While many pilots around the country are dealing with the chills of winter, a warm island breeze is on the way. Plans are well underway for the 2016 Biennial Convention, which is being held from October 24-28 at the beautiful Fairmont Kea Lani Hotel and Resort in Maui. The Convention is an unmatched opportunity for the Nation’s pilots to gather, share ideas and strengthen the pilotage system in the U.S. This year’s Convention is hosted by the nine pilot associations in the Pacific Coast States: Alaska Marine Pilots, Columbia River Pilots, Columbia River Bar Pilots, Coos Bay Pilots, Hawaii Pilots, Puget Sound Pilots, San Francisco Bar Pilots, Southeast Alaska Pilots and Southwest Alaska Pilots.

As always, the work week will be preceded by some fun and camaraderie. On Sunday, October 23rd the 14th Biennial APA Golf Outing will be held at the stunning Wailea Golf Club. While the winning foursome will get to raise the coveted Admiral’s Cup, the course’s carpet-like fairways, tropical foliage and gorgeous ocean views will be consolation enough for those who don’t finish “in the money”!

The first day of pre-convention meetings is Monday, October 24th. The day starts with the Attorneys’ Meeting, which is focused on recent developments in pilotage law. Later in the afternoon, various APA committees will meet to finalize proposals and nominations. On Tuesday, October 25th, the Convention officially opens and will run through Friday, October 28th. During these General Sessions, association business will be taken up and attendees will hear from federal agency officials, as well as Congressional representatives and/or staff.

The Navigation and Technology Committee (NAVTECH) will meet on Wednesday afternoon. In addition to discussing the latest issues in electronic navigation practice and equipment, plans are underway for NAVTECH members to hear from various government officials with responsibilities for navigation programs.

The Suppliers’ Exhibition, an excellent opportunity to meet with maritime and pilotage related vendors to discuss their products, will be held on Wednesday and Thursday.

As always, several social events will be held during the week, including a Welcome Reception on Monday, a traditional luau on Wednesday, and a closing Gala on Friday.

To make attendance arrangements, go to www.americanpilots.org and click “2016 APA Convention.” There, pilots and other attendees can book flights, make hotel reservations, and register for the Convention. Pilots can also view the Exhibitor Directory by clicking on “Exhibitor Registration” and dragging the mouse over the booth diagrams.
IMO CONTINUES UPDATE OF FATIGUE GUIDANCE

The IMO’s Subcommittee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) met in London for its 3rd Session from February 1-5. APA’s Deputy Director-Associate General Counsel, Clay Diamond and Captain Andrew McGovern (Sandy Hook Pilots), in his capacity as Chairman of the Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee (MERPAC), served on the U.S. Delegation as private sector advisors.

While HTW took up a wide range of issues, including work aimed at improving cruise ship safety, validation of model courses on radar navigation, and revising guidance on the implementation of the ISM Code, the agenda item of most importance to pilots is the review and update of fatigue guidance.

The existing guidelines (“Guidance on Fatigue Mitigation and Management,” Circular 1014) were approved by IMO in 2001. Circular 1014 consists of 9 modules; one is a general overview of fatigue, and several other modules cover specific types of mariners (e.g., officers, masters, engineers, tug personnel and pilots).

Two important principles were agreed by HTW at the outset of the review. First, any fatigue guidelines that are produced will continue to be recommendatory, not mandatory requirements. Second, rather than have numerous modules aimed at different types of mariners, there will be one module titled “Fatigue and the Seafarer.” This module will contain fatigue information that is broad and flexible enough to be useful to all mariners.

The review of the fatigue guidelines was not completed at this session of HTW; so work will continue over the next year though a correspond-ence group.

The new fatigue guidance is expected to be completed during the next meeting of HTW which will be held in February 2017. APA will continue to work on this important issue.

IMPA AND MAIIF PUBLISH WHEELHOUSE POSTER FOR BRIDGE TEAMS

The International Maritime Pilots’ Association (IMPA) and the Marine Accident Investigators International Forum (MAIIF) published a new wheelhouse poster that provides guidance to bridge teams working with pilots. The poster, titled, “Safe Navigation in Pilotage Waters,” draws on various studies and marine accident investigations by MAIIF and surveys by IMPA. The two organizations examined the operational practices of the bridge team while a vessel is under pilotage and identified a number of common shortcomings.

The poster was developed after more than a year of cooperation between MAIIF members (including the U.S. and Canadian National Transportation Safety Boards) and IMPA. APA’s Executive Director-General Counsel, Paul Kirchner, participated in the effort on behalf of U.S. pilots.

The poster is being distributed to shipping interests through various outlets by both IMPA and MAIIF. It will be interesting to see if the wheelhouse posters begin appearing on bridges of ships entering U.S. ports. In this regard, if any APA-member pilot notices one of these posters in the course of a piloting assignment, please advise the APA office.

