PILOTS GATHER IN SEOUL & MAUI TO SHARE, EXCHANGE, IMPROVE

As in many professions, the need to constantly hone skills is inherent in pilotage. In fact, striving for continual improvement has long been a hallmark of the State Pilot System. While successive pilotage assignments can have similarities, outside factors are continuously changing: ship size, handling characteristics, environmental and hydrographic factors, cargoes, technologies, etc. Toward the goal of constantly improving and adapting, pilots routinely gather to exchange ideas and experiences and to share lessons learned. In the coming months, pilots will assemble at two key events – the American Pilots’ Association (APA) Biennial Convention in Maui and the International Maritime Pilots’ Association (IMPA) Congress in Seoul, South Korea.

The 23rd IMPA Congress takes place September 25 to 30. Mr. Kitack Lim, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization offers the Keynote Address and Captain Simon Pelletier will deliver the IMPA President’s Address. The Congress will also pay tribute to the late Captain Mike Watson, past President of IMPA and APA.

The IMPA Congress will address a broad swath of pilotage issues. There is an Industry Session on Trends Impacting Global Shipping and a Technical Session on Recent Developments in e-Navigation, which features a presentation by APA Executive Director/General Counsel, Mr. Paul Kirchner. There is a session on Training and Education of Pilots, and a double session looks at Responding to the Challenges of New and Larger Ships, with a contribution from current APA President (and member of the IMPA Advisory Board) Captain Peter McIsaac. Among other sessions is a presentation under the category of Personal Safety by Captain Anne McIntyre of the Columbia River Pilots. Captain McIntyre will discuss Fatigue Management. The open program wraps up with a session on Steering Gear Failures and Ship Accidents in Harbors and their Approaches.

This important international gathering is followed by the biennial meeting of American professional maritime pilots at the APA Convention. As ON STATION readers know, this year’s Convention, which is sponsored by West Coast Pilots’ Associations, is being held from October 25 to 28 in Wailea, Maui. Pre-convention events kick off with the APA Golf Tournament, bright and early on October 23. The Attorneys’ Meeting is on Monday 24 October. This valuable meeting is open to attorneys who represent APA pilots or pilot associations and are invited by an APA member pilot group.

The convention officially begins on the morning of the 25th with a general session and several high profile guest speakers from the maritime community and our Hawaiian hosts. The Suppliers’ Exposition, an unmatched opportunity to see the latest in pilot-related products and services, opens on the 26th. Throughout the week, attendees will hear various committee reports, receive State updates, and address important APA business, including the election of a new APA president. On the afternoon of the 26th, the Navigation and Technology Committee meets to cover a wide variety of issues, including revised PPU Best Practices, IALA/IMO e-navigation updates, use of PPUs in the conduct of ULCVs, the Mississippi River Traffic Information System, AIS AtoNs, and AIS transmission of PORTS information.

The APA and IMPA programs will serve as a robust exchange of ideas among pilots (and pilots and equipment manufacturers), both nationally and internationally. These venues will also provide an opportunity for camaraderie, socializing, and sharing good times with good friends.
PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES LAUNCH SAFETY INSPECTION CAMPAIGN ON PILOT LADDER SAFETY

An organization known as the Riyadh Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Port State Control, which consists of 6 Persian Gulf countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE), announced in August that it is launching a “concentrated inspection campaign (CIC) on pilot transfer arrangements.” The CIC is scheduled to run from September 1 to November 30, 2016.

The purpose of the campaign is to attempt to ensure that ships comply with the requirements for pilot transfer arrangements detailed in International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly Resolution A.1045(27). These requirements include such matters as the physical condition of the ladder and associated ropes and lines, familiarity of the ship’s master and crew with pilot transfer arrangements, and equipment inspection. The CIC also makes reference to IMO circular MSC.1/Circ.1428 on required pilot boarding arrangements.

