

Lake Carriers' Association



MINUTES OF THE 32nd ANNUAL CAPTAINS COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: February 12, 2015

Start: 0800

PLACE: DoubleTree Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio

End: 1430

AGENDA AND ATTENDEES

The agenda is on page 7. The list of attendees is on pages 8 and 9.

MINUTES

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Jim Weakley, President of Lake Carriers' Association, opened the meeting by welcoming all those attending. He then turned the podium over to RDML Fred Midgette, Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District. The Admiral stressed his three priorities are Proficiency, Safety and Security. He puts great stock in the Mutual Training Agreement between D9 and LCA and appreciates the opportunities it provides for Coast Guard personnel to get first hand knowledge of commercial vessel operations. He made a special note of how impressed he was by the members' ability to respond to emergencies.

U.S. Coast Guard Agenda Items

Icebreaking Update: CDR Matt ten Berge reported that this past November was the third coldest on record. While temperatures moderated in December, January was a challenge. There were many issues on the St. Clair River and eventually it had to be closed for two days for flushing. Queues and convoys continued until January 28.

In response to a comment from an LCA member, CDR ten Berge agreed that in the future the vessel's lay-up date should be a consideration when establishing queues and convoys. He also noted that the Coast Guard is reassessing how soon it puts icebreakers in "Charlie" after the closing of the Soo Locks. This January the Poe Lock closed on Friday, January 16, and some icebreakers began Charlie status on Monday. However, the ice conditions in the St. Marys River and elsewhere were formidable and many vessels still needed assistance. The Coast Guard was urged to delay maintenance until most vessels have reached their lay-up port.

All D9 icebreaking assets are expected to be ready by March 9th. Although the MORRO BAY was permanently assigned to the Ninth District in 2013, it has been undergoing service life extension at the Coast Guard yard in Baltimore and hence unavailable this past ice season. To help offset the reduction in icebreaking assets, the NEAH BAY is being dual-crewed with the MORRO BAY crew. This helps keep the MORRO BAY crew's skills fresh and also allows the NEAH BAY to work more hours.

CDR ten Berge encouraged the Captains to share any helpful information with the USCG. Ice calls have proven to be successful in improving communications.

There were many questions from the Captains regarding the timing of maintenance – does it have to be done on a set schedule, does it have to be done at a USCG facility, can it be done during the off season, can be done when there's a lull in transits....? CAPT John Little responded to the questions. He stated that the USCG does have some flexibility in the maintenance schedule; however, a lot depends on the condition of the vessel and contractor schedules as to when stops are made. It is important to realize that with the age of many of the icebreakers, winter maintenance work is critical to having the vessels ready for the spring breakout, which is generally more challenging, as the ice has had a period to harden.

The USCG and the Canadian Coast Guard work closely throughout the ice season. One area of improvement recommended by the Captains was for the agencies to work more closely to reduce the time needed to stage convoys. Also, vessels should be spaced closer together in convoys. A meeting between the Captains, USCG and Canadian Coast Guard was suggested.

Captains expressed a need for an additional heavy icebreaker on the Great Lakes. LCA is working on it and has laid the foundation with a well-publicized news release about the economic losses related to ice delays between December 2013 and May 2014.

ATON: CDR Keith Ropella reported that the move toward AIS Atons has begun and some should be in place by July 2015. Included will be Real Time (transceiver on the aid), Synthetic (transmits a signal to the aid) and Virtual (AIS transmitting the signal). AIS Aton will be used on the Mackinaw Bridge and on about 20 winter markers in the St. Marys River. However, the Coast Guard wants to know which traditional winter markers must remain in place.

Year round lighted ice buoys are being tested in some areas. So far, some like them and some do not. The USCG is looking for feedback on the ice buoys.

Captains were asked to report any discrepancies to the USCG as soon as possible. Voice radio is a good method of communication for reporting.

CDR Ropella was asked about the reliability of AIS Aton. He responded that it's more reliable than physical buoys.

The Captains questioned why bells were being removed from some buoys. Sound signals are still desirable. CDR Ropella said some of them will be brought back because the USCG has received negative feedback about their removal.

