

Flag Vanuatu Issue No. 10

Quarterly Newsletter from the
Vanuatu International Shipping
Register



Winter 2023

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Welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of our quarterly newsletter 'Flag Vanuatu', intended for our flagged vessel Owners, Operators, Managers, Seafarers, Friends of the Register and Colleagues.

We hope that our Newsletter will be equally well received in the company boardroom, the ship's messroom, and everywhere in between. Please feel free to pass a copy along to your associates, friends, and flagged vessel owners etc, so that it may be printed/distributed widely. WE ALWAYS APPRECIATE YOUR FEEDBACK, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, AND IDEAS.



This Festive Season we wish all our Readers Joyful Holidays, Peace, Happiness and Prosperity, along with our fondest best hopes for the New Year ..



Joyeuses fêtes et bonne année

"Mi wisim yufala eerywan one gutfala Krismes"

From all of us in Vanuatu, the International Shipping Register, and The Vanuatu Maritime Services Limited Network worldwide.

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EditorialWhat is the cost of 'Green Energy'?

From a regional perspective it is noted that the UK Government has raised the support price for new offshore wind farms by 66%, as it tries to rekindle investment in a crisis-hit sector crucial, we are told, to its, arguably naïve, “climate goals”.

We are given to understand that the global offshore wind sector has been in cost crisis, and the UK's last ‘auction round’ for prospective offshore wind farm developers resulted in no bidding at all, in a country where rising costs will surely erode profits. Inevitably, the government's increased support level will feed through to higher prices and bills for households (already near historic highs) yet we are told that renewable power is still the cheapest form of energy, essential for our future needs.

Struggling families globally might find this a little difficult to grasp as they face high cost of living challenges including green energy levies.

Realistically, fossil fuels (oil, gas and coal) will remain essential for a civilized future for mankind, for quite a while to come.

High time, perhaps, to take a perspective view amidst the hype and hysteria which has become the norm whenever climate change, decarbonisation and net zero are considered.

We all appreciate good practical moves toward decarbonisation, and readily concede that the use of fossil fuels is not good for the environment.

We all wish for a clean environment for



our descendants and clean safe air to breath; and that without appropriate measures we might expect a collapse of our global industrial civilization unless a number of problems (not all of which are directly climate-related) are addressed and solved in the reasonably near term:

Even a casual glance at global population and resources statistics show that achieving sustainability here is of equal, or considerably more, importance than just policing carbon emissions.

Some experts warn that every year humans use the equivalent of 1.75 times as many resources as the planet can generate. Things like forests, aquifers, topsoil, fertilizer and fossil fuels etc. When did we reach the break-even point?: About 50 years ago by some accounts! So we seem to be living on borrowed time, yet meaningful discussion and planning on these topics are rare as they do not, generally, earn sufficient political points.

The current importance of fossil fuels for our civilized existence can not be over emphasised and the end of 'cheap' fossil fuels, before viable alternatives are found and introduced, could be catastrophic for our life as we know it. According to related studies, there are at least four other critical items we need to maintain and advance our civilization: cement and steel (for building projects etc.), plastic (for everything, including medical equipment), and ammonia (to produce nitrogen fertilizer – without which half the world would starve). All of these require fossil fuels.



What is 'Green Energy'? Many seem to think this means energy produced without damage to the environment, although this is not actually the case.

True, things such as wind turbines and solar panels produce fewer emissions, but they still produce some, not least from the fossil fuels needed to provide the energy to create them.

Plastic, as we are well aware, is derived from oil, and as just 2 examples, wind turbine blades are made of plastic, as is up to 50% of a typical electric vehicle. (We know that there are other ways to create plastic, but they are a lot more expensive)

Metals, in considerable quantity, are needed to sustain production of such items as computers, solar panels, and a plethora of other technologies, and all of the above need replacement after a period of time.

In the case of wind and solar farms, rebuilding is probably required every 20 to 30 years (depending on the quality of original construction), so these forms of

energy should, perhaps, be more accurately called 'rebuildables' rather than 'renewables'.

A variety of 'rare metals' are required in our phones and devices, including europium, indium, manganese, neodymium, terbium, tungsten and many others, like lithium (one of the most important metals in the religion of 'green energy') being the least dense and able to store more energy for its weight. To obtain these, strip mining is used with much damage to local environments and eco-systems, to say nothing of child labour and other abominations.

It could be argued that the loss of a few ecosystems is tolerable so that we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but we might do well to think again:

Currently 'renewables' (solar, wind, hydro & geothermal etc.) make up less than 20% of world energy production (some less optimistic reports put it as low as 5%) so the march toward a global green energy grid is eye-wateringly expensive and still an oppressively long one.

As things stand an estimated 30 million square miles of the earth's land surface is already affected by mining and commercial de-forestation to sustain our ever growing populations. Could 'green energising' of the remaining 80% of the global energy grid outweigh the damage done by climate change?

Addressing the real issues?

Climate change is, however, responsible for a large segment of our woes.

According to a consensus of predictions the increasing number of natural disasters, not least droughts and flooding, hurricanes and wildfires etc, cause simultaneous food production failures around the world potentially leading to global famine.

Time perhaps, this holiday season, to reflect on these supremely important issues and a pressing need to cooperate on a global scale to address them.

Clearly, humanity needs to collectively transition away from reliance on fossil fuels. Nuclear power, with all its drawbacks, not least the initial costs and radiation hazards, would appear one of the most viable 'heavy duty' reliable alternatives from where we currently stand.

The shipping industry has been innovative (of necessity) in the research and development of alternative fuels. It is a daunting prospect to move from a reliable, relatively safe and readily available traditional fuel (like low sulphur fuel oils) to an alternative which might require unique handling, containment, and present significant safety hazards.

Several experts and sages have predicted that the future for propulsion energy in the shipping industry may well be battery power for smaller, short distance

tonnage, some form of wind assistance for many, and nuclear power for the majority of larger deep ocean vessels. **-Ed.**

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In Brief This Quarter

Heatwave in Brazil

(AP News -Dateline 15th November 2023)

While Summer proper has not yet started a dangerous heat wave is sweeping across large portions of Brazil, causing significant disruptions and driving up energy demand amid reports of power outages.

Most Brazilian states face “great danger” from the heat, according to the National Institute of Meteorology. The institution issued a red alert for the center-west, southeast and parts of the north warning of “a high probability of major damage and accidents, with risks to physical integrity and even human life.”