Part of the CIC is a checklist to assist masters and crews in preparing for the CIC and to prevent delays or detentions by port state control officers. For details on the CIC, including access to various IMO references and the checklist, visit: https://maritimecyprus.com/2016/08/25/port-state-control-cic-on-pilot-transfer-arrangements-riyadh-mou/

The Riyadh MOU is one of nine regional agreements on Port State Control (PSC) that have been signed by maritime authorities under the auspices of the IMO. PSC governs the inspection of foreign ships in national ports to verify that the condition of the ship and its equipment complies with the requirements of international regulations and that the ship is manned and operated in compliance with convention standards. The other eight regional agreements on PSC are: Europe and the North Atlantic (Paris MoU); Asia and the Pacific (Tokyo MoU); Latin America (Acuerdo de Viña del Mar); Caribbean (Caribbean MoU); West and Central Africa (Abuja MoU); the Black Sea region (Black Sea MoU); the Mediterranean (Mediterranean MoU); and the Indian Ocean (Indian Ocean MoU). The U.S. Coast Guard maintains the tenth PSC regime on behalf of the United States.

While this Riyadh MOU survey is occurring in a different region of the world, it should still be of interest to U.S. pilots. Many of the ships that are surveyed will also call on U.S. ports, where State pilots will embark and disembark. Furthermore, this regional pilot ladder safety campaign may spur other regional MOUs to conduct similar efforts. In fact, APA has forwarded all of the information on the Riyadh MOU CIC to the Coast Guard’s Office of Inspections and Compliance for their consideration. We will keep APA members apprised of any further developments.

The IMO issued a notice that World Maritime Day will be celebrated on September 29, 2016. This year’s theme is “Shipping: indispensable to the world.” A forum will be held in London on that date to debate Global Shipping’s Future Challenges. Information on this year’s events can be found at: www.imo.org/en/About/Events/WorldMaritimeDay/Pages/WMD-2016.aspx

The theme was chosen to focus on the critical link between shipping and global society and to raise awareness of the relevance of IMO as the preeminent global regulatory body for international shipping and seafarers. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, more than 80% of global trade by volume is carried by sea. Without shipping and the expertise of the world’s million plus mariners, including pilots, the import and export of goods on the scale necessary to sustain the modern world would not be possible.
HEARING EXAMINES HOW USCG ALLOCATES FUNDS AND PEOPLE

On June 14th, the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee held a hearing on Coast Guard mission needs and a recently completed Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, titled Coast Guard: Actions Needed to Improve Strategic Allocation of Assets and Determine Workforce Requirements.

The witnesses appearing at the hearing were Admiral Charles Michel, Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard, and Ms. Jennifer Grover, Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues, Government Accountability Office. At the hearing, government witnesses were asked about how the Coast Guard makes decisions on allocating personnel and funding. Questions were also raised about the Coast Guard’s maritime security mission and its impacts on traditional missions such as marine safety.

The GAO made three recommendations to the Coast Guard: (1) increase “transparency” in allocating resources; (2) ensure “high priority” missions are fully supported; and (3) incorporate “field input” into how it assigns its personnel and funding.

Subcommittee Chairman, Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA), showed some frustration, stating, “It should not be this difficult to unravel the needs of the Service or to understand how existing assets are performing.”

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEES TO EXAMINE FEDERAL NAVIGATION PROGRAMS

The Subcommittees on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation and Water Resources and Environment will hold a joint hearing on September 7 to examine federal maritime navigation programs. The Subcommittees will hear from the Coast Guard, Army Corps of Engineers, and NOAA.

According to a joint press release, “Rapid innovation in satellite and advanced navigation technologies presents new opportunities to improve the safety, security, and efficiency of the marine transportation system and reduce risks to the environments… the Committee will explore these issues and hear from the leaders charged with adapting these new and emerging technologies to current maritime navigation programs.”

APA staff will continue to actively monitor this and other important Congressional proceedings of interest to the piloting profession.

