

Opening Remarks

As we all continue to navigate the risks of exposure to COVID, the San Francisco car service, TBC, notified the company this week that one of its drivers had been diagnosed with having the Corona virus. Two of our members had been driven by this individual nine days prior to the notification. Our medical department promptly contacted the individuals. The off signer had been recently tested due to his home state requirements. It was mutually decided that the crewmember presently on the vessel should self-quarantine in place until he reached the fourteen-day mark. This incident is a reminder about the ever-present situation we are all in and the need to maintain our guard.

ConocoPhillips and Polar Tanker News

COVID Precautions and Response – To date, we have had one of our members contract the Corona virus while he has been on paid leave. Outside of a persistent cough, he was able to “weather the COVID storm” fairly well. He has taken a COVID PCR test and is waiting for negative results prior to coming back to work. His main concern is not infecting any of his shipmates.

The antibody test kits ordered by the company have been sent to Valdez for delivery to the vessels. These kits are meant to be a screening tool and not a diagnostic tool. Their use will be voluntary and managed in collaboration with shoreside medical support.

Corporate Reorganization – There was a reorganization announcement this week from Ryan Lance. The change most relevant to Polar is that Steinar Vaage will become President of Europe, Middle East, and Asia. Michael Hatfield, presently President of Alaska, Canada, and Europe will assume Steinar’s present role as vice president, Global Operations, Wells, & Projects. The good news for Polar is that we already have an established, positive relationship with Mr. Hatfield. Mr. Hatfield will report to Dominic Macklon, who is becoming senior vice president of Strategy, Exploration, and Technology. There will be an additional layer of management as a result of this reorganization. In my opinion, this move may in part be to prepare the executive leadership for the eventual retirement of Matt Fox.

COP Financial Performance – On July 8th, ConocoPhillips announced a quarterly dividend of 42 cents per share. In the same timeframe, there was an announcement that COP would be paying out the six percent matching funds to employees who are in the company-sponsored savings plan but there would be no discretionary match this year. Based on the events over the last six months, these announcements are not surprising. ConocoPhillips had to cut its dividend during the last commodity price contraction, so it was welcomed news by investors that COP was not significantly reducing its dividend for this quarter. A public meeting will be held July 30th announcing the company’s second quarter financial results.

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Polar Endeavour Status – The Endeavour is still anchored in Hong Kong. The second crew change was moved up based on the initial delays. Following the second crew change this weekend, the Endeavour will proceed to sea to complete the clean-up and then proceed to Singapore. The tentative start date for the shipyard period is now August 22nd. Contractors and office personnel are required to spend two weeks in government housing upon initially entering Singapore.

Annual Physicals – The situation is still fluid, but as of now, the annual physical requirement will be reinstated starting August 1st. A few employees with expiring USCG medical certificates have opted to proceed with conducting the annual physicals during the hold period. This is an option for mariners but some of the clinic locations have suspended respiratory fit and pulmonary function tests during the pandemic.

Biometrics Screening Status – As a reminder, on June 17th, ConocoPhillips announced that based on the pandemic, employees could use their 2019 biometrics screening results for 2020 should they choose. If an employee had one or more metrics (i.e. weight, etc.) that were out of range during the 2019 screening, that individual will have to complete the same qualifying activities again for this year. Jamie will be coming out with a Biometrics update soon to clarify this year's requirements.

Staffing Department/Meledie Castro – Meledie is back from maternity leave. Everyone is glad to see her return, none more so than Janice.

Industry News

OPEC+ Meeting – The mid-year meetings of OPEC and OPEC+ countries were held this week. The results of the meetings were that OPEC production cuts will start being eased next month from a curtailment of 9.7 million barrels per day to 7.7 million barrels per day. The oil markets took a dip in response to this news but overall, it is a good signal that OPEC+ is continuing actions to stabilize the market. The OPEC countries are showing a disciplined adherence to this plan because some member countries that were not initially in compliance with the cuts (e.g. Iraq) are extending the initial quotas in order to come into compliance.

Stranded Seafarers – According to a Marine Log article, the International Trade Federation (ITF) reports that approximately 300,000 seafarers are still trapped on ships due to national governments not allowing crew changes in their ports. On July 9th, a virtual summit was hosted by the U.K. government to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on crew changes. In the article, a BIMCO representative was quoted as saying that only fifteen countries attended the summit. Further, the representative said the absence of many key countries from this summit shows the apparent indifference of some countries toward the crew change crisis. In light of these challenges, the shipping industry has been chartering flights, rerouting ships, and other extraordinary measures in an attempt to accomplish the crew reliefs. The ongoing challenges of getting our Endeavour shipmates relieved is a glimpse into this broader issue.

