APA AND VIRGINIA PILOTS CONTINUE OUTREACH TO NTSB

On July 31st and August 1st, the Virginia Pilot Association (VPA) hosted National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Chairman, the Honorable Robert L. Sumwalt, along with Mr. Michael Hughes (a senior NTSB communications official) at their Virginia Beach offices. APA President, Captain Jorge Viso, also participated in this meeting.

In addition to receiving briefings and a tour of the VPA facilities, Chairman Sumwalt also observed a pilotage assignment firsthand.

Chairman Sumwalt was first appointed to the NTSB in 2006 and has since been reappointed twice. He was sworn in as the 14th Chairman of the NTSB in August 2017. He previously served as Vice Chairman of the NTSB.

Captain Bill Cofer, VPA President, began the Chairman’s visit by giving him an overview of the Virginia Pilots’ operation, as well as a comprehensive briefing on Virginia’s pilotage waters. Captain Cofer, Captain Whiting Chisman (VPA Vice President), and Captain Viso then gave a presentation on ultra large container vessels (ULCVs) and the challenges associated with piloting these vessels.

Sumwalt was then transported to the inbound container ship ZIM LUANDA aboard a VPA pilot boat. The ship was piloted by Captain Jay Saunders. Captain Chisman was also aboard to provide information on the transit and to answer any questions.

After the Chairman’s visit, Mr. Hughes sent a message to both Captain Cofer and Captain Viso: “The work you professionals do is critical to the management of safety at our Nation's ports. This week's experience certainly impressed on the Chairman and me the level of expertise involved in training for and working as a marine pilot.”

The APA will build on this visit by hosting Chairman Sumwalt at the APA offices on September 19th. Chairman Sumwalt will be a keynote speaker at the upcoming APA Convention in Savannah.
IMO SUBCOMMITTEE AGREES ON REVISED FATIGUE GUIDELINES

The IMO’s Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping met at IMO Headquarters for its 5th session (HTW5) from July 16-20. The principle task of HTW5 was to complete its review and revision of IMO’s voluntary Guidance on Fatigue Mitigation and Management (MSC Circular 1014).

Clay Diamond, APA Deputy Director-Associate General Counsel, served on the U.S. Delegation, as did Captain Andrew McGovern, New Jersey Sandy Hook Pilots and former Chairman of the Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee (MERPAC). Captain Simon Pelletier, President of the International Maritime Pilots Association (IMPA) and the Canadian Marine Pilots’ Association (CMPA) also attended this meeting.

IMO has considered the issue of seafarer fatigue for several decades, adopting Assembly Resolution A.772(18) on Fatigue factors in manning and safety, in 1993. This resolution was followed by the development of comprehensive guidance on fatigue mitigation and management (MSC/Circ.1014), which was issued in 2001. The IMO’s Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) agreed in 2014 that the Guidance in MSC/Circ. 1014 should be reviewed and updated by the HTW subcommittee.

Given the importance of fatigue and fatigue mitigation, as well as the impact these voluntary IMO guidelines can have on all maritime operations, including piloting, APA and IMPA have been deeply involved in the nearly four-year review of the IMO fatigue Guidelines.

During this four-year process, MSC Circular 1014 has been thoroughly reviewed and updated, taking into account the latest research and studies. The newly revised Guidelines provide information on the causes and consequences of fatigue, as well as the risks it poses to the safety and health of seafarers and operational safety.

The updated Circular includes various “modules” aimed at providing specific guidance and information to countries’ maritime authorities, seafarers, shipping companies, naval architects/ship designers and training providers. According to an IMO press release, “The aim of these updated Guidelines is to assist all stakeholders to contribute to the effective mitigation and management of fatigue.”

The revised MSC Circular 1014 will not go into effect until it is approved by the IMO’s Maritime Safety Committee during its 100th Session, which will be held in December 2018.

On June 12, the Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM) held a meeting of its e-Navigation Steering Committee. Chaired by APA Navigation Technology Director, Bill Cairns, the steering committee considers the work of RTCM’s relevant Special Committees as it relates to the broader international e-Navigation effort.


At this meeting, the Steering Committee noted a wide swath of ongoing international efforts, notably IMO’s work on S-Mode and Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships. The committee considered other technical developments at IALA and IHO, as well as the Coast Guard’s and other government agencies’ focus on cybersecurity.