The respective obligations of bridge teams and pilots are well-established in various IMO instruments. The STCW Code emphasizes the importance of an ongoing exchange of information between the master and the pilot and states that “despite the duties and obligations of pilots, their presence on board does not relieve the master or officer in charge of the navigational watch from their duties and obligations for the safety of the ship.” Similarly, IMO Resolution A960 provides that: “Masters and bridge officers have a duty to support the pilot and to ensure that his/her actions are monitored at all times.” A960 also states: “The master, bridge officers and pilot share a responsibility for good communications and understanding of each other’s role for the safe conduct of the vessel in pilotage waters.”

The poster is available at: http://www.impahq.org/downloads.php
USCG AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015 SIGNED INTO LAW

The House and the Senate, in genuine bipartisan cooperation, came together in February to pass the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015 (CGAA). The CGAA was signed into law by the President on February 8th.

This maritime legislation, in addition to authorizing funding and personnel levels for the Coast Guard and Federal Maritime Commission, includes several provisions that can impact pilots.

APA followed the legislation closely as it moved through various House and Senate subcommittees and committees. There are three sections of the law that are of particular importance for pilots. Specifically, the legislation includes provisions that direct the Coast Guard to:

Section 210. Within six months, establish and publish a detailed process, including a plan for advanced public notification, for the discontinuance of any aid to navigation;

Section 309. Establish a program of “trusted agents” (medical professionals trained on maritime physical standards and listed on a registry) who are qualified to conduct mariner physicals and issue Medical Certificates; and

Section 610. Refrain from “activities related to the dismantling or disposal of” LORAN-C related infrastructure until the Homeland Security Secretary certifies to Congress that the infrastructure is not needed as backup to GPS.

House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee (CG&MT) Chairman, Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA), said about the bill’s passage, “I am pleased that the Coast Guard reauthorization bill finally reached the President’s desk.” Hunter added, “This bipartisan legislation...addresses our maritime sector and makes quality regulatory changes to strengthen this important part of our economy.”

CG&MT Ranking Member, Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA), made reference to navigation safety when he said, “I am pleased that this legislation moves the United States one step closer to building a reliable backup navigation and timing signal for GPS.”

APA TRACKS ROUTE OF 2016 e-NAVIGATION UNDERWAY CONFERENCE

On February 2-4, APA participated in the International e-Navigation Underway 2016 conference, held aboard the ferry MS Pearl Seaways sailing from Copenhagen to Oslo and back. The theme this year was “The Coordinated Approach” of e-Navigation. Paul Kirchner, APA Executive Director-General Counsel, and Bill Cairns, APA Navigation Technology Advisor, joined roughly 125 other attendees. The theme was the coordination of those international and non-governmental groups involved with e-navigation under the lead of IMO, such as IHO, IALA, IMPA, and others.

The conference kicked off with the keynote address of the new IMO Secretary-General, Mr. Kitack Lim. Captain Simon Pelletier, President of IMPA, gave the pilot perspective, stressing pilot-industry coordination with emphasis on consensus-building, practical solutions and a realistic, evolutionary approach to e-navigation.

This conference has earned the reputation as a venue for stretching the definition of e-navigation, and this year was no exception. For example, presentations on the concept of electronic route exchange and its broad extension to sea traffic management go beyond any definition of e-navigation agreed at IMO. In addition to representing the interests of member pilots, APA attends this conference to keep an eye on such “outlier” concepts.

THEME SET FOR 2016 DAY OF THE SEAFARER

On June 25th of each year, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) observes the Day of the Seafarer. The goal of this day is to highlight “just how important seafarers are to everyone on the planet, as they transport all over the world those vital items, commodities and components which are so critical vital to all our daily lives.”

The theme for 2016’s Day of the Seafarer is “At Sea for All.” This special day to honor mariners was established by the IMO in 2010.
NTSB UNVEILS 2016 “MOST WANTED LIST”

On January 13, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) unveiled its 2016 Most Wanted List of transportation safety improvements, calling it a “road map from lessons learned to lives saved.” The list focuses on 10 broad safety improvements that the NTSB believes are of the highest priority for the coming year. While some of these matters are linked specifically to certain modes of transportation (e.g., highway, railroads, or aviation), other items on the Most Wanted List are applicable to all modes of transportation, including maritime.

According to NTSB, distraction (especially from portable electronic devices) and fatigue continue to be serious safety issues in all modes of transportation. In addition, the NTSB’s 2016 Most Wanted List notes that undiagnosed and untreated medical conditions have caused or contributed to numerous accidents, and the NTSB continues to call for transportation regulatory agencies to require robust medical examinations to ascertain fitness for duty.