LAWMAKERS INTRODUCE BILL ASSIGNING COAST GUARD AS LEAD ON GPS BACKUP SYSTEM

Earlier this summer, House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee Chairman, Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA), along with the Subcommittee’s Ranking Member, Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA), jointly introduced legislation that would make the U.S. Coast Guard responsible for setting up and maintaining a backup system for the Global Positioning System (GPS).

This legislative direction, titled the “National Positioning, Navigation, and Timing Resilience and Security Act of 2016,” is included as Section 1 of H.R. 5531, a broader maritime-related bill. The key section of the Act reads:

“Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, shall provide for the establishment, sustainment, and operation of a reliable land-based positioning, navigation, and timing system to provide a complement to and backup for the Global Positioning System…to ensure the availability of uncorrupted and nondegraded positioning, navigation, and timing signals for military and civilian users in the event that GPS signals are corrupted, degraded, unreliable, or otherwise unavailable.”

The legislation also establishes clear requirements for a GPS backup system. According to H.R. 5531, the system shall, among other things: (1) be wireless; (2) be terrestrial; (3) provide wide area coverage; (4) deliver a precise, high-power 100 kilohertz signal; (5) be synchronized with coordinated universal time; (6) be extremely difficult to disrupt or degrade; and (7) take full advantage of existing, unused LO-RAN –C infrastructure.

To be clear, this bill does not provide any funding for a GPS backup, but it does direct the U.S. Coast Guard to lead the effort. The lack of a designated “lead federal agency” has been seen as a major impediment to eventually achieving a viable GPS complimentary backup system.
SMITH PROMOTED, NAMED DIRECTOR OF NOAA OFFICE OF COAST SURVEY

Captain Shepard Smith, NOAAn Commissioned Officer Corps, has been promoted to Rear Admiral and named Director of NOAA’s Office of Coast Survey. In this role, Smith will oversee NOAA’s charts and hydrographic surveys. He succeeds Rear Admiral Gerd Glang, who retired on September 1st after a 27-year NOAA career and was honored at an August 26th change of command ceremony at NOAA’s Headquarters in Silver Spring, MD. Rear Admiral Glang served almost four years as Coastal Survey director, leading NOAA’s transition from a paper-based nautical charting system to a full digital system.

Smith has served with NOAA for 23 years and has been a good friend to pilots and to the APA. “I congratulate Rear Admiral Smith on his promotion and look forward to building on the strong relationship that exists between our two organization,” said APA President, Captain Peter McIsaac. McIsaac added, “I wish Rear Admiral Glang the very best in his retirement and in his future endeavors.”

During his career, Rear Admiral Smith has been deeply involved in advancing the state-of-the-art in hydrography and nautical cartography. His 11 years as a field hydrographer include duty as commanding officer of NOAA Ship Thomas Jefferson. Smith also served on NOAA Ship Rainier, surveying in Alaska, and as the officer-in-charge of Research Vessel Bay Hydrographer. He served on the inter-agency response teams for the search and recovery of TWA flight 800, Egypt Air flight 990, and the private plane piloted by John F. Kennedy, Jr. He commanded Thomas Jefferson during her six-week response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Smith also served as Chief of Coast Survey’s Marine Chart Division, Chief of Coast Survey’s Atlantic Hydrographic Branch, and as Coast Survey’s deputy hydrographer. He was also on the U.S. delegation to the International Hydrographic Organization. Smith earned his Bachelor’s Degree from Cornell University and his Master’s in Ocean Engineering from the University of New Hampshire.

NTSB TO DISCUSS ITS VTS STUDY AT PUBLIC MEETING

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued a notice stating that it will meet on September 13th in Washington, DC. Among the topics on the meeting agenda is a discussion of the U.S. Coast Guard’s Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) systems. Specifically, the NTSB plans to discuss the results of the study conducted by its Safety Research Division of the effectiveness of the Coast Guard’s VTS system throughout the United States.

