrants until the driver hired by the agent finally showed up. An experience I don't wish on anyone.

Considering the amount of time mariners spend traveling between home and the vessels they work on in their career, it's important to remember that when it comes to travel day - there is "pain" and "avoidable pain." You can't avoid the emotional pain of separation from loved ones, home, and friends, nor the "pain-in-the-neck" hassles generally associated with travel. However, by being proactive you can make sure that your travel day goes as smoothly as possible.

Till next time I wish you all smooth sailin.'

Capt. Kelly Sweeney holds the license of master (oceans, any gross tons) and has held a master of towing vessels (oceans) license as well. He has sailed on more than 40 commercial vessels and lives on an island near Seattle. He can be contacted by email at captswweeney@outlook.com.



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A Mariner's Notebook

by Capt. Kelly Sweeney

Tips for a trouble-free travel day

My wife and I pulled up at the ferry terminal passenger drop off area and parked our truck. I grabbed my bags and the lunch she made me for the trip, and after a short hug and kiss,

headed down to board the 0440 ferry. A few minutes later the ship got underway, and the island faded in our wake.

My travel day had begun.

After the ferry trip came the shuttle ride to SeaTac airport; a cross-country flight to Boston; cab ride from Boston airport to the bus terminal; and two bus trips before I finally ended up at the Martha's Vineyard Ferry Terminal. I got off the bus and then walked three blocks to where my vessel was docked, an oceanographic ship I had been hired to be the chief

mate on for the next three months. Coming up the gangway I looked at my watch — the commute to the ship had taken 14 hours.

Travel day, otherwise known as the mariner's commute, is the day going to or coming from the vessel. Depending upon the schedule there can be over 1500 travel days during a merchant mariner's career, a full four years' worth of time spent commuting to and from the job. There are as many versions of travel day as there are mariners. Sometimes it's a short commute like the two-hour drive my friend Noah, who is master on a large ferry, makes every few days. Often it is closer to the 18-20 hour commute my old friend and classmate Davey, a deck officer on a product tanker running in the Far East, makes every time he joins the ship.

Every merchant mariner has no choice but

to deal with travel day, and failure to successfully navigate the commute can have serious career impacts. Missing the vessel will, at the very least, mean losing out on the job. Depending on the employer, it can also result in getting fired. In extreme cases, mariners missing the ship can be reported for negligence per 46 CFR 11501, resulting in a monetary fine to cover the cost of sending out a replacement crew member. The good news is, from my experience, that there are some "tried and true" ways to make the commute go more smoothly and successfully.

I used to wait until the last minute to get packed, wanting to savor as much of my vacation as possible. After way too many harried trips to the store the night before heading to work, to pick up stuff I had overlooked or forgotten, my wife convinced me that to reduce

both her stress and mine things needed to change. So, I began to pack for the next job right after I came home from the last one. That gave me plenty of time to buy any new work clothes or footwear, personal gear, and even the dental floss I'd always forget. It meant no more last-minute mad dashes to the store. Also, being packed and ready makes it easier to "go with the flow" whenever the company changes your travel itinerary — something that happens regularly.

Another piece of advice is to always make sure that you carry documents such as your merchant mariner credential (MMC), passport, and Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) card in a document holder on your person or in your carry-on bag. I got my first second mate job after the scheduled second mate flew from Texas to join

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