THE FORTNIGHTLY DELIGHTFULLY BRIEF, PITHY AND WHOLLY IDIOSYNCRATIC NEWSLETTER.

Delightfully Brief

Is there justice for seafarers? No. Some exceptionally good research by Seafarers' Rights International has objectively and well found out what we all intuitively know. It does not exist. Nada. Zilch. Nay. No. Nicht. Non. Niet. We could go on. Go to www.seafarersrights.org. Read it an either weep or get angry or get very concerned about the industry. Some 41.6% of seafarers polled are considering quitting the profession because of criminalization; 86.75% of seafarers charged were without legal representation; 23.3% of masters have faced or are facing charges; 8.3% of all seafarers facing criminal charges; if charged a seafarer has a 1:3 chance of conviction; two thirds of all searches of cabins are without warrant; 46.5% of all seafarers are reluctant to cooperate in accident investigations; 11.4% of seafarers charged had their rights explained. We would not stand for this ashore. Why do we stand for it with our labor?

Pithy

It is often said that the airplane people are treated as human beings; seafarers are treated as criminals. In the US that is true. Foreign airfarers (is that a word?) get special visa privileges, special passes and wave-throughs, have no detention on their aircraft in the US and so forth and so on. Is a jet jock inherently socially better than a seafarer? You bet. Is

he legally better? You answer that. There has never been a documented case of a foreign seafarer involved in a terrorist act in the US (a pretty broad word in that country today where everything is a crime). That cannot be said for airplane people. Look at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Why does the US do this to seafarers? They have no strong voice (i.e., no strong paid lobby in Washington), they are silent and most importantly, it is easy to deny seafarers rights. Therefore the government does it because it can get away with it and it makes good press: The DHS is protecting you, the American citizen (as if and American does not know that) from the threat of these dirty and deadly foreign seafarers! Don't you feel safer?

Wholly Idiosyncratic

I have been accused by those who believe that I carry on diatribes. The dictionary defines a diatribe as a forceful argument. If the above is a diatribe so be it. I prefer to think of it as a statement of what I believe to be the state of affairs with which and in which we are dealing as an industry. Security theatre is alive and well. The threats and the intimidating acts and the meddling on the part of the organs of state security in the US are the weapons of choice by those agencies who breed their own paranoia and cannot define what they do any more than they can reduce the risk of terrorism to zero. They confuse and have confused security and safety and any anti-government act and criminal behavior. We have more than 4800 federal felonies on our books these days. Our melange of laws grows murkier by the year. Perhaps George W. Bush unwittingly said it best: if you are not with us [the government] you are against us. Us and them. Welcome to the 21st century.

26th Annual American Merchant Marine Veterans Conference: MARAD Joel Szabat speech

The Kings Point motto is *Acta non Verba*. Mr. Joel Szabat of the Maritime Administration spoke at The Conference Center at the Maritime Institute on 6 June 2012. The score: *Acta*: 2. *Acta Paena*: 3. *Verba*: 4.

So it seems that we have two deeds, three deeds in progress and four words. The cynical will say 'show me the ships'. The optimistic will say that this is the most wonderful thing since sliced bread. The realistic will say that there is an election coming up: what will stick and who will be there to stick it?

He reviewed and said (1) 100 million dollars has been

invested since 2001 in Kings Point; 54 million has been appropriated for further improvements. *Acta Paena*: (2) Kings Point has six barracks of which four have been refurbished; not mentioned, is the independently written strategic plan in progress; (3) Mallory Pier is on the list for refurbishment with a 600 ft concrete pier out to bid.

Verba: (4) Delano Hall, the dining hall, is slated to be refurbished; (5) a new training vessel is promised with the (6) possibility of a second for brown water training; (7) there will be a new Superintendent at the start of the Class of 2016; new updated curriculum is being developed addressing dynamic platforms, electronics, communications and navigation systems; to accommodate changes in the way business is now done.

We will see.

Mr. Szabat's speech can be viewed here at Maritime TV.

Urgings
If you are not a member, sign up for FOB -- the dedicated networking site. It is a lot better than the infinite number of groups in LinkedIn -- and the more than infinite numbers of conversations and discussions.

Watch Maritime TV. Come 80% of what we know comes from visual input and Maritime TV is the best maritime visual source around. Give it a try!

If you like good law reporting, sign up for Maritime Advocate put out by my good friends Sam Ignarski and Humphrey Hill in London. They also include funny stories from time to time which we all need the current shipping vale of tears.

Smooth sailing, fair winds and a following sea.

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