



Canadian Merchant Service Guild Eastern Branch NEWSLETTER

Fall 2013 Issue



Christmas Greetings

There is less and less downtime for Guild members in the Eastern Branch. The East Coast is mostly full-time year-round work in very harsh conditions. Toward the middle of the country, Guild members are working longer seasons than they were doing many years ago; and many Guild members are utilizing their skills in the Arctic for longer periods of time. All areas have requirements and reminders of the need for your skill and vigilance.

One constant through this is that many Guild members will work again this year through the Christmas season and will be away from their families and loved ones. This is never an easy time of the year to be away but members accept that it is part of what they do.

On behalf of the Guild staff and Board we offer our best wishes for Christmas to all members and their families. We also wish you the very best for a safe and Happy New Year.

Guild Bursary

A number of years ago the Guild instituted a \$2000 bursary to be awarded to a Guild member who is working to upgrade their marine certification. This is in recognition of the fact that many Officers go back to school at personal expense. Bursary applications are reviewed by the Branch Board at Board meetings held during the winter. Applications are available at district meetings or by contacting the nearest Guild office.

CCGS Perley Arrives in Dartmouth

CCGS Perley shown alongside on the day she was delivered to the CCG base in Dartmouth, NS.

From left to right:
Yvonne Daigle (1st Officer),
Paul O'Brien (LRO) and
Mark Chaisson (Chief Engineer).



A Busy Summer and Fall in the Eastern Branch of the Guild

The passage of time in this industry is surprising in its swiftness. Guild members in the Eastern Branch have been extremely busy in 2013 and the Guild has been extremely busy addressing issues that affect the Officers who are our members. There are many sets of negotiations scheduled and/or ongoing, lots of grievance/arbitration matters requiring attention, and many meetings held to address other items of interest.

CSL and V.Ships present photograph of the award-winning M.V. *Baie St. Paul* to the Thorold Office of CMSG Eastern Branch



From left: Claude Dumais (CSL), Mario Elrick (LRO), Coral Milne (V. Ships) and Kieran Clarke (LRO).

The *Baie St. Paul*, Canada Steamship Lines' (CSL) first new Trillium Class self-unloading bulk carrier, passes Quebec City on her maiden voyage to Montreal in December 2012. It is believed to be the first trans-Pacific delivery trip from China to eastern Canada by a Great Lakes bulk carrier.

The *Baie St. Paul* was named 2012 Bulk Ship of the Year by the International Bulk Journal.

The Company (CSL & V.Ships) has taken on a new Safety Culture called Safe Partners:

- Canada Steamship Lines / V.Ships Canada/
- Safe Partners
- Continued Education

Canada Steamship Lines (CSL) and V.Ships Canada continue to receive Federal Committees and Designated Health & Safety Representatives training which is being delivered by the government designated health and safety training centre, Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC). They use proven adult training techniques that create a non-threatening learning atmosphere. This allows for information building as the participants learn from each other and the instructor, fostering a better understanding of occupational health and safety, their roles and responsibilities.

New Great Lakes Vessels

Both CSL and Algoma Central Corporation have made announcements a couple of years ago about new vessel construction and it is encouraging to see that plan go forward. The Guild was at the ceremony welcoming the *Baie St. Paul* (CMSG Eastern Branch Newsletter, spring 2013).

The *Algoma Equinox* is en route from the shipyard and will arrive in Canada soon. We look forward to future new builds from both companies and also look forward to Guild members and other crew enjoying many years of safe and productive employment.

It is important to note that along with the new ships some new ideas and recognition for Officer and personnel needs is starting to be built in. CSL for example has included Wi-Fi in every crew member's accommodation and also in vessel common areas as well as providing a cell phone for use by their employees free of charge! That is forward thinking and attention to 'quality of life' concerns and makes life just a little bit better for Officers on those vessels.

We understand that Algoma has plans for Wi-Fi in the common areas on vessels and this is movement in the right direction.

Grievances

Every Guild office deals with various grievances. Sometimes grievances have little chance of resolution unless there is referral to Arbitration. When Arbitration gets close sometimes these employers will try to resolve the outstanding issue. This is unfortunate from a number of perspectives, not the least of which is the time and frustration brought about by the increasingly long wait to get matters before Arbitrators.

There are many grievance issues at Marine Atlantic. These range from terminations to other disciplinary actions to contracting out issues. There has been an issue on the manning of the two new vessels since those ships replaced the *Caribou* and *Smallwood*. Marine Atlantic did not bulletin Engineer and Electrical Officer positions on the *Blue Puttees* and *Highlanders* at the same levels as on the two previous vessels and the Guild has worked

to get this matter before an Arbitrator. The matter had been outstanding for quite some time. Preliminary discussions on the Arbitration were finally scheduled for early October but finished without resolution. We are now working to schedule more dates to have the matter finally resolved.

There are many other grievance issues outstanding at Marine Atlantic. Due to the nature of labour relations with this Employer we expect many of these issues to go to Arbitration. Scheduling for Arbitrations is often a process requiring months of delay and this only aggravates the problem by increasing the frustration level of the individuals who feel they were improperly treated in the first place.