D9 Confined Space Entry Policy: CDR Scott Anderson reviewed D9's policy. Tom Anderson outlined a video inspection alternative being developed by American Steamship Co. Although it is still in the testing stage, the hope is that eventually the local OCMI will have the discretion to accept a video inspection in the event of casualty. Members needing more information may contact Tom Anderson.

Subchapter M Update: CDR Scott Anderson reported that vessels over 26 feet will be regulated, meaning approximately 6,000 vessels will be covered. Latest projections call for a completion date of August 2015.

Security Issues: Josh Peters informed members of findings from the MTSA 2014 review. Compliance was very high on the Great Lakes. When there were security findings and discrepancies for vessels, they usually had to do with access control and crew training. The LCA Alternative Security Program (ASP) meets all MTSA requirements, and all in all, crews are doing a good job. Some suggested improvements for vessels include:

1. As required by the ASP, boarding should be done at one location;
2. The ASP's sign-in log should be utilized, and consideration should be given to modifying it to include time boarding the vessel and time departing the vessel;
3. Unauthorized persons should be questioned as to their purpose for being on the vessel; and
4. Restricted areas should be able to be locked down.

Training drills are required on vessels and the VSO needs to keep track of all training. Laid-up vessels have some different requirements and these are also covered by LCA's ASP.

A NPRM for Seafarers' Access to Maritime Facilities was published on December 29, 2014. The docket is open for comments until February 27, 2015. (LCA filed their comments on February 25, 2015. See LCA Updates on pg. 5 for more information.)

Peters was asked if it is necessary that mariners surrender the TWIC cards upon request from facilities. The answer is no. The facility has the right to see the TWIC and ensure it is valid, but then the card must be returned to the mariner. He noted, however, that there have been some fraudulent TWIC cards.

Bridge Updates: Scot Striffler thanked the members for their feedback. He reported that ODOT does not plan any work on the new Innerbelt Bridge this spring. A timeline for putting up the second bridge has not been released.

A railroad bridge was removed in Green Bay and the remains of a railroad bridge were removed in Indiana Harbor.

Captains were asked to notify the appropriate Sector if they notice bridge lights are out.

Plans for the new bridge connecting the U.S. and Canada at Detroit and Windsor were discussed. There have been no changes to the Coast Guard's permit from three years ago that requires the new bridge to retain the Ambassador Bridge's current clearances. No date has been given for construction of the new bridge.

Misc. Items: CAPT Paul Albertson introduced his successor, CAPT Paul Arnett.

Captains' Items for USCG: The Captains repeated their request of a year ago that the Coast Guard bring longer range helicopters to the Lakes. They also asked that the National Maritime Center be more cooperative when dealing with time-sensitive credentialing matters. Mariners have been unable to join their ship because the NMC used mail to contact individuals about whom they had questions. Use e-mail or call the person's cell phone when a credential is to expire soon.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Agenda Items

Dredging Update: Dave Wright reported the FY14 Final Allocation commits \$53.7 million for dredging 30 projects and a total of 4.1 million cubic yards, \$10.6 million in dredged material management and \$7.1 million in Soo asset renewal. For 2015 the Corps budgeted \$115.7 million for Great Lakes navigation operations and maintenance. \$46.2M in dredging (21 projects – 3.1M cubic yards), \$10.3M in dredged material management, and \$8.65M in Soo asset renewal. An additional \$3.1 million has been budgeted for emergency funding for the October 31st storm, dredging in Muskegon, and pier repair in Grand Haven.

Ports to be dredged in 2015 are:

Ashtabula, OH	Green Bay, WI	Rouge River
Buffalo, NY	Holland, MI	Saginaw River
Burns Harbor, IN	Huron, OH	Sandusky, OH
Cleveland, OH	Indiana Harbor, IN	St. Clair River
Detroit River	Irondequoit, NY	St. Joseph, MI
Duluth, MN/Superior, WI	Milwaukee, WI	St. Marys River
Erie, PA	Monroe, MI	Sturgeon Bay
Fairport Harbor, OH	Muskegon, MI	Toledo, OH
Grand Haven, MI	Rochester, OH	Waukegan, IL

New Poe-Sized Lock: A limited sensitivity analysis of the project benefits is being conducted to determine if some benefits were overlooked or if some of the information used in determining the current benefit/cost ratio was incorrect. As a part of this analysis, shippers were surveyed about a closure and their ability to move commodities through other modes of transportation. Their assessment is that it would not be possible to replace all the Lakes-bond tonnage and what little could move by other modes of transportation would be at a much higher cost. The results of the sensitivity analysis are being finalized and should be released in the near future.