Extreme heat can affect breathing, kidneys, and the heart, with the very young and elderly particularly at risk.



The heat index — a combination of temperature and humidity — hit 58.5 degrees Celsius (137 Fahrenheit) Tuesday morning in Rio, the highest index ever recorded there.

Cariocas — as residents of Rio are known — have always seen sun, heat and the beach as part of their identity, said Núbia Beray, coordinator of Rio de

Janeiro Federal University’s GeoClima laboratory. But this is too much even for many of them, she said.

El Niño is a large contributor

Amid the high heat, wildfires are burning widely in the Pantanal biome, the world’s biggest tropical wetlands spanning parts of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul states. The fires have ravaged an area about the size of Cyprus, or more than 947,000 hectares (about 3,600 square miles), according to the Environmental Satellite Applications Laboratory of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

Temperatures across South America are affected by the climate phenomenon El Niño, a periodic naturally occurring event that warms surface waters in the Equatorial Pacific region. But this year, ocean temperature rose extremely quickly – in a couple of months, said Danielle Ferreira, a climatologist at ‘Inmet’.

“This indicates that the impacts are accelerating,” Ferreira said.

In Brazil, El Niño has historically caused droughts in the north and intense rainfall in the south. This year, the impacts of the climate event have been particularly dramatic.

In the Amazon rainforest, the drought has been so severe communities dependent on the dried-up waterways [are stranded without supply of fuel, food or filtered water](#). And in Brazil’s southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, [devastating floods killed dozens](#).

Scientists say extreme weather is happening more frequently due to human-caused climate change.

EU Clamps down on Shipping-Related Environmental Crimes

It is reported that EU negotiators have reached a provisional agreement on updating environmental crimes and sanctions rules related to shipping and other activities to enhance the protection of the ecosystem.

A revised list of offenses encompasses various activities such as pollution caused by ships, the import and use of mercury and fluorinated greenhouse gases, the import of invasive species, and the illegal depletion of water resources. Stricter sanctions have also been agreed upon for qualified offenses, which include acts leading to the destruction of an ecosystem or habitat within a protected site, or damage to air, soil, or water quality.



File photo: Port of Rotterdam

Environmental crime is a major global criminal activity and a significant source of income for organized crime

Under the new rules, individuals, including company representatives, found guilty of environmental offenses resulting in death can face imprisonment for up to 10 years. Qualified offenses, on the other hand, would be punishable by up to eight years in prison. For other criminal offenses, the duration of imprisonment, ranging from five years, will depend on factors such as the extent and severity of the damage caused.

The agreed draft law will now undergo formal approval by the Legal Affairs Committee, the European Parliament as a whole, and the Council before it can enter into force.

IMO's Annual Budget set to exceed \$51 Million

(Dateline 24th November 2023)

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly, the United Nations affiliate's highest governing body, is due to meet shortly with a packed schedule. The assembly consists of all member states and meets every two years at IMO's London headquarters to thrash out upcoming work programmes, budgets as well as electing the IMO Council.

Outgoing IMO secretary-general

Kitack Lim has already warned member states that the annual budgets planned for 2024 and 2025 will hit new highs, mentioning in the past the effect of inflation which reached levels not seen in the United Kingdom for 40 years. The proposed budget



for next year stands at £40.9m (US\$ 51.25m), a 5.9% increase over 2023.

Reportedly among matters for debate next week there is a strongly worded draft resolution, supported by 22 member states, voicing the growing criticism of the overwhelming use of English in the IMO secretariat with a call for all technical documents – including the often very bulky annexes – to be translated in all six UN official languages. This issue relates to concern over transparency and the notion that nobody is left behind in often complex technical work and often undertaken by correspondence groups that only work in English.

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Concerns for Safety of Shipping in the Red Sea

(Dateline 29th November 2023)

Commercial ships face increasing dangers at sea after armed groups have attacked and seized vessels in waters around the Red Sea and off the coast of Yemen, adding to perils for seafarers, shipping officials said on Wednesday.

An **attempted hijacking** of a commercial vessel in the Gulf of Aden appears to have been carried out by armed **Somali pirates** and not Yemeni Houthis, despite the **firing of missiles** from Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen afterwards, the Pentagon said on Monday.



The incident is the latest in a series of attacks in Middle Eastern waters since a brutal war between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas broke out on Oct. 7th.

The International Chamber of Shipping association said the “attacks must stop immediately, and the innocent seafarers released.”

“In all cases, these vessels are conducting their right of freedom of navigation and innocent passage,” the ICS said in a statement.

U.S. maritime administration MARAD said in an advisory on Sunday that vessels faced multiple threats after the attacks.

“Exercise caution when transiting these areas and remain cognizant of evolving threats in this region,” MARAD said.

Return of Somali pirates after long dormant period

(Dateline 24th November 2023)

Pirate activity has been flagged offshore Somalia after many years and commercial shipping has been advised to remain outside the country's territorial waters due to the risk of "opportunistic armed robbery".

An Iranian-flagged fishing vessel, *Almeraj 1*, has been hijacked by an armed Somali clan militia offshore Eyl, with demands of \$400,000 in ransom and threats to use the ship for additional hijackings if the payment is not made, according to local media.

Maritime security consultants have said the reason given for the hijacking was the vessel/dhow allegedly performing illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.



"Merchant shipping is advised to avoid the area, to be vigilant in case of a sighting, and to implement counter-piracy Best Management Practices," a UK security expert said.

Somali pirates have mostly targeted smaller commercial dhows or fishing

vessels in the past. Piracy was rampant off Somalia for a four-year period from 2008 but then it went dormant for about five years. The last reported hijacking involving a commercial ship was in 2017 when a bulk carrier [OS35](#) became the fifth ship to be attacked within three weeks.

The UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai UAE



The 2023 UN Climate Change Conference was convened between the 30th of November and the 12th of December 2023 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). It was the 28th meeting of the

Conference of the Parties (COP 28); the fifth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 5);

(See also: [Vanuatu takes on big polluters at COP28 – Page No. 19](#))

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Lead Feature

A look at the future of ship fuels and their impact on the industry

The subject of alternative fuels remains highly topical in the shipping press as we make strategies to move away from fossil fuels.

We are reminded again that the shipping industry is a vital component of the global economy, transporting approximately 80% of the world's trade.

However, the industry is also a significant contributor to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

(Our thanks to 'Spectra Fuels' for an informative article forming the basis of this report)



According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), shipping accounts for around 2% of global emissions, and this is expected to increase to 17% by 2050 if no action is taken.