There are several grievances outstanding at Algoma and we realize that these may end up at Arbitration as well.

There are still over a dozen with the Province of Newfoundland Department of Works, Services and Transportation concerning the Ferry Captains on provincially owned ferries.

There are several outstanding at Cancrew for Officers on the shuttle tankers.

There are also grievance issues for our GSO members (Coast Guard, DND) arising in just about every region, and those range from pay issues to discipline to harassment and all are being worked on by staff members.

Negotiations Continue Throughout the Eastern Branch

Every year Collective Agreements come up for renewal and negotiation. Some years many contracts are due at the same time and this year that fact continues.

Collective Agreements for Officers at Algoma continue to be negotiated. Obtaining finalized Collective Agreements for Officers at AGLSI (former ULS vessels) remains an elusive goal. Those Agreements have not been finalized despite several attempts to do so. Mediation sessions were held in late April (Engineers and Electricians) and early May (Deck Officers) in efforts to reach negotiated settlements. There have been several discussions of issues back and forth in the months

since and we hope to get the Parties back together for final resolution.

The contracts of Officers at Algoma Tankers are up for renegotiation and Notice to Bargain has been given.

Proposals have been requested from the Officers and the Negotiating Committees should be ready to start the process soon.

Negotiations for the Officers at MMTL are expected to begin within the next few weeks.

Marine Atlantic's Captains and Chiefs contract is in the conciliation stage now. The Employer informed the Guild of several

unacceptable approaches it intended to take with the Bargaining Unit members. We will have to see if there is any

further ability to reach a negotiated settlement

based on those positions from Marine Atlantic which we believe are totally unreasonable.

Notice to Bargain has been sent to Marine Atlantic for the Bargaining unit of Mates Engineers and Electricians. Proposals have been requested from the Officers and the Negotiating Committee is being put together. The old saying that "those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it" surely applies here. In fact, we know the history and still might be forced to repeat it. The Officers contract has been settled by arbitration in the last 3 or 4 renewals and while we hope to reach a negotiated settlement this recent history means we need to be prepared for the potential of Arbitration again. Negotiations for the Cancrew Tanker Mates Engineers and Electricians contract have gone through the first stage. We held several meetings but the Company did not present us with a



M.V. Arctic (from left): Anglo-Eastern Chief Officer Michael Lee, 4th Engineer Felix Element and Yann Donnelly (LRO).



Greetings from Mohammad Ismail (left) and Bernard Talbot (LRO) onboard the Anna Desgagnés.

monetary offer and we applied for conciliation. We are still working on scheduling those conciliation meetings.

The Cancrew Captains and Chief Engineers Agreement is also due to be renegotiated and a proposal exchange is scheduled, to be followed by direct negotiations.

The Maersk contract negotiations, for the Captains and Chiefs and the separate contract for the Mates and Engineers have both commenced. We have exchanged proposals and have had meetings with the Employer. We are still early in the process.

Negotiations with Groupe Océan Côte-Nord resulted in a first Agreement but only after the Negotiating process reached an impasse, went through conciliation, and a strike vote was taken.

Negotiations continue with Oceanex for a contract renewal for Officers on the Oceanex Sanderling.

The Guild's National Office has put out a "Request for Proposals" to Coast Guard and DND Officers. Proposals that have been received in local Guild offices have been forwarded to the National Office for review by the GSO Negotiating Committee.

Winter Meetings and Branch Board Meetings are Scheduled

The Eastern Branch of the Guild will hold district meetings throughout the Branch in January and part of February, 2014. The Branch Board meetings will be held in Montreal during the second last week of February. We hope the meetings will be well attended again this year. We also hope for cooperation from the weather so we don't have to cancel any, as we unfortunately had to do in North Sydney NS last year.

The Guild National Office will hold a convention in Ottawa in May 2014 and the notice for same can be found on the Guild website. Resolutions for consideration by the Eastern Branch must be received in our Thorold office by February 1st, 2014.

Reminders for Guild Members

In a previous Newsletter we reminded members about the emphasis on Administrative Monetary Penalties that will be ramped up in the future. We have seen several AMPs applied to our Officers and successful appeals of AMPs have taken place.

However, Officers are reminded that some issues may not be successfully appealed and Officers must help themselves in some of these issues. Please ensure, for example, that when you return to work your certificate of competency is valid and up to date and won't expire during your time back to work. If it isn't or if it expires during your tour and there is a review undertaken by TC, chances are you could receive an AMP. These types of penalties are totally preventable and we remind all Guild members to control those things that they can and therefore avoid needless costs to them.

Seniority and the right to exercise seniority if laid off, is something that Officers should remember and address. If you have accumulated seniority and are laid off, a request to your Employer to exercise your seniority (preferably in writing) should be your first step in confirming that your right to return to work has been examined. Waiting on the Employer could potentially result in loss of income, benefits, and retirement income.

Officers should also be aware of the Hours of Rest Regulations, and any Employer Policies and procedures on same. Failure to work within the regulations could have very negative results for any Officer found in contravention.

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