The next gathering of Nation’s professional maritime pilots will be “deep in the heart of Texas!” The American Pilots’ Association’s 2014 Biennial Convention, hosted by the Houston Pilots, will be held at the Hilton Americas – Houston from October 19-24. The Houston Pilots and APA staff are busy making preparations and finalizing contracts for what promises to be a GREAT week.

On Sunday, October 19 the 14th Biennial APA Golf Event, certain to produce at least one ESPN “Top 10 moment,” will be held at Wildcat Golf Club – Lakes Course. The team of big hitters from the “Philly Pilots” are eager to hold on to the “Admiral’s Cup,” but there are a number of teams ready to snatch this coveted trophy.

The first day of pre-convention meetings will be Monday, October 20. As is customary, the day will begin with the Attorneys’ Meeting. This important gathering allows APA lawyers (both of the licensed and “sea” varieties) to discuss recent developments in pilotage law. The Attorneys’ Meeting will be followed by meetings of APA working committees at which various proposals and resolutions will be prepared for consideration during the Convention’s General Sessions.

On Tuesday, October 21, the Convention officially opens and will run through Friday. During these General Sessions, association and pilot business, required to be addressed by the APA By-Laws, will be taken up. In addition, attendees will hear from senior leaders from federal agencies, such as the USCG and NOAA, as well as Congressional representatives and staff.

The APA’s Navigation and Technology Committee (NAVTECH), under the chairmanship of Captain Jorge Viso (Tampa Pilots) will meet on Wednesday afternoon. (continued on page 3)
PILOTS GATHER AT THE PANAMA CANAL: PELLETIER ELECTED NEW IMPA PRESIDENT

It is fitting that the latest International Maritime Pilots’ Association (IMPA) Congress was held within clear view of the Panama Canal. So much of the history and development of the maritime industry over the past 100 years was driven by the building of this canal. Similarly, the canal expansion project has already impacted the direction the shipping industry will likely take in the next century.

Hundreds of pilots from all over the world, including dozens of pilots from APA-member groups, met in Panama City, Panama from April 7-11. With Captain Mike Watson’s decision not to seek a third term as IMPA President, the first order of business was the election of a new IMPA President. In a landslide, Captain Simon Pelletier, President of the Canadian Marine Pilots’ Association, was elected to succeed Captain Watson. Captain Pelletier said that his priority as president will be to ensure that IMPA continues to maintain constructive relationships with international maritime stakeholders, particularly the IMO. In addition to a new president, a number of new IMPA vice presidents were chosen. For a complete listing of the new IMPA Executive, go to: www.impahq.org/executive_and_advisory_committee.php

In addition to the elections, the busy agenda included a keynote speech by IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu, hands-on tours of, and briefings on the canal expansion work, discussions about recent developments in pilot boat design, and an overview of the latest IMO agenda items, including eNavigation. APA’s Executive Director-General Counsel, Paul Kirchner, also moderated a panel discussion of legal experts from around the world on the topic of pilot civil liability. For more on the IMPA Congress, see page 5.

At the Congress’ closing, it was formally announced that the 2016 IMPA Congress will be held in Seoul, South Korea.

IMPA NEWSLETTERS NOW LINKED TO APA WEBSITE

In a step to keep APA-members abreast of various international pilotage issues, IMPA’s newsletter, “The International Pilot” is now linked to the APA’s website. See: www.americanpilots.org/impa_newsletter_archive.html

WATSON ATTENDS ANNUAL SPANISH PILOT CONFERENCE

Captain Watson, with the leaders of the Spanish Pilots, addresses their annual meeting, which was held in La Coruna, Spain from June 1-8. From left to right: Captain Jose Francisco Mosquera Gayoso, Captain Amador Gutierrez Rodriguez, Captain Joan A. Roig Carcelle, Captain Michael R. Watson, Captain Jose L. Chaves Gonzalez, Captain Molinero Gutierrez.
PRESIDENT SIGNS WRRDA

On June 10, the President signed the Water Resources Reform & Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014. According to a press release, “the law streamlines the Army Corps’ infrastructure authorization process, authorizes new projects, deauthorizes old projects, and accelerates project delivery.”

Despite the tendency for some in Washington, DC to exaggerate the benefits of newly adopted legislation, there are particular provisions within the WRRDA that give some cause for optimism with regard to dredging funding. As pilots around the country know, and as has been well-documented in ON STATION and other maritime publications, the dredging and maintenance of America’s ports and channels has been significantly underfunded. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has projected that at current funding levels there will be a $28 billion dredging shortfall by 2040. This is not surprising given that each year far less than half of the $1.8 billion collected in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) for maintenance dredging has actually been used for its intended purposes.