There is growing pressure, therefore, to reduce the shipping industry's carbon footprint, and one of the key areas of focus is the development of alternative ship fuels. In this article, we explore the future of ship fuels and the role they are likely to play in reducing GHG emissions.

Current Ship Fuels

Traditionally, ships have relied on heavy fuel oils (HFOs) that are high in sulfur content. These fuels are relatively inexpensive and widely available, making them a popular choice for the shipping industry. However, they also emit significant amounts of greenhouse gases, sulphur dioxide, and other pollutants, contributing to air and water pollution and climate change.

In response to these environmental impacts, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has implemented regulations to reduce sulfur emissions from ships. In 2020, the IMO mandated a significant reduction in sulfur content in marine fuels, requiring ships to use fuel with a sulfur content of no more than 0.5% (reduced from 3.5%). This has led to the development of new fuel options, including low sulfur fuel oil (LSFO), liquefied natural gas (LNG), and biofuels.

Alternative Ship Fuels

There are several alternative ship fuels currently being developed that have the potential to significantly reduce GHG emissions from shipping.

Briefly:

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)

LNG is a cleaner-burning fuel than HFO, emitting 25% less carbon dioxide (CO₂) and negligible amounts of sulfur oxides (SO_x) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x). It is currently the most widely used alternative ship fuel, with more than 200 vessels currently in operation and many more on order. However, LNG is not a long-term solution, as it is still a fossil fuel and emits significant amounts of GHGs.

Biofuels

Biofuels are renewable fuels made from organic matter such as crops or waste. They have the potential to reduce GHG emissions by up to 90% compared to HFO. However, their use is currently limited due to the high cost and lack of availability.

Hydrogen

Hydrogen is a zero-emission fuel that can be produced from renewable sources such as wind or solar power. When used in a fuel cell, hydrogen produces only water and heat, with no emissions of GHGs or pollutants. However, hydrogen is currently expensive to produce, transport, and store, and there is a lack of infrastructure to support its use as a ship fuel.

Ammonia

Ammonia is a zero-emission fuel that can be produced from renewable sources such as wind or solar power. It has a high energy density and can be transported and stored relatively easily. However, it is highly toxic and corrosive and requires specialized infrastructure and handling.

Methanol

Methanol is a low-carbon fuel that can be produced from renewable sources or from natural gas with carbon capture and storage (CCS). It emits 15-20% less GHGs than HFO and can be used in existing ship engines with minimal modifications. However, its use is currently limited due to the lack of infrastructure and the high cost of production.

Besides these alternate of ship fuels, there are two more possible alternatives:

Wind Propulsion and Nuclear Propulsion

It is widely considered that these have little scope in the near future due to a variety of challenges such as high investment in the case of nuclear propulsion and the significant challenges to their widespread adoption.

Considerations for using alternative fuels

Cost:

The cost of alternative ship fuels is currently one of the biggest barriers to their widespread adoption. For example, the cost of biofuels is significantly higher than that of traditional fuels, making them less attractive to ship owners and operators. The same is true for other alternative fuels like hydrogen and ammonia, which require expensive production, transport, and storage infrastructure.

However, there are opportunities to reduce the cost of alternative fuels over time. For example, as production scales up and technology improves, the cost of biofuels is expected to decrease. Additionally, new technologies are being developed to make the production of hydrogen and other alternative fuels more efficient and cost-effective.

Infrastructure:

Another challenge associated with alternative ship fuels is the lack of infrastructure for their production, transport, and storage. For example, there are currently very few ports that offer LNG bunkering, which limits the ability of ships to use this fuel. Similarly, there are only a few facilities for the production and storage of hydrogen and ammonia, which makes their widespread use impractical at the moment.

To address this challenge, governments and private companies are investing in the development of infrastructure for alternative fuels. For example, several countries have announced plans to build new LNG bunkering facilities, and there are initiatives underway to develop a network of hydrogen refueling stations for cars, trucks, and ships.

Safety:

Many alternative ship fuels are highly flammable or toxic, which requires specialized handling and storage. For example, ammonia is highly corrosive and can cause serious injuries if not handled properly. Similarly, hydrogen is highly flammable and requires special safety measures to prevent fires and explosions.

To address these safety concerns, companies and governments are developing new technologies and safety protocols for the handling and storage of alternative fuels. For example, there are new designs for hydrogen storage tanks that reduce the risk of leaks and explosions, and there are new safety guidelines for the use of ammonia as a ship fuel.

Overall, the development of alternative ship fuels is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a coordinated effort from governments, private companies, and other stakeholders. While there are significant challenges associated with the adoption of alternative fuels, there are also significant opportunities to reduce GHG emissions and create a more sustainable shipping industry.

As technology continues to improve and production scales up, the cost of alternative fuels is likely to decrease, making them more attractive to ship owners and operators. Similarly, the development of infrastructure and safety protocols for alternative fuels is likely to accelerate, making their widespread adoption more feasible in the years ahead.

The shipping industry has been making strides towards more sustainable and eco-friendly fuels in recent years. Here are some developments that have been reported:

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the shipping industry by at least 50% by 2050 compared to 2008 levels.

Many major shipping companies have announced plans to invest in alternative fuels. For example, Maersk, one of the world's largest shipping companies, has committed to becoming carbon-neutral by 2050.

The use of hydrogen as a fuel for ships is being explored by several companies.

The use of ammonia as a fuel for ships is also being explored. In April 2021, a consortium of companies announced plans to develop ammonia-fueled ships, with the first vessel expected to be in operation by 2025.

Overall, the shipping industry is making progress towards a more sustainable future, with a focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and exploring alternative fuels.

The transition to cleaner ship fuels is likely to have significant impacts on the shipping industry over time, including economic, operational, and regulatory considerations.

Economic Impacts

The transition to cleaner ship fuels will require significant investment and effort from the industry. Ships will need to retrofit their engines or invest in new technology to use cleaner fuels. Additionally, the availability and cost of

alternative fuels may be a barrier to adoption, particularly for smaller shipping companies.

The cost of alternative fuels, such as LNG and biofuels, is currently higher than traditional marine fuels. This may impact the competitiveness of the shipping industry, particularly in regions where fuel costs are a significant portion of operating expenses. Additionally, the costs associated with retrofitting or replacing ships may be a significant barrier for some companies, particularly smaller operators.