The RTCM Annual Assembly, which will be held from September 25-27 in Florida, features presentations by relevant government agencies and on many of the shipboard systems pilots use every day. This year the Assembly is being held in conjunction with the National Marine Electronics Association (NMEA). For information on the combined RTCM / NMEA meeting, visit:

wwwexpo.nmea.org
LAW DELAYS ELECTRONIC TWIC INSPECTIONS

On August 2nd, the President signed the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Accountability Act of 2018 (H.R. 5729). The law prohibits the Coast Guard from requiring electronic inspections of TWICs until 60 days after the Department of Homeland Security submits a study to Congress on the overall security value of the TWIC program.

This study is expected to be completed in April 2019, which means the Coast Guard will be unable to enforce the TWIC Reader Rule at any facility until June 2019 timeframe—at the earliest.

The Coast Guard issued a bulletin on the TWIC reader program, including information on H.R. 5729, the TWIC reader final rule, and ongoing litigation on this final rule. This bulletin is available at: http://mariners.coastguard.dodlive.mil/2018/08/03/8-3-2018-latest-developments-regarding-twic-reader-final-rule/

PROVISION BENEFITING YACHT OWNERS BURIED IN DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

On August 13th the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (NDAA) was signed into law. While the NDAA sets spending and policy priorities for the Department of Defense, it also includes a provision to aid super yacht owners.

The owners of the majority of these large yachts in the U.S. opt, principally for economic reasons, to flag these vessels in a foreign country. A section of the NDAA directs the Coast Guard to essentially exempt these yachts from current U.S. commercial inspection, manning and construction standards by issuing new regulations for recreational vessels over 300 gross tons that do not carry any cargo/passengers for hire. These regulations are to be “comparable” to United Kingdom’s Large Commercial Yacht Code (LCYC). The LCYC standards are considerably lower than U.S. commercial standards. This NDAA section concludes by stating that until the effective date of these new regulations, large yachts shall not be subject to inspection so long as the Coast Guard determines that the vessel complies with the LCYC.

It is somewhat unusual for a U.S. law to make such direct reference to another country’s laws or regulations. While there is nothing in the LCYC or this provision of the NDAA that directs the Coast Guard to make any changes to pilotage requirements or standards, the APA will closely watch the Coast Guard rulemaking in this area.

Captain Robert Louis Adams 1953 - 2018

Captain Robert Louis Adams, Aransas-Corpus Christi Pilots, was killed in the line of duty on June 16, 2018. Captain Adams was boarding a moored vessel by gangway, when the gangway collapsed. This tragic accident is currently under investigation by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The program from Captain Adams’ memorial service included the following passage:

“Captain Louis Adams was the consummate professional, liked and respected by all that knew him and worked with him. Growing up in LaPorte, Texas and coming from a maritime family, Louis was a second generation mariner and Texas State Pilot totaling over 45 years of service to the marine industry making him a unique individual. Louis took special pride in the fact that he started his sea going career as an ordinary seaman and worked his way up the hawsepipe to sail as a Master Mariner. Captain Adams valued the essence of command; taking care of his crew first, the vessels he commanded and piloted, and the cargo for which he was responsible.

One of the proudest moments of his distinguished career was when he was appointed as a Deputy Branch Pilot for the Port of Corpus Christi. One of his proudest achievements was serving two terms as Presiding Officers of the Aransas-Corpus Christi Pilot Association. As Presiding Officer, he offered a steady hand at the helm, valued leadership and sage advice. Now that he has crossed the final bar, he will be sorely missed by all who were fortunate enough to have known him.”

Captain Adams is survived by his wife of 45 years, Karen Elaine Womack Adams, son Robert Andrew Adams and wife Amanda, daughter Lisa Adams Spivey and husband Gregory, his four grandchildren, and his sister Deborah Adams Winegar.
NOAA LOWERS ATLANTIC HURRICANE FORECAST

Forecasters for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have lowered predictions for Atlantic hurricane season. According to these forecasters, conditions in the ocean and the atmosphere are conspiring to produce a less active Atlantic hurricane season than initially predicted in May, though NOAA and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are raising caution as the season enters its peak months.

“There are still more storms to come – the hurricane season is far from being over. We urge continued preparedness and vigilance,” said Gerry Bell, Ph.D., lead seasonal hurricane forecaster at NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center.

NOAA’s seasonal forecasters have increased the likelihood of a “below-normal” Atlantic hurricane season to 60% (up from 25% in May) in the updated outlook, issued in mid-August. For the entire season, which ends November 30th, NOAA predicts a total of 9-13 named storms (winds of 39 mph or greater) of which 4-7 will become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or greater), including 0-2 major hurricanes (winds of 111 mph or greater).

