

Fellow Mariners:

Opening Remarks

The AMOA office is up and running. An office reception was held last Friday with about twenty-five individuals in attendance. It was mostly a local rabble, but a few Polar people did show up along with retirees John Sala and Wayne Komulanien.

This week was spent in Seward, Alaska evaluating an on-site engine room simulator for its possible use as an engineering training aid. It was also a great opportunity to observe Captains George, Parker, and Simpson at the helm (of the bridge simulator). Although the engine simulator is an impressive tool, a specialized curriculum would have to be developed for it to be a good fit for us. AVTEC does not have a lot of engineering expertise on site to do this. Considering all the near-term engineering changes (e.g. ballast water treatment system, Kongsberg upgrades, etc.), the immediate priority is to focus on training that supports these changes. I also visited Seattle Maritime Academy (SMA) this morning to get a comparative analysis of the simulation capacity at that facility. The SMA engine simulator was laid out very well and gave the operator a more realistic experience. That said, the same level of effort would have to be put into a curriculum there for it to be of any value. I could see a simulator like this being an effective front-end tool for training in preparation for new vessel construction and operation. The SMA engine room simulator is fully integrated with their on-site bridge simulator as well.

Polar News

The following is a departmental breakdown of company-related information and news to share:

- a) HSE News: In a follow up conversation with Vance, we discussed the Psychological Safety program in a little more detail. It is a corporate driven initiative that should not have any significant impact on the way we conduct ourselves on board. The intention of the initiative is to make sure we are creating a “safe space environment” for the identification and sharing of lessons learned and information.

There was an incident review committee presentation recently held for the Polar Discovery allision and the Polar Adventure ballast water release to engine room incident. During this presentation follow up actions were discussed for both incidents. There will be some policy changes to address each of these incidents. For docking, the addition of maneuvering plan drawings to aid in docking is one anticipated change as well as clarification of the master’s ultimate responsibility. For the LOTO process, the following changes will be coming:

- Modification of the LOTO procedure to add clarity around two-valve isolation.
- Line drawing requirements in the LOTO process will also be added to aid personnel in understanding the system being isolated.
- Clarifying acceptable verification tests
- Guidance for opened piping
- Revision of SIMOPS language to address the absolute necessity for interdepartmental communication during planning and execution
- Revision of the JHA policy to include considering risk during critical operations

- Revision of the bridge management manual to clearly indicate what work can and cannot be done at a cargo berth
 - Revision of the Ballast Water Management Policy such that valves no longer in use must be secured in the closed position.
- b) Quality News: In a one-on-one conversation with the Quality Manager, Mark Franks, we discussed the evolution and present status of the quality program within our company. One of the main tenets of the discussion was fleet input into the policy making process. We were both in agreement that the final policy product is always much better and stronger with more fleet input. The best way to do this is to engage your QAOs and have them communicate your input through their bi-weekly meetings. As a personal goal, I am also seeking to become a more proactive collaborator and another voice for the fleet in the policy making process.
- c) I.T. News: The logistics of making the changeover to our new VSAT provider, Network Innovations, is being actively managed. Concurrent with the VSAT changeover, Polar is a pilot project within ConocoPhillips for use of Silver Peak. Silver Peak is a network accelerator that also acts as a router. The hardware is on all the ships at this point, but as of now, the Polar Discovery is the one ship that has the new service in operation which also is managing Guest Wi-Fi. The Silver Peak technology has a lot more granularity in its ability to observe, shape, and manage data. The successful implementation of Silver Peak will facilitate the forthcoming cellular offloading option.
- d) Human Resources News: We recently had a member that needed to utilize the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to care for his parents. FMLA is unpaid job protection for up to twelve weeks. The Department of Labor (DOL) has given guidance on the administration of the FMLA. Additionally, companies are periodically audited for their compliance with this law. Guidance from the Department of Labor states that the start of caregiving is what triggers the start of family medical leave. In this case, the employee communicated that the caregiving started approximately thirty days prior to his seeking job protection under the FMLA. Consequently, per the DOL requirements, his FMLA status started as of the date he started the caregiving process not the date he requested the protection. Employees should be aware of this requirement when seeking job protection under the FMLA.

Staffing has rolled out the staffing assignment plan which is being sent by separate correspondence. As stated in an earlier update, the majority of changes were to address time-in-service demands.

ConocoPhillips News

Savings Plan Discretionary Contribution – On January 21st, the company announced the total contribution to individual savings plans for participating employees will equal 9% of your eligible pay. This consists of the 6% base match contributed each pay period and a 3% discretionary match. The 3% discretionary contribution should have been deposited into employees' accounts by the end of January. To be eligible, an employee needs to set aside a minimum of one percent of their pay into the company-sponsored savings plan each pay period.

Industry News

Volkswagen AG is the parent company of MAN Energy Solutions and RENK. VW has been attempting to sell both divisions to focus on its primary automotive business's efforts to enter the electrical vehicle market. Cummins and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries have both been in talks with VW for the sale of MAN. GCaptain recently reported that these talks have hit a roadblock. EQT AB, Triton, and Rheinmetall AG are reportedly three companies interested in acquiring RENK. A winning bidder for RENK is expected to be announced within the next few weeks. For any of us involved with procurement of spares, it might be worth evaluating the potential effect of this impending sale on our RENK supply chain.

Fleet Council News

We are collecting information on what members would like to see on an AMOA web site. Please reach out to me or a delegate if you have an opinion on the subject or want a feature included on the web site.

Promotions

Congratulations to John Blais, Fritz Carmine, and John Zwetsloot on their promotions to Second Assistant Engineer. No schedule has been announced for chief mate and second mate promotions, but it is my opinion that they are on the horizon.

Closing Remarks

The AMOA updates have had varying degrees of content and distribution over the years. I was reading a newspaper-style update that was delivered to my office with the other approximately 700 pounds of AMOA historical information. As a Fleet Council, we decided to make the distribution of these updates transparent and uniform. Consequently, we have broadened their official distribution to include shoreside company personnel and captains. We feel this in the best interests of the Association and is in the spirit of goodwill and trust building.

In addition to establishing the AMOA office phone line and receiving a company cell phone, a new email address has been created (see below) if you would like to share information outside of the company email system. This e-mail address will facilitate some portability if any of the other fleet council members fill-in for the chairman role at some point in the future.

I will be joining the Polar Adventure this weekend in Shell Anacortes and riding the vessel to San Francisco.

Best regards,

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