There are, however, also potential economic benefits associated with the transition to cleaner fuels. The use of alternative fuels may help to reduce emissions and comply with environmental regulations, which could improve the industry's reputation and access to markets. Additionally, investment in new technology and infrastructure may create jobs and drive innovation in the industry.

Operational Impacts

The transition to cleaner ship fuels may also have operational impacts on the industry. The use of alternative fuels may require changes to ship design and operations, such as fuel storage and handling systems. Additionally, the use of LNG as a fuel may require additional safety measures and training for crews. The availability and reliability of alternative fuels may also impact ship operations. LNG requires specialized infrastructure and refuelling facilities, which may not be available in all ports. Biofuels may also have limited availability, particularly in regions where feedstocks are scarce.

Regulatory Impacts

The transition to cleaner ship fuels is being driven by environmental regulations, and compliance with these regulations may have significant impacts on the industry. The IMO's sulfur emissions regulations are already in place, and additional regulations may be implemented in the future. Compliance with environmental regulations may require additional monitoring and reporting, which could increase administrative burdens for shipping companies. Non-compliance with regulations may result in fines and reputational damage.

Conclusions

The transition to cleaner ship fuels is likely to have significant impacts on the shipping industry over time and it is probable that



additional major challenges (and solutions) will unfold in the future.

While the shift towards cleaner fuels is necessary to address environmental impacts, it will also require significant investment and effort from the industry. The availability and cost of alternative fuels may be a significant barrier to adoption, particularly for smaller companies, and there may be operational and regulatory impacts associated with the transition.

The companies that are able to adapt quickly and effectively are likely to be the most successful in the long run. **-Ed.**

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Meet our Team. Ms. Sabina Cailean, Licencing Department, Vanuatu Maritime Services Ltd., New York

Introducing members of our worldwide registry team and support staff to our customers and friends. Hopefully this will allow readers to get to know our team in a more meaningful way than simply a voice at the other end of the phone or a name at the bottom of an email.



Sabina joined Vanuatu Maritime Services on the 16th of October, 2013 and is now Senior Manager of Licensing Department in New York, our main administrative office.

She was born in Romania, where she first studied, and excelled, at mathematics. She studied at the prominent University of Timisoara, and subsequently became a professional teacher of mathematics in Romania which she enjoyed considerably and found satisfying, assisting students on the road to

wisdom, and giving them a good grounding for their futures.

Luckily, for us, Sabina moved to the United States and started to build a new life.

Needless to say, leading a team responsible for issuing vital documents such as ID Books, Endorsements and CRAs for seafarers working on Vanuatu Flagged vessels is not an activity to be taken lightly nor can it be done at a leisurely pace. We are sure that many of our readers have benefited from the speed and efficiency of Sabina and her team over the years **-Ed.**

Name: Sabina Cailean

Position: Senior Manager, Licensing Department

Base: New York, U.S.A.

Contacts: Tel. +1 (USA) 212 425 9600

Email: scailean@vanuatuships.com



Photo: "The VMSL Dream Team" in New York.

Sabina with her team in our Licencing Department.

Sabina writes:

"Dear readers, it is a privilege to write a few words in this Winter edition of our newsletter, especially as it is the last one for 2023, and we are really looking forward to serving all our valued customers again next year.

Here in the New York office I manage a team of 3 persons, Andreea Alexandru, Stiffany Arandia and Elizabeth Bizic. I mention these three ladies

because I do not wish to keep all the limelight to myself (!) and I owe the success of our department to all of us, working as a team.

It is exciting to be part of that great team, and it is very important to be able to rely on each other to make it operate like precision clockwork.

We always keep our mission in mind, which is the timely issuance of important documents, vital for the seafarers on our ships. They deserve the right to work and to have their documents delivered on time.

We know that Jobs in the marine industry can be hard, both physically and mentally.

Seafarers are away from their families for months at a time and they often work in inhospitable conditions around the world.

Our work here is to provide them with the 'right tools' so that they can provide for their families.

The Editor has asked me what I like to do in my spare time?.. Well, I enjoy helping kids with their Math homework (old habits I guess) and I would like to add that I am the proud Mom of a son (Daniel), who is actually a European 'Jiu Jitsu Champion. He trains other kids in the art of (Brazilian) Jiu jitsu.

The date that I joined the 'Vanuatu team' in New York (16th October) is actually a very special day for me, as that date in October is also Daniel's birthday".

Sabina, Thank you so much for your contribution which is deeply appreciated. We have much respect for Daniel as our research shows that the Brazilian version of Jiu Jitsu is highly competitive, fast and skilful; definitely not for the fainthearted. -Ed.

Feature – The OSJ Asia Conference in Singapore

VMSL Co-Sponsored the OSJ Asia Conference 2023 in Singapore

We mentioned in our Autumn edition that Vanuatu Maritime Services Limited (VMSL) on behalf of the Vanuatu International Shipping Register, co-sponsored the annual Offshore

Support Journal Asian Conference in Singapore which took place on the 12th and 13th of September at the 'Four Points by Sheraton', Riverview venue.

It was our pleasure and honour to host the day two networking lunch, which was a great success, thanks to the hosting venue and to the organizers, Riviera Maritime Media.

The event was attended by our Chairman, Robert Bohn, who reported a significant event with an impressive list of speakers and delegates, in one of the most important shipping hubs in the region, and one of the most dynamic cities in the world.



A brief outline of the Event

A keynote address was given by Er Tham Wai Wah, Chief Sustainability Officer at the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, emphasising their commitment to decarbonisation and working toward a greener future and transition to multi-fuel systems. This general theme was present throughout the conference.

In October 2022 Singapore announced the raising of its national climate target to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Key focus areas include domestic harbour craft and vessels flying the Singapore flag, along with reducing emissions from port terminals, where fully electric lifting equipment, solar and battery power, are envisaged along with the creation of suitable infrastructure.