Soo Locks Asset Renewal: MacArthur Lock controls replacement and Poe Lock gate 3 coating replacement are ongoing projects. Other projects planned for FY15 include replacement of MacArthur Lock tainter valve bulkheads, Lock dewatering well repairs and Soo Locks complex waterline replacement.

Maintenance: Kevin Sprague reported that the Poe Lock hydraulic system replacement is taking longer than expected so it will be even closer quarters for 1,000 footers while this project is underway. Additional Poe Lock maintenance projects include gate 4 inspection/documentation, fill/empty valve cross repairs, gate 1 pintle casting and embedded gate anchorage inspections. MacArthur Lock maintenance projects include gate 5 anchorage replacement, gate 3 fender replacement, and tie in to new air system.

Rock Cut Stabilization Work: Efforts on stabilizing the rock cut guide walls have been completed on the mainland side of the rock cut. Work is now shifting to the island side, but will not start in earnest until this fall and is scheduled to be complete in FY16.

MacArthur Lock Vessel Size Restriction: The Corps would like to do further tests of locking vessels 740 feet long and 78 feet wide through the MacArthur Lock this year. Last year the CSL LAURENTIAN successfully transited the MacArthur Lock. Assuming this year's tests are successful, it will be necessary to amend the Code of Federal Regulations to affect a permanent change in the size restriction.

Misc. Items: The bubbler system is ready for the spring.

Captains' Items: The Captains asked that the Middle Neebish Channel be sounded on both sides from Mud Lake to 9 Mile. Soundings were also requested for Gray's Reef Passage, Round Island Passage and Lansing Shoal.

National Weather Service Agenda Items

NOAA Great Lake Water Level Observations and Forecasts: Richard Edwing reported that not much has changed in the past year with the water level station network and that NOAA was fully able to maintain stations because of the FY14 budget.

The current meters in the St. Clair River, Maumee River and Cuyahoga River need long-term funding. LCA will send the Port Director in Cleveland a letter explaining the importance of continued operation of the current meter in the Cuyahoga.

Improvements were made in data latency. Specifically, improvements were made in the plotting process for Great Lakes data, Great Lakes Online data retrieval and plotting was separated from Tides Online and plotting time was reduced from 7-8 minutes to 3-5 minutes.

The Captains asked that a water level gauge be installed in Burns Harbor and temporary gauges be installed in the St. Marys River at Johnson's Point and the lower end of the Rock Cut. Readings from Johnson's Point and the lower end of the Rock Cut could then be compared to determine the best location. A current meter was requested for Round Island Passage.

Precision Navigation: CAPT Rick Brennan presented information about and demonstrated the PROTIDE system, a precision navigation tool. Precision navigation is the ability of a vessel to operate in close proximity to the seafloor or other hazards with an increasingly low statistical probability of interaction with

that hazard. It is achieved by combining high resolution bathymetry, forecast models and real time observations. CAPT Brennan asked for feedback on the program.

Great Lakes VOS Program: Ron Williams recapped the Voluntary Observing Ship (VOS) Program and its results for 2014. He stressed the importance of the information and will replace equipment on any vessel involved in the program as needed. The suggestion was made to get Environment Canada involved in the program. Scott Porter of Canada Steamship Lines said he would discuss with Canadian Shipowners Association.

Great Lakes Weather Services Update: Mike Bardou informed the Captains of two new buoys – one on Lake Superior between Pictured Rocks and Whitefish Bay and one on Lake Michigan off the north side of Chicago.

A one-stop ice information page has been added to the NWS website. The address is www.weather.gov/cle/greatlakesice. In addition, Great Lakes Portal enhancements have been made to improve service.

The Captains asked that amendments to MAFORs be issued. Currently MAFORs are updated every six hours.

The Captains noted that they do not get enough information from the northeast portion of Lake Superior because it lacks stations. They would like the NWS to work with Canada on a harmonization project in hopes of improving the situation. Ron Williams will look into it.