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Fleet Council News

Fleet Council Meeting – The fleet council recently held another phone conference meeting. We had an active discussion on the use of paid leave and return to work considerations. Several members have been negatively impacted by having personal schedules disrupted and/or having to consume paid leave involuntarily. The one, two punch of the pandemic and oil market collapse presented the company with some serious challenges and difficult choices. They have tried to minimize impacts, but some individuals were affected. The council wanted me to affirm members to contact the chairman and council members for assistance. We would much rather assist you at the time of need rather than trying to mitigate the impacts afterwards.

One of the 2020 goals the council had laid out at the beginning of the year was to develop and improve guidance to new and existing employees concerning financial and company benefits management. This goal will be one of our next areas of focus.

Some members may have missed the Wordpress introductory email that contained your username and password for the AMOA web site. If you are one of those individuals, contact me and your password can be reset. Your web site and NS5 username are the same.

Delegate Nominations – The window for delegate nominations is now open. If you would like to run for an engine or deck delegate position, please notify myself or a council member in writing (email). There may be a little confusion about members needing to have at least three years of seniority prior to running for a council member position. The three-year requirement is for the officer positions. The council memberships do not have the same requirement. The following section of our bylaws covers eligibility:

Section 2: Each member of the Association is eligible for nomination and election to the Fleet Council provided:

- (A) *The member is in good standing on the first Monday in April of the election year.*
- (B) *The member has been in good standing for 365 days preceding the election date.*
- (C) *The member has declared availability for election by filling in a form which will be made available to all members by the Association (or, if the member so chooses, by writing a letter declaring his or her availability) and has forwarded such completed form (or letter or email) to the Chairman of the association in time for it to be received on or before a date determined by the Fleet Council.*

Ship of the Week – Polar Discovery

The AMOA Update welcomes another field reporter to its staff. Mr. John Wilder, Second Assistant Engineer on the Polar Discovery contributed this edition's article on starting your tour.

Surprise! Going to work is never easy. Putting your home life on hold and leaving loved ones generates an angst that few people in the world can understand. As many of us are well aware, it is commonplace when describing to someone what we do for work to be met with immediate

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bewilderment at our seemingly alien lifestyle. Frequently I have heard “you have the best job” or “it must be nice to spend so much time at home, you must love this job”. However, we know there are many aspects of this job that outsiders can only see, but never truly feel. The final embrace and goodbye of a newborn child, or the difficult departure from a nursing home for what one may only hope will not be the final time, or maybe even both in the same day. These are the challenging things. These are the things we spend long plane rides thinking about and step into quiet hotel rooms wondering about (I don’t have kids, for some of you I can imagine the quiet hotel room is a welcome reprieve).

For me personally, the feelings of this arguably somber pilgrimage we make three or four times a year are always quickly replaced. Whether you’re taking your first step out of the elevator into the MCR or walking out on deck to prepare for cargo, you are suddenly immersed in a completely new dynamic. Some may consider it accepting fate, others may call it changing gears, but for me it is always a reminder that I do have a second home. With this comes the other aspect of what friends and family may never experience: genuine comradery. Although my career thus far has been relatively short, I have seen those struggling with missing births, deaths, and other major life events, and I have seen how shipmates will respond and be at each other’s side through these times. But I have also tasted a cheesecake made by Delly, bonded with others over the challenge of a certain chiefs Spreadsheet, lost the annual Christmas Martinelli’s Pong tournament multiple times (I’m coming for you Ben Mitchell), and definitely sweat profusely with others in a fuel tank in Singapore after an extensive night of, sleeping soundly for 8 hours. These things can never be replicated in the shoreside world, nor would I ever want them to be. Considering these things in responding to those who ask if the job is worth it, the answer is always clear.

Closing Remarks

Congratulations to Logan Goewey. Logan was just promoted to third mate and is presently assigned to the Polar Discovery. As I gathered AMOA’s introductory and initiation information for Logan, I had a flashback to my own initial experience of joining the national affiliated union of American Maritime Officers (AMO). The AMO west coast office was on the second floor of the SIU hall in San Francisco. The office was at end the end of a darkened corridor with adhesive mailbox stickers on the door stating **AMO**. In my mind, the only missing ingredient in that situation was a hallway “attendant” —a middle-aged guy named Tony in a track suit.

Gus Gazillion was on the other side of that door. Gus was a grizzled ex-Chief Engineer that was Armenian but born and raised in Boston. Sizing up Gus, you might think he stole Whitey Bulger’s lunch money as a kid. Instead of relieving me of my lunch money, I relinquished a \$10,000 check for my union initiation fee. In reflecting upon this, I want to make sure that a more welcoming impression is given to AMOA members. Please reach out if you have any questions and let me or the fleet council members help you. Our primary mission is to serve the membership.

Best regards,

Pete

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