This study has been going on for more than a year, with NTSB staff visiting every VTS in the United States. During these visits, NTSB conducted interviews not only with VTS personnel, but also with maritime and port interests, including many local pilots’ associations.

In response to a request from the Coast Guard and the NTSB, APA agreed to be the national point of contact for pilot input to the NTSB’s VTS study. In order to facilitate the effective and efficient gathering of pilot input and views, APA conducted a survey of member-associations, compiled the results, and submitted comments to the NTSB in December 2015. These comments are available at: www.americanpilots.org/APA_Comments_NTSB_VTS_Study_Dec2015.pdf

The APA has followed this NTSB study closely and will continue to do so. APA staff will attend the NTSB meeting on September 13.

NTSB RELEASES 2015 “SAFER SEAS DIGEST”

In August, the National Transportation Safety Board Tuesday released its annual compendium of marine accidents and the lessons learned from them. According to an NTSB notice, “Safer Seas Digest 2015,” available on the NTSB’s website (www.ntsb.gov), examines 29 major marine casualty investigations that the agency closed in 2015.

“Safer Seas Digest 2015 represents our continuing commitment to sharing the lessons that we learn through our investigations,” said NTSB Chairman Christopher A. Hart. “Many marine accidents can be prevented when crews know of and respond to safety issues early and when crews work together effectively in the event of a crisis.”

The 72-page report lists some of the lessons learned from the investigations, such as the need for effective communications and recognizing the perils of crew fatigue.
NMC GETS NEW COMMANDING OFFICER

Captain Kirsten Martin assumed command of the Coast Guard’s National Maritime Center (NMC) at a change of command ceremony on July 1, 2016. Captain Martin, who is planning to speak at the APA’s Biennial Convention in October, has served in the Coast Guard for 28 years. She has served in a variety of marine safety, security, and environmental protection positions in the ports of New York/New Jersey, San Francisco, and Buffalo.

MARINER CREDENTIALING PROGRAM GETS REORGANIZATION

In July, the Coast Guard announced a reorganization of its Mariner Credentialing Program (MCP), creating one centralized office at Headquarters responsible for all technical aspects—including statutory, regulatory and policy development—related to the MCP. Previously, aspects of the credentialing program were spread among different offices.

The Coast Guard emphasized that while this change will improve customer service, it will not change how mariners apply for credentials or medical certificates, or otherwise interact with the NMC.

COAST GUARD ISSUES AUTOPILOT SAFETY ALERT

On August 16, the Coast Guard issued Safety Alert 10-16, titled: “Avoid Auto-Pilot Induced Casualties.” This Safety Alert cites numerous instances where a crew boat or supply vessel allided with an oil rig or other platform while the auto-pilot was engaged. The alert is available at: www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg545/alerts/1016.pdf

The Safety Alert recommends that all credentialed mariners are aware of “Use of Auto-Pilot” regulations, and that companies conduct periodic training in the operations and limitations of the auto-pilot system, post procedures on how to switch from auto-pilot to manual control, and set operational limitations on the use of auto-pilot with regard to areas of high traffic density, conditions of restricted visibility, or any other hazardous navigational situations.

In a bit of irony, the Safety Alert follows by about a month the Coast Guard’s release of a Federal Register Notice proposing to permit tankers to operate under autopilot in crowded shipping safety fairways and traffic separation schemes. APA plans to submit comments to this proposal.

NDGPS CLOSURES ANNOUNCED

On August 3, the Coast Guard announced the closure of nine of the agency’s Nationwide Differential Global Positioning System (NDGPS) sites. These closures became effective on August 5, 2016.

Last August, the Coast Guard, Department of Transportation and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jointly proposed decommissioning 62 of the then-existing 84 NDGPS sites. After reviewing Federal Register comments, including those submitted by the APA and member pilots’ associations, the planned closures were reduced to 37 sites. Of the closures, 28 are Department of Transportation operated inland sites and nine are Coast Guard operated maritime sites.