The abundance of very high quality and informative presentations that followed gave us a useful insight into the current circumstances in the offshore support vessel (OSV) sector, firstly with the dilemmas facing Oil and Gas (O&G) exploration activities and production. Predictably this sector is in a massive upward (super?) cycle which will exist while the price of crude oil remains buoyant (expected to be in the region of USD 85/BBL – satisfactory for OPEC and the 'powers that be') in the foreseeable future, considering the increasing demand for energy and massive offshore construction projects, particularly in the middle east. **The market for OSVs then, 'after 7 years of pain, is very good and picking up.'**

The next 5-year demand for support vessels is expected to be high, with an estimated utilization rate of 93% average (read fully booked). While many of the older drilling rigs are leaving the market, there are reportedly no drill ships currently available ('for love nor money'), and if one can be found, charterers might be expected to pay a day rate in excess of USD 500,000.-

Speakers from the leading ship brokerage houses were unanimous in predictions of increasing vessel values due to a number of factors, including difficulties in newbuilding replacements, which is less of an option in the current climate:

- *Lenders are reluctant to extend loans for the oil and gas sector.
- *The slow speed of new building. (there are almost no newly built OSVs on the market)
- *High Labour markets & Supply chain uncertainties.

*Uncertainties in respect to practical future fuels. Etc.

Charterers are, therefore, accepting older tonnage, and more vessels are leaving layup.

Presenters gave insightful regional overviews for the offshore sector, with generally bright prospects in all areas, and again 'starring' the Middle East despite uncertainties, not least of which are hostilities and the knock-on effects thereof. ***This conference took place before the war in (Gaza erupted in early October) -Ed.***

While all of the major energy producers in the Middle East are identifying with a transition toward 'green energy', expansion of oil and gas (O&G) production facilities continues at pace. There are massive offshore projects underway, with opportunities for all types of support vessels.

A number of emerging and alternative offshore markets were examined, including a potentially massive market in the decommissioning of ageing and abandoned offshore structures, largely associated with oil & gas.

Other subjects addressed included developments in deep sea mining for the collection of metals and minerals etc., and the numerous issues associated with these activities.

Along with finance, ESG (Environment, Social & Governance) and Sustainability were considered, being the fashionable (although many consider boring to a degree) topics for discussion in the current industrial climate.

Day 2 opened with a series of presentations focussing on technology and innovation, including cyber security, communications and the management of data.



Delegates networking at our Day Two sponsored Lunch
An Impressive venue in Singapore, The Four Points by Sheraton

Presentations under the title 'Opportunities in the Offshore Wind sector' included regional outlooks and insights into current global trends. Growth in this sector is, of course, predicted to be massive, although currently slowed somewhat due to escalating costs. China remains the largest player in offshore wind and construction is underway of numerous specialist vessels for the placement of offshore turbines etc. Large AHTS are predicted to be in high demand, as will be the need for specialist surface and subsea construction vessels.

Throughout the numerous jurisdictions worldwide, the choice of fixed or floating wind turbines is, obviously, predicated by local topography and the depth of water, increasing as operations move further offshore. As distances from the shore increase, so will the

scale and durability of wind farm components, to the extent that current daily rates for support vessels do not yet justify the outlay for newbuilding, and the required technology for locating turbines in very deep water is not yet with us.

Massive offshore wind projects are, nevertheless, predicted circa 2030.

Finally delegates were invited to consider alternative fuels for powering their vessels and the advantages and (mainly) the disadvantages compared to fossil fuels.

(See also our feature on alternative fuels – Page No.8)

We considered some of the interesting ‘take-aways’ from this event to have been:

*Many newbuilds in both offshore O&G and renewables will, for the time being, be carried out on the basis of long term contracts already made in advance, due to the high cost/risk involved just building on speculation.

*That we have at least 5 boom years coming in the offshore support industry.

*While reducing carbon footprints is laudable, to say the least, the concept of achieving ‘net zero’ by a fixed date almost 30 or 40 years into the future is fraught with uncertainty.

It can only be hoped that suitable technology will be discovered to achieve carbon reduction goals in a safe, reliable and sustainable way, along with the preservation of earth’s natural resources and wildlife.



Local News and Features from Vanuatu

Vanuatu Nationals Repatriated from Israel

(Dateline 20th October 2023)



Eighteen Ni-Vanuatu arrived in Port Vila on the 20th of October following their safe repatriation from Israel.

The Department of Foreign Affairs confirmed their arrival today.

The group was flown to Australia on Wednesday along with over 100 Australians and 65 Solomon Islanders, on an Australian government-assisted flight.

Photo – Ni Vanuatu arrived safely in Sydney on their way home,

The Vanuatu consul-general in Sydney has thanked the Australian and Vanuatu governments for arranging the flight from Jerusalem to Australia via Dubai.

They were among 3,000 visitors from over 80 nations attending the week-long Feast of the Tabernacle in Israel, visiting historic sites and participating in services before the Gaza attack and they found themselves stranded in a country at war.

VPF Champions Gender Equality in Vanuatu

In an era where gender equality is emerging as a fundamental concept in both governmental departments and private enterprises, the pursuit of fair job opportunities for all genders has gained significant traction. However, this commitment to gender equality often remains on the surface, lacking real world implementation.



In this landscape, the Vanuatu Police Force (VPF) stands out for its resolute support and proactive implementation of gender equality within its ranks. The VPF has set an example by fostering an inclusive environment that allows both men and women to actively participate in policing duties

across the nation. This robust commitment to gender equality is ushering in substantial transformations within the workplace, society, and the entire nation.

These transformative changes are underpinned by visionary leadership, aiming to enhance the organisation, the community, and society at large.

Vanuatu takes on the big polluters at COP28

(Dateline 9th December 2023)

The Climate Change Editor at Singapore's Straits Times Notes:

"At the [COP28 climate talks in Dubai](#), one of the smallest nations has one of the most powerful voices in calling for climate action."

For Vanuatu, there is a good reason to push hard for an ambitious outcome from the talks. Such is the scale of devastation being wrought by climate change that the future of the Pacific island nation is at stake, said Climate Change and Environment Minister Ralph Regenvanu.

"We can see a future that's very bleak for our children and grandchildren."

Vanuatu, about 1,750km east of northern Australia, is a volcanic chain of about 80 islands with a population of just over 300,000.

Over the years, it has forged a strong international coalition with other island nations and has led a global campaign to push the fossil fuel industry and big

emitting nations to face up to the impacts of their greenhouse gas pollution. Burning fossil fuels is the main cause of global warming. And it achieved a major win at the COP28 talks – an agreement to initialise a fund to pay for irreparable loss and damage caused by the climate change suffered by poorer nations.

Vanuatu launched the idea of a loss and damage fund in 1991 and faced years of pushback from rich nations fearing compensation payments.

Photo: Vanuatu's Climate Change and Environmental Minister Ralph Regenvanu speaking at COP28 in Dubai.



The nation achieved another win in 2023.