[From the Editor: As this edition of ON STATION goes to print, we recognize the irony of including this article at the same time Hurricane Florence is moving inexorably toward the Southeast U.S. coast]

NOAA HONORS ANNIVERSARY OF LIGHTHOUSE ACT OF 1789

On August 7th, NOAA issued a notice commemorating the 229th anniversary of the passage of the Lighthouse Act of 1789. NOAA celebrated the passage this Act, officially called “An Act for the Establishment and Support of Lighthouses, Beacons, Buoys and Public Piers,” because it led to the States turning over all lighthouses, beacons, buoys, and public piers to the federal government and tasked the Secretary of the Treasury with building and maintaining the aids to maritime navigation. NOAA’s press release noted that August 7th is now known as National Lighthouse Day.

The NOAA release went on to read, “Lighthouses and beacons…can be found on rocky cliffs or sandy shoals on land, on wave-swept reefs in the sea, and at entrances to harbors. They serve to warn mariners of dangerous shallows and perilous rocky coasts, and they help guide vessels safely into and out of ports. While lighthouses still guide seafarers, nowadays, GPS, NOAA’s nautical charts, lighted navigational aids, buoys, radar beacons, and other aids to navigation effectively warn mariners of dangerous areas and guide them to safe harbors. Some 48,000 federal buoys, beacons, and electronic aids of the marine transportation system mark more than 25,000 miles of waterways, harbor channels, and inland, intracoastal and coastal waterways.”

While the points made in NOAA’s press release commemorating the anniversary of the Lighthouse Act are accurate, most APA-member pilots also know that the Lighthouse Act of 1789, which was the ninth law passed by the First Congress of the United States, essentially established what we now know as the State Pilot System in this country.

In passing the Lighthouse Act, Congress decided that it was in the national interest to make lighthouses, buoys and beacons the responsibility of the new federal government, but fortunately it reached the opposite conclusion for pilotage.

Section four of the Act reads in part, “all pilots in the bays, inlets, rivers, harbors, and ports of the United States shall continue to be regulated in conformity with the existing laws of the States, respectively, wherein such pilots may be, or with such laws as the States may respectively hereafter enact for the purpose, until further legislative provision shall be made by Congress.”

NTSB GETS NEW VICE CHAIRMAN

Bruce Landsberg has been appointed Vice Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). Landsberg, who joined the board in late August, is past president of the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association Air Safety Institute and has held executive positions with several national aviation companies.

"Vice Chairman Landsberg's expertise and long-standing commitment to safety will be invaluable assets," said NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt in a press release.

Mr. Landsberg’s appointment as Vice Chairman is for a two-year term. His term as an NTSB member is for five years.

A fifth member, Jennifer Homendy, has been confirmed by the Senate and is scheduled to join the board soon, NTSB officials said.
USCG ISSUES ALERT ON GANGWAY SAFETY

On August 21st, in the aftermath of the tragic death of Captain Louis Adams (Aransas-Corpus Christi Pilots), the Coast Guard issued a Marine Safety Alert (MSA 14-18), titled, “Don’t forget about Gangways and Ladders! Pilot dies in gangway accident.” While the APA immediately sent MSA 14-18 to all member pilot groups, we thought it important enough to reprint it in this edition of ON STATION.

Recently, a vessel pilot died while boarding a vessel when its gangway separated from the vessel, causing two persons to fall into the water. Although the investigation is still underway and additional facts are being gathered, this casualty serves as another reminder that shipboard equipment that seems quite benign can quickly become a hazard to persons boarding and departing a vessel.

Commercial vessels can present hazards to mariners onboard if the risks are not recognized and mitigated. Considering the hazards presented by rotating machinery, electrical systems, potential fire, severe weather, etc.; one could easily underappreciate the risk that a simple gangway presents, leading mariners to become complacent. Because of injuries and fatalities on gangways, a number of organizations have developed gangway safety standards, requirements, and best practices.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), International Maritime Organization, Protection and Indemnity Clubs, Owners and Operators, and others have put forth various requirements and shared best practices to improve gangway safety.

Because of this recent fatality, the Coast Guard strongly recommends:

1) Owners and Operators, Captains and Mates review and implement the best practices as presented in the links above and comply with all the regulations applicable to your vessel.