Cuyahoga River Water Taxi Proposal

John Cardwell of the Cleveland Metroparks presented information regarding the proposed Cuyahoga River Water Taxi. He described the water taxi route, boat, dock locations, and qualifications they are looking for in a Captain. The service will initially consist of one vessel and be seasonal (warm weather months). He also talked about safety measures the water taxi will employ (they will monitor Ch. 16) and their understanding that they need to work closely with Captains transiting the Cuyahoga River to avoid issues. American Steamship offered to host their Captain(s) so they can see the River from the pilothouse of a freighter and better understand commercial navigation's needs and concerns.

Lake Carriers' Association Updates

New LCA Employee: Jim Weakley gave a brief description of the Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs position that LCA is currently looking to fill. Interested individuals should forward a resume to Katie Gumeny at gumeny@lcaships.com.

Dredging Crisis: The Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) passed by Congress in 2014 requires the Federal government to spend more money on dredging. Another key provision designates the Lakes a system in terms of dredging, which should give the Corps more flexibility in terms of ports to be dredged.

Second Poe-Sized Lock: The Limited Re-Evaluation Review has been a very positive development and it may not be necessary to do a full-blown study to recompute the benefit/cost ratio.

USCG Heavy Icebreaker: There is a demonstrable need for an additional USCG heavy icebreaker on the Great Lakes. To better illustrate the need for a new heavy icebreaker, LCA has hired Martin Associates to perform a study that will demonstrate how loss of cargos impacts the economy and employment.

Scott Porter reported that Canadian Shipowners Association will meet with Transport Canada on February 13, 2015, and industry will request an additional Canadian heavy icebreaker as well.

Ballast Water Treatment: Transport Canada is proposing that all vessels in its waters, even those just transiting, be equipped with ballast water treatment systems. LCA is working with a lobbyist in Ottawa to assist in resolving this issue.

LCA will continue to work with CSA to defend the EPA in its description of lakers as vessels that do not go past Anticosti Island and its exemption of the treatment system requirements for these lakers.

LCA Alternative Security Program ("ASP"): Glen Nekvasil said he does not anticipate any changes to the ASP in the foreseeable future. The Coast Guard still intends to propose updates to the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA), but there is no firm date for publication, and then there will be a public comment period. Review of comments could take a year more, so any impact from MTSAll is well in the future.

Mariner Access: Glen Nekvasil asked for feedback regarding the USCG's proposal that facilities must provide mariners and others access in a timely manner. What is a timely manner in the Captains' opinions? Since loading or discharging a vessel takes anywhere from four to 12 hours, the Captains believe the facilities should provide free and open access at all times the vessel is at the facility.

Captains Committee

This meeting marked the end of Bill Millar's (American Steamship) term as Chairman of the committee. He was thanked for his service. Vice Chairman Ray Sheldon (Central Marine Logistics) fledged up to Chairman of the committee and Mark Blatnik (Great Lakes Fleet) was elected as Vice Chairman.

Ray Sheldon encouraged committee members to contact him by e-mail if they have questions or concerns. His e-mail address is captray49829@charter.net.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1430.

Minutes Submitted By
Glen G. Nekvasil
Vice President

Lake Carriers' Association
32nd Annual Captains Committee Meeting - February 12, 2015

DoubleTree Hotel – Cleveland Downtown/Lakeside
1111 Lakeside Avenue • Cleveland, Ohio 44114 • 216-241-5100 • Guest Fax: 216-241-7437

AGENDA

0730 - 0800Continental Breakfast Lakeside Ballroom

0800 - 0815Greetings from James H.I. Weakley, President, LCA
CAPT John Little, Chief of Staff, Ninth Coast Guard District

0815 - 0915Ninth Coast Guard District

- Icebreaking/ATON – CDR Keith Ropella, CDR Matt ten Berge
- D9 Confined Space Entry Policy – CDR Scott Anderson
- Subchapter M Update – CDR Scott Anderson
- Security Issues – Josh Peters
- Bridge Updates – Scot Striffler

0915 - 0930Captains' Comments/Questions for USCG

0930 - 1015USACE, Detroit District (David Wright, Kevin Sprague)