The NTSB also stressed that impairment remains a serious safety issue in all modes of transportation. While alcohol impairment is a concern, the NTSB notes drugs other than alcohol can also impair operators of various types of vehicles and vessels – whether these drugs are recreational, over-the-counter, or prescription.

Finally, the NTSB reiterated how much weight it gives to voyage data recorders. The press release announcing the Most Wanted List states, “all of these most wanted transportation safety improvements are the result of our accident investigations. Our most powerful tool to learn safety lessons from accidents is data recorders. Thus, the list calls for their increased use in all modes of transportation.”

The complete Most Wanted List is available at: www.ntsb.gov/safety/mwl/Pages/default.aspx.

IOOS DIRECTOR VISITS APA

On February 18, Ms. Josie Quintrell, Director of the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) Association visited the APA offices.

Ms. Quintrell met with Executive Director-General Counsel, Paul Kirchner and Deputy Director -Associate General Counsel, Clay Diamond to discuss the latest developments with the IOOS program and to discuss how the program might better meet the needs of pilots.

PUGET SOUND PILOTS ENSURE LARGEST SHIP TO EVER CALL IN U.S. TRANSITS SAFELY IN SEATTLE

The largest cargo ship to ever visit the United States, the CMA CGM Benjamin Franklin, arrived in Seattle early on the morning of Monday, February 29. The Benjamin Franklin has capacity for 18,000 TEUs - more than double the cargo of most container ships calling at Seattle area terminals - and is 1,310 ft. long and 177 ft. wide.

During the massive vessel’s inbound transit, Captain Jim Shaffer was the lead pilot, conning the vessel, and Captain Ed Marmol was the harbor pilot/electronics pilot. For the outbound transit, Captain Peter Geise was the lead pilot and Captain Ed Marmol again served as the harbor pilot/electronics pilot. Captain David Grobschmit, President of the Puget Sound Pilots, was onboard for the inbound assignment to ensure all prior port arrangements and agreements were strictly followed.

According to port and pilot officials, the Benjamin Franklin’s stop in Seattle, as with prior port calls in Los Angeles and Oakland, is part of a test to see how quickly cranes at the ports can load and unload the containers and how quickly containers can be brought to and taken from the port. Since the Benjamin Franklin greatly exceeds the size of ships the ports usually see, the test calls will likely show that parts of port infrastructure will need to be expanded.

As noted, the Benjamin Franklin had previously visited the port of Oakland. Below is a link to a time-lapse video that shows the San Francisco Bar Pilots safely navigating the huge vessel away from its berth, turning it around, and heading the ship out to sea:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B_zyobmiiOpuMEdybFBxLVhzZzg
APA PROMPTS IMPORTANT NMC ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING MEDICAL CERTIFICATIONS

Shortly after the Coast Guard released an updated version of CG Form 719K (mariner medical form) early last Fall, the APA noted that the new form contained numerous flaws. In fact, APA views these flaws as so significant that the revised form is unusable by mariners or the USCG.

APA hosted a meeting on November 17 during which APA and senior Coast Guard staff members discussed the problems with the new 719K form and what steps might be taken to rectify the situation. During the meeting, APA strongly recommended that the Coast Guard continue to authorize use of the old 719K until these flaws are corrected. Captain Peter McIsaac, Acting APA President, followed up on this meeting with direct communications with Rear Admiral Paul Thomas, Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy.

To its credit, the Coast Guard considered the APA’s concerns, and on December 17, 2015 the National Maritime Center issued a Notice, which reads in part: “Until further notice, the National Maritime Center (NMC) will continue to accept applications for medical certificates submitted via the U.S. Coast Guard form CG-719K Rev (01-09) with an expiration date of June 30, 2012.” The full NMC Notice is available at: www.uscg.mil/nmc/announcements/pdfs/med_cert_apps_719k.pdf

The APA strongly recommends that pilots continue to use the previous version of the CG-719K (Rev. 01-09) until further notice. For your convenience, this version of the CG-719K is available on the APA website at: www.americanpilots.org/719kRev1-09.pdf

Since there could be some confusion or questions from physicians and/or pilot oversight officials about the continued use of an “expired” form, the APA also recommends that pilots keep a copy of the NMC Notice readily available.

Over the past several years, the APA has worked very closely with Coast Guard Headquarters and the NMC to assist the agency in its efforts to make improvements to its mariner credentialing and medical certification programs. We commend the Coast Guard for its willingness to collaborate with the APA and for taking prompt action to address the APA’s concerns with the CG-719K form.