The WRRDA directly addresses dredging funding and project approval. First, the law streamlines the conduct of feasibility studies needed before a dredging project can be approved by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). The WRRDA limits ACOE studies to three years. Currently these studies have no time limit, and it has become common for the studies to take 10 to 15 years! Second, the WRRDA addresses, albeit over 10 years, the shortfall in utilization of HMTF money. The WRRDA sets specific target expenditures for maintenance dredging from the HMTF, increasing each year, so that by fiscal year 2025 and beyond, 100% of the funds collected under the harbor maintenance tax (HMT) go towards intended maintenance activities.

The President signed the WRRDA following a rare show of bipartisanship; the bill passed the House by a vote of 412-4 and the Senate by 91-7. Present at the President’s signing ceremony were the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Sen. Barbara Boxer(D-CA) and Ranking Member Sen. David Vitter (R-LA), as well as the Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA) and Ranking Member Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV).

2014 BIENNIAL CONVENTION (CONTINUED)

In addition to having professional exchanges on the latest issues in electronic navigation practices and equipment, NAVTECH members will hear from USCG officials on their view of the latest domestic and international navigation policies and priorities.

The Suppliers’ Exhibition, which will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, will provide pilots with the chance to meet with maritime and pilotage related vendors to discuss their products and services. The number of vendors registering is well ahead of schedule, so this year’s Exhibition is on pace to be a huge success.

The Convention will not, of course, be all work. A number of unique and exciting social events are in the works. As has become custom, there will be a Welcome Reception on Monday evening and a Friday evening black tie Gala Dinner. In between will be an evening cocktail reception at the NASA Space Center, a rodeo at the Pasadena Convention Center, and an event at Minute Maid Park. There will also be a daytime spouse excursion on Tuesday, October 21. As plans are finalized, detailed information will be made available.

Don’t miss the fun, camaraderie, and professional exchange opportunities. Come on down to Texas!

LONG TIME CONGRESSMAN JIM OBERSTAR PASSES AWAY


He was considered a good friend and supporter by the U.S.-registered pilots on the Great Lakes.
APA OFFICERS WORK TO INFORM NTSB OFFICIALS

According to its website, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is charged by Congress with investigating all “significant accidents” in various modes of transportation, including the marine sector. Following these investigations, the NTSB determines the probable cause of the accidents and issues safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. This is, of course, a laudable purpose. NTSB Board Members and staff, however, can become isolated “inside the beltway” and as a result can lose touch with the current realities of the transportation modes they are charged with investigating.

APA works to counter this potential problem by having senior pilots meet with NTSB officials and provide valuable information and “reality checks.” Two recent examples of APA outreach efforts with the NTSB involved Captain Pete McIsaac (San Francisco Bar Pilots and APA Vice President, Pacific States) and Captain Jorge Viso (Tampa Bay Pilots and APA Vice President, South Atlantic States).

Captain Viso was a presenter at a high-visibility March 25-26 NTSB forum titled, “Cruise Ships: Examining Safety, Operations and Oversight.” Viso, along with representatives from cruise lines, regulators, and researchers offered thoughts on navigation safety, the industry's regulatory framework, and operational oversight issues surrounding a number of recent high-profile incidents. Captain Viso made national headlines with his candid warning about the dangers posed by a recent trend of some bridge teams’ over-reliance on electronic navigation. For an example of the press coverage, see: http://bigstory.ap.org/article/captain-cruise-ships-may-over-rely-electronics.

Captain McIsaac was a key player in a March 21 emergency drill on SF Bay involving industry representatives and local, state and federal agencies. The drill was a first-of-its-kind exercise in the U.S. in which a tug towed a powerless ultra large container vessel (ULCV) in confined waterways. McIsaac ensured an NTSB Board Member had a front row seat to observe the complex operation that would be required if an ULCV lost power in restricted waters. “This was an important exercise because it showed how vital public-private partnerships are in responding to major marine casualties,” McIsaac said.

PILOTS WORK WITH THE NTSB

Captain Pete McIsaac (left), makes a point to NTSB Board Member Mark Rosekind during the March 21 ULCV towing exercise that took place in San Francisco Bay.

Captain Jorge Viso provides testimony at a March NTSB forum on cruise line safety. Viso emphasized that pilots have been at the forefront of navigation technology, but cautioned the Board about the potential dangers of overreliance on electronics by some bridge teams.

KIRCHNER ADDRESSES ANNUAL JOINT CIRM/RTCM MEETING

Paul Kirchner, APA Executive Director-General Counsel, addressed the annual joint meeting of the International Association for Marine Electronics Companies (CIRM) / Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM) on April 28 in Annapolis, MD. Kirchner provided a historical overview of how State pilots have consistently been on the cutting edge of navigation technology and offered the pilots’ experience with Portable Pilot Units as a model for developing and using e-navigation equipment in a sensible, responsible manner.