In March, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution by Vanuatu to ask the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the world's top court, for an opinion on the legal obligations of countries to protect current and future generations from climate change.

The resolution was [backed by a slew of states including Singapore](#) and asked the ICJ to clarify the obligations of big polluters in terms of the human rights of those affected by the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.

An opinion from the court, which it is still deliberating, could accelerate global climate action.

Vanuatu has been consistently ranked by the UN University in its world risk index as the country with the highest disaster risk worldwide, Mr Regenvanu said.

It suffers from earthquakes as well as volcanic eruptions, but it is the increasing severity of cyclones, floods and warming seas that is causing compounding disasters, draining the nation's finances and ruining livelihoods. "We don't have the financial capacity to build resilience and to respond to these constant disasters, which makes us continually disaster prone," the minister said.

"It takes us years, for example, to rebuild from certain severe disasters. The difficulty of accessing climate finance is one of the reasons why we are here in Dubai to talk about climate finance and make it easier for countries like us to get the finance we need to build our resilience," he added.

Building resilience, such as strengthening roads, homes and key buildings including schools and hospitals, would mean “we don’t have to continually just be building back every few months after every disaster hits us”.

In 2015, maximum category 5 Cyclone Pam caused widespread damage. “It cost us 64 per cent of our GDP (gross domestic product).”

Since then, Vanuatu has been hit by cyclones, including two in February and March 2023 and Cyclone Lola in October 2023.

COP28 is also about accountability, Mr Regenvanu said. That means rich nations need to help with financing and other means of support.

“Vanuatu historically has been responsible for 0.00016 per cent of global emissions. And yet we are a country most at risk and experiencing right now loss and damage at a much higher rate than we expected,” he added.

“There is an accountability and justice issue because why should we face these enormous costs and enormous suffering to our people?”



PHOTO: VANUATU RED CROSS SOCIETY

The damaged caused by Cyclone Lola in Central Pentecost, in the northern province of Vanuatu in October.

At COP28, Vanuatu and the other members of the 39-

nation Alliance of Small Island States (Aosis), want a decision on phasing out fossil fuels.

The bloc also wants an overall outcome that will ensure the world will not slip past 1.5 deg. C of global average warming above pre-industrial levels, a key guardrail of the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

And crucially, Aosis wants an urgent boost in climate finance.

One easy source for Vanuatu would be the tens of billions of dollars neighbouring Australia spends subsidising its fossil fuel industry. Australia is the world’s third-largest fossil fuel exporter.

Mr Regenvanu’s message to Australia? “Just take the subsidies that you currently give your fossil fuel industry and move them to help us build our resilience in the Pacific.”

For now, the future is very uncertain for Vanuatu, he said

“We are going to see a decline in our standard of living.

Families, communities, individuals are living in a constant state of danger,” he added.

“Our children definitely are going to have worse lives than we’ve had.”

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Recent Items from the Register

Items appearing in this section are summarized for general information only and for specific information and policy please always refer to our website and official circulars.

Your inquiries are always welcome. These may be directed to Vanuatu Maritime Services, Limited New York.



Fleet Safety Letters

From our Safety Department in New York, recently issued:

Safety letters are applicable for the attention of ship-owners, ship managers, operators, Masters of Vanuatu-registered ships, and Recognized Organizations.

Fleet Safety Letter 101423.GEN – Rev.3 issued 14th Nov. 2023

Re: Vanuatu’s acceptance of CG-ENG 03-12 as it relates to A.673 "GUIDELINES FOR THE TRANSPORT AND HANDLING OF LIMITED AMOUNTS OF HAZARDOUS AND NOXIOUS LIQUID SUBSTANCES IN BULK IN OFFSHORE SUPPORT VESSELS"

This FSL assumes that Class approves the P&A manual and cargo list for the applicable rules noted below:

With regard to A.673 "GUIDELINES FOR THE TRANSPORT AND HANDLING OF LIMITED AMOUNTS OF HAZARDOUS AND NOXIOUS LIQUID SUBSTANCES IN BULK IN OFFSHORE SUPPORT VESSELS", any OSV that meets the damage stability requirements contained in paragraph 2.1.2 may carry unlimited amounts of drilling fluids as defined in paragraph 1.3.11. However, the carriage of all other cargos identified in paragraph 1.2.2 must not exceed a total aggregate volume in cubic meters equal to 20% of the vessel's deadweight. calculated at a cargo specific gravity of 1.0. I

If the damage stability requirements of paragraph 2.1.2 are not met, an OSV may not carry more than the limited quantities specified in paragraph 1.1.4 above (i.e., the lesser of 800 m3 or a volume in cubic meters equal to 0% of the vessel's deadweight).

Please note our International Directory of Assistant Commissioners and Special Agents (as of 13th November 2023) is available on our web site, under ***International Contacts*** on the Home Page

Global Shipping News & Analysis

(Extracted from the Shipping Press, dedicated to the wellbeing of the worldwide shipping community, and all those: ‘...who go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters’)

In Brief This Quarter (Strategic view)

Some analysts believe that the ongoing and unprecedented congestion at the Panama Canal could ultimately result in delays at Egypt’s Suez Canal, which might need to take a lot more vessels as a result of the crisis in Panama.

A lack of rainfall has **dried up** a key lake at the Panama Canal, delaying shipments through one of the world's most important waterways. The resulting delays have already upended global commerce, forcing some ships to take the long journey around South America.

The Suez Canal, an alternate route for vessels traveling between the US and Asia, has handled congestion issues over the years, making it less of an issue, but obviously it's something you need to be aware of. Suez has a larger capacity than the Panama waterway, enabling it to handle more ships per day.

Container Shipping remains volatile as this sector appears to be entering a choppy period as new vessels ordered during the pandemic shipping boom enter service in 2024.

Analysis predicts the outlook for this sector has darkened considerably in recent months, with some of the largest container lines including A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S, Hapag-Lloyd and CMA CGM publishing significant slumps in third-quarter earnings and outlining plans for cost cutting. Some have said they fear the decline will last through 2024.

Overcapacity for the key liner trade routes remains rampant meaning that carriers are facing tough decisions as the end of 2023 approaches according to a new analysis from 'Sea-Intelligence'. It points out that carriers failed to make anticipated adjustments after the Chinese Golden Week celebration at the beginning of October leaving the industry in a challenging position as contract renewal season is approaching.