Following is a list of the Coast Guard NDGPS cites that closed on August 5th: Cold Bay, AK; Lompoc, CA; Sturgeon Bay, WI; Pickford, MI; Saginaw Bay, MI; Brunswick, ME; Key West, FL; Elgin, FL; and Isabela, Puerto Rico.

Out of the 62 NDGPS cites originally proposed for decommissioning, APA requested the retention of 11 maritime and 2 inland sites from the proposed closure list. APA had requested either Brunswick or Penobscot Bay be retained, and only Brunswick was closed. The APA had also requested the inland site at Savannah be retained. This site under DOT’s control, however, was closed. Of those 13 sites APA requested to continue, 11 will still be operating.

According to its notice, the Coast Guard will continue to provide single-site NDGPS coverage for port and harbor approaches in all areas currently covered, with the exception of the Isabela, PR and Cold Bay, AK coverage areas. Those two sites, the Coast Guard contends, are being closed due to a lack of expressed mariner interest.

NDGPS transmissions will continue from 39 Coast Guard and seven Army Corps of Engineers sites.
APA NEWS

RETIRED PILOT, MIKE LORINO, ELECTED LOUISIANA COUNCILMAN

Captain Mike Lorino, long-time President of the Associated Branch Pilots and past APA Vice President, is certainly not taking it easy following his retirement earlier this year. He was recently elected Councilman to represent the Fourth District of the St. Tammany Parish Council.

Captain Lorino was born and raised in New Orleans. Following his graduation from Southwestern Louisiana University in Lafayette, he began his pilot apprenticeship in 1972 and became a full pilot in 1978. He was elected President of his group in 2000, and served in that position until his 2016 retirement.

Captain Lorino said, “As a State-licensed pilot for nearly 40 years, I was honored to serve the people of Louisiana and protect the interest of this State. Continuing to serve my community on the Council was a natural next step.”

With his wife Peggy, Lorino resides in Madisonville. He has three children and four grandchildren. In addition to his work as a Bar Pilot, Captain Lorino has served on several area boards and commissions, including the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry Trade and Tourism Council, the Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission, and the Millennium Port Authority (Commissioner).

Don’t forget to register for the 2016 eNavigation Conference in Seattle. The APA is a strong supporter of this event, which is considered the premier eNavigation conference in the United States.

This year’s conference will be held in Seattle from December 6-7. For more information visit: www.enavigation.org/

HUDSON RIVER PILOT ENCOURAGES NOAA TO UPDATE CHARTS

Captain Scott Ireland, Hudson River Pilots Association, is using some nautical charts that date back to 1887. Even the more “modern” chart data is based on surveys done with lead lines for the 50-mile run between Kingston and Albany, New York.

Last year Ireland wrote to Rear Admiral Gerd Glang, then Director of Coast Survey at NOAA, noting the old and often inaccurate chart data. Captain Ireland sought to have critical portions of the Hudson sounded and for the navigational charts to be updated. His campaign with NOAA received broad support from maritime and environmental organizations.

In response, NOAA has surveyed a dozen critical areas outside the Hudson River channel and has plans to survey the entire Hudson. The survey project will run through the end of 2017, with NOAA planning to have updated electronic charts available online by 2019.

Captain Ireland said, "The new NOAA data will provide a much more accurate picture of the river - something that every professional mariner can use when they need to be in, and out, of the channel."

ELECTIONS, SELECTIONS, APPOINTMENTS, ETC.

The following pilots’ associations announced new officers:

- Association of Maryland Pilots: Captain Eric Nielsen (President), Captain John Colgan (First Vice President), Captain Jesse Buckler (Second Vice President), Captain Chris Wilson (Secretary), Captain Noah Seiple (Treasurer), and Captain Mike Flanagan (Harbor Operations).
- Texas State Pilots Association: Captain Richard Casas (President), and Captain Robert Shearon (Vice President-Treasurer).