APA works closely with both RTCM and CIRM, which provide important and influential international voices on matters relating to electronic navigation and equipment. RTCM is an international non-profit scientific, professional and educational organization dealing with maritime radionavigation and radio-communication policy issues, regulatory changes, and technical standards. CIRM represents the interests of the marine electronics industry and promotes the application of electronic technology to the safety of life and efficient conduct of vessels at sea.
DON’T FORGET THE APA PAC FUND

Send your voluntary contribution to:
APA Political Action Committee
499 South Capitol St., SW
Washington, DC  20003

SCENES FROM THE 2014 IMPA CONGRESS

Captain Watson (left) presents Captain Rainiero Salas (President, Panama Canal Pilots Association) and Captain Alvaro Moreno (President, Panama Canal Pilots Union) with a gift to recognize their efforts in hosting the 2014 IMPA Congress.

APA VPs rock the “Guayaberas” at the IMPA Congress Friday Night Gala Dinner. At left: Jacquie and Captain Eric Nielsen (APA Vice President, North Atlantic States). At right: Captain Steve Hathorn (APA Vice President, Gulf States, Louisiana) and his wife Darren.

(L to R) Marta and Captain Mike Morris (President, Texas State Pilots); Captain Paul Amos (President, Columbia River Pilots) and his wife Della.

Paul Kirchner, APA Executive Director-General Counsel (far right), moderates a panel discussion of international legal experts on “Civil Liability of the Marine Pilot.”

A Panamanian Ambassador (center), presents the IMPA Flag to a representative of the South Korean Pilots in order to officially recognize that the 2016 IMPA Congress will be held in Seoul, South Korea. IMPA Secretary General Nick Cutmore looks on.
NAVTECH – AN INTERNATIONAL IMPACT ON NAVIGATION TECHNOLOGY

CIRM - the International Association for Marine Electronics Companies – recently submitted a paper for consideration at the upcoming meeting of the IMO’s Subcommittee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) that is based on concepts originated by APA’s NAVTECH. Specifically, CIRM is proposing that IMO’s draft eNavigation Strategy Implementation Plan (SIP) be revised to replace reference to “S-Mode” with reference to “default settings” and “save/recall function.”

“S-Mode” would require all shipboard navigation displays to have the ability to revert, by a single operator action, to a single, uniform international standardized navigation display system. CIRM’s submission to NCSR, echoing concerns raised by NAVTECH, warns that “ship navigation needs are not uniform across the globe; customers and users based in different markets have different user needs and preferences...[and] the development of e-navigation services is proceeding on a regional and national basis, rather than a uniform global one.” CIRM correctly notes that S-Mode could create a barrier rendering it more difficult to field equipment capable of meeting user needs.

The CIRM paper continues, “In 2010 the American Pilots Association Navigation and Technology Committee reviewed the S-Mode concept...and concluded that a more targeted and refined approach would be more effective for pilots and more acceptable to the equipment...manufacturers.” CIRM further explains that the NAVTECH refinement of the S-Mode “comprises two concepts: standard default settings on radars, ECDIS and related equipment; and a save/recall function for user settings. With this latter functionality a mariner would be able to save a preferred display configuration and, with one action, be able to recall that display configuration in the event that another mariner changes the original.”

Regardless of whether IMO ultimately agrees to modify the SIP, NAVTECH has made a difference; manufacturers are already moving forward with the NAVTECH concepts. NAVTECH members and all APA-member pilot groups should be proud!

CHRISTMAN FIRST PILOT NAMED TO USCG’S MEDMAC

In an April letter, the U.S. Coast Guard announced that Captain Beth Christman (Association of Maryland Pilots) has been appointed by the Secretary of Homeland Security to serve as a member of the Merchant Mariner Medical Advisory Committee or MEDMAC.

According to its charter, MEDMAC “shall advise the Secretary on matters related to: (A) medical certification determinations for issuance of licenses, certificates of registry, and merchant mariners’ documents; (B) medical standards and guidelines for the physical qualifications of operators of commercial vessels; (C) medical examiner education; and (D) medical research.”

The Committee is comprised of 10 members who are health-care professionals “with particular expertise, knowledge, or experience regarding the medical examinations of merchant mariners or occupational medicine” and four members who are professional mariners “with knowledge and experience in mariners’ occupational requirements.”

Christman, who will fill one of the mariner vacancies, is the first pilot to serve on MEDMAC, which was created in 2010.

ELECTIONS, SELECTIONS, APPOINTMENTS, ETC.

♦ The new Officers for the Lake Charles Pilots, Inc. are: Captain Brett A. Palmer (President), Captain Charles R. Morrison (Vice President), Captain William J. Neal (Vice President), and Captain David G. Fath (Secretary/Treasurer).

♦ The Savannah Pilots announced their 2014 Officers: Captain J. Nicholas Groover (President), Captain Robert T. Thompson, III (Master Pilot / Vice President), and Captain Christopher L. Yarbrough, Sr. (Secretary/Treasurer).

♦ The 2014-2015 Officers for the Mobile Bar Pilots, L.L.C., are: Captain J. Christopher Brock (President), Captain Robert T. Thompson, III (Master Pilot / Vice President), and Captain Christopher L. Yarbrough, Sr. (Secretary/Treasurer).