Alternative Fuels

We understand that Maersk (often seen as a trend setter in the industry) signed what the company is calling a milestone deal for the offtake of **green methanol fuel** from China for its fleet. It is the latest in a series of steps the carrier has taken over the past few years to build a global supply chain for green fuel as it prepares to launch its first class of methanol dual-fuelled containerships and is exploring the conversion of existing ships to that fuel.

Maersk entered into a deal with China's 'Goldwind', a company launched in 1998 focusing on wind power and expanding into a broader range of green energy. The companies are calling the deal which will provide Maersk with 500,000 metric tons of green methanol annually the "first large-scale green methanol offtake agreement for the global shipping industry."

It is reported also that COSCO Heavy Industry Shanghai Co. has entered into a contract with MAN Energy Solutions for the retrofit of four COSCO Line containerships to dual-fuel methanol engines.

The vessels, with capacities of 13,800 and 20,000 TEUs, currently operate on single-fuel MAN B&W 11S90ME-C10.5 engines, but will be retrofitted to dual-fuel MAN B&W 11S90ME-LGIM10.5 units capable of running on fuel oil or methanol. The retrofits will make them the first vessels in COSCO's fleet to operate on methanol.

The contract also includes an option for an additional nine vessels from COSCO's 20,000 TEU "Virgo" and "Pisces" class. COSCO Heavy Industry Shanghai Co. Ltd. will act as a complete turnkey solution provider for the COSCO Line retrofits.

The retrofitting of the first vessel is scheduled for Q2 2025.

In the interim, at least one of the major Classification Societies has launched rules for hydrogen-fuelled vessels.

For an overview of trends and developments in the **Offshore Sector**, see our article **covering the Singapore OSJ Conference (Page No. 15)**

Shipbuilding

(Dateline 11th December 2023)

There is what appears to be a frantic rush for new tonnage for alternative fuel vessels, particularly from 'Eastern' Yards.

The shipping press notes that "resales are happening as owners seek earlier delivery slots with South Korea's top three shipbuilders all reporting record orderbooks that stretch into 2027, and all of them are also struggling to keep up with their production schedules. Brokers have reported that a change of ownership has taken place for five 15,000 teu LNG dual fuel ships under construction at Hanwha Ocean, originally contracted by Zodiac Maritime, and that Mediterranean Shipping Co (MSC), the world's largest container line, has purchased these five vessels scheduled for delivery in 2025." No price has yet been revealed, although we imagine this will be substantial.

Meanwhile Øystein Kalleklev-led 'Avance Gas' has reportedly sealed a resale deal for two VLGCs (Very Large Gas Carriers) for US\$ 120m each, ships it originally contracted for \$78m back in April 2021.

(Dateline 8th December 2023)

Delivery has begun on a new class of LNG-fueled containerships for CMA CGM which is reported to be a more efficient generation of vessels. China's Hudong-Zhonghau Shipbuilding, a subsidiary of CSSC, delivered the *CMA CGM Bahia* on December 7 as the shipyard looks to



CMA CGM is adding a larger wind deflector to improve fuel efficient on its containerships (CSSC)

solidify its leadership in building LNG-fueled containerships. CSSC points out that they had previously built the larger 23,000 TEU class for the French company and now expanded the relationship to the first 13,000 TEU LNG-fueled containerships. They were part of a 2021 order that included this class of six ships. The vessels were designed by CSSC's research institute to

represent a further advancement in LNG technology.

As a further demonstration of the strong demand in **the car and vehicle transport sector**, Seaspan Corporation, which is one of the largest owner-operators of containerships, is jumping into the car carrier segment in a partnership with Hyundai Glovis, one of the largest operators in the segment. The move follows a growing orderbook for car carriers and the entry of other majors into the market, including CMA CGM which chartered its first Pure Car and Truck Carrier (PCTC) for an entry into the segment.

The shipping press reports that In the **Tanker Market** growth is predicted in the coming years, driven by a growing demand for crude oil, refined products and others.

The Global 'Suezmax' Tanker market is anticipated to rise at a considerable rate during the forecast period, between 2023 and 2030.

Meanwhile, **"dark fleet" tankers that carry sanctioned cargo**, such as oil from Russia, Venezuela and Iran are a serious inconvenience for Western sanctions enforcement, but for maritime stakeholders and coastal states, they are a serious safety and pollution risk. The average age of these vessels tends to be high, especially in the Venezuelan and Iranian trades, where the average ship is 20 years and older – 20 being the typical retirement point for respectable tankers. Aging equipment and light regulation tend to produce accidents, and dark fleet tankers do get into trouble - like the tanker '*Liberty*', which went aground in the Strait of Malacca a short while ago.

The *Liberty* is a Cameroon-flagged Suezmax of 23 years of age, and according to TankerTrackers.com, she is carrying a cargo of one million barrels of Venezuelan fuel oil.

In the **dry bulk market**, Two bulker heavyweights are reportedly merging. Star Bulk Carriers of Greece and US-based Eagle Bulk Shipping have sealed a deal to combine into the largest US-listed dry bulk shipping company with a combined fleet of 169 owned vessels on a fully delivered basis.

The transaction unanimously approved by the boards of directors of both companies is structured as an all-stock merger that gives the combined company a pro-forma market capitalisation of \$2.1bn.

The deal will see Eagle shareholders receive 2.6211 shares of Star Bulk common stock for each share of Eagle common stock owned, representing a total consideration of around \$52.60 per share, a 17% premium based on Eagle's closing share price of \$44.85 on December 8.

Star Bulk and Eagle Bulk shareholders should own about 71% and 29% of the combined company on a fully diluted basis, respectively, when the deal closes in the first half of 2024. The combined company will operate as Star Bulk Carriers Corp and be headquartered in Athens, with offices in Stamford, Singapore, Copenhagen and Limassol.

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Late News:

(Breaking, late and ongoing news items which might be of interest to our readers)

Ongoing concerns and issues in the Red Sea

(Dateline 8th December 2023)

Unidentified individuals claiming to the “Yemeni authorities” appear to be attempting to command vessels sailing in the southern Red Sea area by issuing commands over the radio. While the efforts have not been backed by any direct assault on the ships, warnings

UKMTO Advisory 003/DEC/2023			
IRREGULAR ACTIVITY			
Incident Date:	Incident Time:	Latitude:	Longitude:
07/DEC/2023	2245UTC	141700N	0421400E
Source: Master			
Issued: 08 DEC 23 0930 UTC			
UKMTO has received reports of an entity declaring itself to be the Yemeni authorities, ordering a vessel to alter course in the Southern Red Sea. Vessels in the vicinity are advised to exercise caution and report any suspicious activity to UKMTO.			

are being repeated for vessels to exercise caution while the U.S. authorities have now directly associated the attacks with the regime in Iran.