- Recap of FY14 Dredging Program
- Preview of FY15 Dredging Program
- Soo Winter Work Plan
- Status of Rock Cut Stabilization Work
- MacArthur Lock Vessel Size Restriction
- Preview of FY15 Breakwater Work

1015 - 1030Captains' Comments/Questions for USACE

1030 - 1115NOAA

- Updates on Water Level and Currents Real Time Observations and Forecasts – R. Edwing
- Status of NOAA's Charting Effort on the Lakes – Capt. Brennan
- Great Lakes VOS Program – Ron Williams
- Great Lakes Weather Services Update – Mike Bardou

1115 - 1130Captains' Comments/Questions for NOAA

1130 - 1200LCA Updates (Jim Weakley and Glen Nekvasil)

- Dredging – Passage of WRRDA and Appropriation Process Going Forward
- Second Poe-sized Lock
- Need for another USCG Heavy Icebreaker
- Status of Federal and State Ballast Water Regulations
- Senator McCain Attack on Jones Act
- LCA Alternative Security Program

1200 - 1300Lunch

1315 - 1400Cuyahoga River Taxi Proposal – John Cardwell, Cleveland Metroparks

1400 - 1500Open Discussion

ATTENDEES

LAKE CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERS
 (LCA Captains Committee Members – Bold)

Tom	Anderson	American Steamship Company
Capt. Bill	Millar (Chairman)	American Steamship Company
Capt. Rob	Moore	Andrie Inc. / Inland Lakes Management, Inc.
Steve	Stanek	Andrie Inc. / Inland Lakes Management, Inc.
Capt. Ray	Sheldon (Vice Chairman)	Central Marine Logistics, Inc.
Tom	Wiater	Central Marine Logistics, Inc.
Capt. Pat	Hart	Grand River Navigation Company, Inc.
Ed	Wiltse	Grand River Navigation Company, Inc.
Capt. Mark	Blatnik	Great Lakes Fleet
Capt. Dan	Rentschler	Great Lakes Fleet
Bill	Peterson	Key Lakes, Inc.
Mark	Mather	Lake Michigan Carferry / Pere Marquette Shipping
Ed	Hogan	Port City Marine Services/Port City Steamship
Capt. Brad	Newland	The Interlake Steamship Company
Capt. Joe	Ruch	The Interlake Steamship Company
Jayson	Toth	The Interlake Steamship Company
Dave	Groh	VanEnkevort Tug & Barge, Inc.
Capt. Bruce	Messersmith	VanEnkevort Tug & Barge, Inc.

LAKE CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION

Katie	Gumeny	Lake Carriers' Association
Glen	Nekvasil	Lake Carriers' Association
Jim	Weakley	Lake Carriers' Association

CANADIAN SHIPOWNERS ASSOCIATION AND MEMBERS

Capt. Jim	Perkins	Canada Steamship Lines
Scott	Porter	Canada Steamship Lines
Scott	Balko	Algoma Central Corporation

FEDERAL AGENCIES

Capt. Paul	Albertson	Ninth Coast Guard District
LT Hillary	Allegretti	Ninth Coast Guard District
CDR Scott	Anderson	Ninth Coast Guard District
Capt. Paul	Arnett	Ninth Coast Guard District
Capt. John	Little	Ninth Coast Guard District
RDML Fred	Midgette	Ninth Coast Guard District
Josh	Peters	Ninth Coast Guard District
CDR Keith	Ropella	Ninth Coast Guard District
CDR J. Wade	Russell	Ninth Coast Guard District
Doug	Sharp	Ninth Coast Guard District
Scot	Striffler	Ninth Coast Guard District
CDR Matt	ten Berge	Ninth Coast Guard District

FEDERAL AGENCIES

Capt. Rick	Brennan	NOAA
Richard	Edwing	NOAA
Tom	Loeper	NOAA
Mike	Bardou	NOAA
Ron	Williams	NOAA

Josh	Feldmann	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Steve	Hungness	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Kevin	Sprague	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Dave	Swiatek	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Dave	Wright	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

INVITED GUESTS

John	Cardwell	Cleveland Metroparks
Rose	Fini	Cleveland Metroparks
Joe	Roszak	Cleveland Metroparks
Sean	McDermott	Cleveland Metroparks
Rob	Burger	Thompson Hine LLP
John	Wellington	Wellington Maritime