OTHER COAST GUARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

Over the past several months, there have been other Coast Guard announcements that are of general interests to pilots:

The NMC reiterated that applications for Merchant Mariner Credentials (CG-719B) and Medical Certificates (CG-719K), including any necessary supporting documentation, must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Exam Center (REC), not the National Maritime Center. This notice is available at: www.uscg.mil/nmc/announcements/pdfs/mmc_and_mc_application_submittal_notice.pdf

The Coast Guard issued a Marine Safety Alert (MSA 01-16) reminding mariners of the susceptibility of the Global Positioning System (GPS) to jamming and interference and of the importance of understanding how various navigation equipment (e.g., radar, ECDIS, gyro units, etc.) could be impacted by a loss of GPS signal. MSA 01-16 is available at: www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg545/alerts/0116.pdf

On February 5, the Coast Guard published a Marine Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB 01-16, Change 2), to update mariners and the maritime industry on any potential risks associated with the Zika Virus. This MSIB can be found at: www.uscg.mil/msib/docs/001_16_2-5-2016.pdf

In a January Federal Register Notice, the Coast Guard announced that the minimum random drug testing rate for calendar year 2016 will remain at 25%. The Coast Guard also indicated that, in accordance with 46 CFR §16.230(f)(2), it could increase this rate in 2017 if the positive random testing rate for 2016 is greater than 1.0%. As a point of reference, the data for 2015 indicated that the positive test rate was less than 1% (0.87%) across all parts of the maritime industry.

DON’T FORGET THE APA PAC FUND

Send your voluntary contribution to:
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499 South Capitol St., SW
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ACTION OF BOSTON PILOT BOAT OPERATORS SAVE LIVES

The fast action of two Boston Harbor Pilot Association pilot boat operators likely saved the lives of three crewmembers of a tugboat that sank in the icy waters of Boston Harbor on February 16.

Captain Shawn Kelly turned the pilot boat Chelsea around and began racing to the scene as soon as fellow Captain Joe Maloney received the distress call from a tug in the North Channel. The call for help came in about 6:15 a.m. from the Emily Anne—a tug operated out of Salem, Massachusetts.

Kelly told local press outlets that he could see the sinking tug’s navigation and mast lights, but with a mile to go before arriving on scene, the lights vanished. By the time the pilot boat arrived at the debris field, the three crewmen had been in the water for an estimated 3–5 minutes. The tug crew had apparently been unable to put on their survival suits, and were only wearing float coats.

While Kelly maneuvered the pilot boat to the location of the tug crewmen, Maloney—putting himself at risk—entered the water to pull the men to safety. Fortunately, all crewmen and the pilot boat operators were in good health after the incident.

The water temperature at the time of the sinking was 37 degrees, and according to a Coast Guard spokesman, it is unlikely that the crew could have survived for more than 10 minutes in the water.

CAPTAIN MIKE MORRIS EARNS MAJOR AWARD

At a February 4th meeting of the Lone Star Harbor Safety Committee, Captain Michael A. Morris, immediate past Presiding Officer for the Houston Pilots, was awarded the Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service Award.

Captain Morris was recognized for “over twenty years of faithful and dedicated professional service to the waterways of Texas and the Nation.” Aside from the Gold and Silver Life-Saving Medals, this is the highest public recognition that the Commandant of the Coast Guard may award to a private citizen.

ELECTIONS, SELECTIONS, APPOINTMENTS, ETC.

The following pilots’ association announced new officers:

- Sabine Pilots: Captain Michael M. Egan (President), Captain Charles Lahaye (Vice President), Captain Brian P. Thibodeaux (Secretary-Treasurer), and Captain Joseph C. Arnaud (Boat Superintendent).
- Southwest Alaska Pilots Association: Captain Michael J. O’Hara (President), Captain Peter S. Garay (Vice President), Captain Donal J. Ryan (Secretary-Treasurer), Captain Eric Eliassen (Director), Captain C. Vincent Tillion (Director), Captain Ronald A. Ward II (Director), and Captain Joshua S. Weston (Director).
- Puget Sound Pilots: Captain David W. Grobschmit (President), Captain Eric M. vonBrandenfels (Vice President), Captain Eric C. Klapperich (Secretary-Treasurer), Captain Jostein E. Kalvoy (Director), Captain Alec J. Newman (Director), Captain John C. Scragg (Director), and Captain George P. Thoreson (Director).
- Columbia River Pilots: Captain Rick D. Gill (President), Captain Jon Aschoff (Vice President), and Captain Tim K. Harris (Treasurer).
- Biscayne Bay Pilots Association: Captain Jonathan D. Nitkin (Chairman), Captain Christopher S. Marlo (Vice Chairman), and Captain Geoffrey J. Pool.
- Brazos Pilots Association: Captain Daniel Blanton (President), Captain Billy J. Burns (Vice President), Captain John G. Gunning (Secretary-Treasurer), and Captain James A. Teeter (Director).
- Columbia River Bar Pilots: Captain Wayne Stolz (President), Captain Dan Jordan (Vice President), Captain John Torjusen (Secretary), and Captain James “Joe” Brady (General Member).