(Dateline 8th December 2023)

Yemen’s Houthi movement said on Saturday they would target all ships heading to Israel, regardless of their nationality, and warned all international shipping companies against dealing with Israeli ports.

The Iran-aligned group is escalating the risks of a regional conflict as the war between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas continues in Gaza.

Houthis have attacked and seized several Israeli-linked ships in the Red Sea and its Bab al-Mandab strait, a sea lane through which much of the world’s oil is shipped, and fired ballistic missiles and armed drones at Israel.

(Dateline 12th December 2023)

A Norwegian-owned chemical tanker was struck by a cruise missile yesterday while passing through the Bab-el-Mandeb strait.

US Central Command identified the ship as the “*Strinda*”, reporting the ship suffered a fire onboard, but no crew were injured. The US military said the Houthis were responsible for the attack on the Norwegian-flagged ship that was bound from Singapore to Italy. Over the weekend, Ashdod port in Israel had stated on its website that the ship was due to call there.

A military spokesperson of the Houthis stated that the Houthis attacked the tanker with a missile for being destined for an Israeli port.

Third quarter decline in the Seafarer's Happiness Index

The 'Mission to Seafarers' has, in its monthly newsletter for November 2023, expressed alarm for crew welfare, as the latest Seafarer Happiness Index was revealed to fall further in the 3rd quarter of the year.

This report is the third successive report to show such decline, sparking fears over the impact on all those working at sea.

The Seafarers Happiness Index is a quarterly survey conducted by The Mission to Seafarers and made possible by the sponsorship of NorthStandard P&I Club, and 'Idwal', as well as the support of Inmarsat. It measures the wellbeing of seafarers through ten key questions about their work and life, designed to gauge sentiment about their experiences on board.

The Q3 report shows an overall fall in seafarer happiness to just **6.6 out of 10**. This compares to 6.77 in Q2 2023 and 7.1 in Q1 2023.

We hope that you found this edition interesting and informative. **This Newsletter appears on our website, under the link 'NEW POST'**

Your feedback, comments and suggestions are always welcome, along with your contributions in the form of news, items of interest and photos etc. Please get in touch:

Capt. Michael DeCharles – Executive VP
Vanuatu Maritime Services Limited
Suite 2020, 39 Broadway, New York
NY 10006. Tel: +1(USA) 212-425-9600
Email: email@vanuatuships.com

Mr. Robert Bohn - Chairman
Vanuatu Maritime Services Limited
International Building
No.5 Wharf Road, Port Vila, Vanuatu
Tel: +678 (Vanuatu) 24680
Email: rbb@vila.net

Ms. Dee Rescigno -Assistant Commissioner
Senior Manager, Vessel Documentation & Customer relations
Email: drescigno@vanuatuships.com

Web Site: www.vanuatumaritimships.com

Compiler & Editor: Clive Grainger – Assistant Commissioner, VMSL UK
Tel: +44(United Kingdom) 1363-85169 Email: 101242.3160@compuserve.com

Finally, as always:

Greetings from all of us in Vanuatu, VMSL and our Shipping Register worldwide. Stay Safe and Well.

Looking forward to your feedback, suggestions, comments, and contributions.

Back issues of our quarterly newsletter can be requested by email to the editor, who will be pleased to provide these online.

Why not mail us? – regular (snail) mail can be addressed to our Port Vila, New York, or Tokyo Offices, and any of our Assistant Commissioners and

Special Agents worldwide. Envelopes should be marked: *‘To the Flag Vanuatu Newsletter team’*.

Quotable quotes:

“The difficulty in our sector is that we have a number of container ships that will come into the market starting next year and that runs the risk of creating an imbalance between supply and demand,” – Rodolphe Saad, billionaire Head of the world’s third largest container line, Marseille-based CMA CGM SA, during an event in Paris to mark the creation of an AI research lab backed by his company - 19th November 2023.

“In the broader maritime industry, you need to have an appetite for working within the realm of uncertainty and considered risk,” – Harry Banga, CEO of the multi-billion dollar conglomerate ‘Caravel Group’ during the recent Hong Kong Maritime Week, expressing particular interest in ways to prepare seafarers for the future - 24th November 2023.

On Seafarer’s Welfare:

It is deeply concerning to see seafarer happiness fall again during the third quarter of 2023. This extended downturn across all three quarters of 2023 so far paints a worrying picture. It seems clear that happiness levels will not recover to acceptable levels unless we can address the systemic challenges that continue to undermine the welfare of our seafarers, such as limited shore leave, unsustainable workloads, insufficient connectivity, and stagnant wages. – Revd. Canon Andrew Wright, from his comments on the Q3 results of Seafarer’s Happiness Index - 1st November 2023

“I was walking around a village in Vanuatu, an island in the South Pacific, with my camera. People just invited me into their homes and taught me how to make kava, the local drink. It’s this plant root, it looks like mud water, they put it into a machine and they grind it and they mix it with water and apparently it gives a calming effect. I had a couple of sips, it numbs your mouth and you feel a bit calmer. They didn’t ask me for any money – no one wanted anything out of it – they were just being kind, and the kindness of the people there was really eye-opening for me.” – Cassie DePecol, on her world trek to visit 196 countries in less than two years – November 2016.

Flag Vanuatu is a quarterly Newsletter, intended as a means of updating our readers on newsworthy/interesting items, important new legislation, policy, safety, and pertinent regulations. Brief snippets of ‘news’ also from our home country, The Republic of Vanuatu, and from the shipping community worldwide.

Postscript

'A place for everything ...'

This is dedicated to that happy band of Chief Officers, largely before the days of widespread containerized shipping, who were called upon to make a 'break bulk' stowage plan that might include such challenges as working 7 gangs into five holds with tween decks, for a multi-port discharge on the other side of the world, a few of which could be 'optional' - meaning the discharge port could be *switched* at short notice. Probably no one thanked you at the time, but if there are any of you left out there, we salute you as the heroes that you are. Clearly, your skills would also have been appreciated by 'Xenophon' back in 300 or so BC.

The passage below is from the preface of a (now somewhat ancient) edition of Thomas' Stowage. Updated editions of 'Thomas' Stowage' will be very familiar to those of you who are at sea now. -Ed.