2) For vessel pilots, crews, vendors, or anyone boarding or departing a vessel, condition yourself to take a moment to examine the gangway, accommodation or pilot ladder. Look for potential hazards or deficiencies, and report them to senior personnel on board the vessel.

At all times, if there is any question about the safety of a gangway, DO NOT CROSS IT. Do not assume that any gangway crossing is “routine.”

This Safety Alert is provided for information purposes only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirement. Developed by the Prevention Officers of Sector Corpus Christi. Distributed by the Office of Investigations and Analysis. Questions may be sent to HQS-PF-fldr-CGF-INV@uscg.mil.

APA HOSTS COAST GUARD DIRECTOR OF MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

On August 7, APA hosted Mr. Mike Emerson, head of the Coast Guard’s Marine Transportation Systems Directorate, and his Deputy, Captain Kevin Kiefer, at our Washington, DC offices.

Mr. Emerson’s Directorate oversees many of the USCG programs and policies that have the greatest impact on APA-member pilots. For example, Emerson is responsible for Electronic & Visual Aids to Navigation, Ocean & Transportation Policy, Navigation Standards, Waterways Management (including VTS), Great Lakes Pilotage, and Icebreaking.

During this meeting, which was attended by Captain Jorge Viso (APA President), Paul Kirchner (APA Executive Director-General Counsel), and Clay Diamond (Deputy Director-Associate General Counsel), a number of topics were covered, including “virtual aids to navigation” in post-storm port opening, Coast Guard VTS policy, current concerns with AIS, and Great Lakes Pilotage.

From left to right: Clay Diamond (APA), Mike Emerson (USCG), Captain Jorge Viso (APA), Captain Kevin Kiefer (USCG), and Paul Kirchner (APA)

CAPTAIN VISO VISITS NMC

On June 27, APA President, Captain Jorge Viso, visited the National Maritime Center (NMC). In addition to meeting with the NMC’s Commanding Officer, Captain Kirsten Martin (pictured at right with Viso), Captain Viso received comprehensive briefings on all of the NMC functions and programs, as well as a tour of the facilities.
APA NEWS

GREAT LAKES PILOT PLAYS KEY ROLE IN THE RESCUE OF STRANDED KAYAKERS

On July 5th, Captain Rory Grant (Western Great Lakes Pilots) was piloting a cruise ship in Lake Michigan when he noticed plumes of smoke rising from a nearby island. On closer inspection, Captain Grant saw three people waving their arms. It turns out that the three were stranded on the island because their kayaks were lost in the foul weather conditions of 40 knot winds and 5-7 foot seas.

Captain Grant immediately called the position into the Coast Guard and sounded the ship’s whistle to let the stranded kayakers know they had been spotted. A Coast Guard helicopter soon rescued the three and transported them safely to a local hospital.

Local press reports credited the dramatic rescue to “a pilot with a keen eye.”

CRESCENT RIVER AND ASSOCIATED BRANCH PILOTS HELP NEW ORLEANS CELEBRATE TRICENTENNIAL

Historical tall ships and navy ships from around the world helped New Orleans celebrate its 300th Anniversary this summer. Pilots from both the Crescent River Port Pilots and the Associated Branch Pilots hosted events on the SS ELSA, a 135 year old three-masted, iron-hulled ship built in Scotland.

A number of historical tall ships, which averaged 5-6 knots and 16 hours to transit part of the Mississippi River, took part in the celebration.

SS ELSA

COLUMBIA RIVER BAR PILOTS PRESENT SCHOLARSHIP

In mid-June, Captain Dan Jordan, Co-Manager of the Columbia River Bar Pilots (CRBP), presented Cadet Wyatt Vele with a four-year scholarship to Texas A&M Maritime Academy while the two were aboard the Tanker PELICAN STATE.

Prior to earning this scholarship, Cadet Vele had worked as a deckhand on the CRBP pilot boats.

Captain Dan Jordan (Columbia River Bar Pilots), presents a scholarship check to Cadet Vele

ELECTIONS, SELECTIONS, APPOINTMENTS, ETC.

The following pilots’ associations announced new officers:

♦ Northeast Marine Pilots: Captain Sean P. Bogus (President), Captain Richard Astles (Vice President), Captain Clinton Walker (Secretary), Captain E. Howard McVay (Co-Treasurer) and Captain Vincent Kirby (Co-Treasurer).

♦ Aransas-Corpus Christi Pilots: Captain Kevin Monaco (President) and Captain John Williams (Vice President).