



Christmas Greetings

The Eastern Branch represents Officers in many different operations throughout our geographical area. Some are seasonal but most Officers work year round.

Regularized leave systems often provide the opportunity to be home with family during the holiday season but every year there are many Guild members who are hard at work during Christmas. To those members especially, but to all Guild members and their families we extend best wishes for the upcoming holiday season, and the New Year ahead.

District Meetings Scheduled for 2008

The Eastern Branch of the Guild has been extremely busy this summer and fall, and we will commence our district meetings across the Branch early in the New Year.

Meetings are scheduled as follows:

St. John's Nfld – January 8th, 2008; Dartmouth, N.S. – January 10th, 2008; Quebec City – January 16th, 2008; Montreal – January 17th, 2008; St. Catharines, Ont – February 5th Engineers ULS; and St. Catharines, Ont - February 6th regular district meeting.

The Eastern Branch Executive Board Meeting will take place in Quebec City on February 28th and 29th, 2008; and our AGM will take place in Quebec City on March 1st, 2008.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to a lack of attendance in recent years the Owen Sound meeting has been discontinued, and we advise members that similar consideration this year will be made for the Montreal District meeting and the Engineers meeting in St. Catharines.

These meetings are a forum for members to attend and see the workings of the Branch. The meetings give members an opportunity to ask questions and understand the direction of the Branch on matters

of interest. However, if attendance does not justify the expense then future meetings for Montreal and the Engineers meeting in St. Catharines are unlikely.

Reminder for Guild Members

Guild members are reminded of the cards given to members containing emergency numbers to be used in the case of a marine incident. Please keep those cards available and use them if an incident occurs. All emergency calls are monitored, and should be made as soon as possible after the incident.

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Staffing Updates

The Eastern Branch of the Guild continues to work hard to improve member service. Our new staff members are working well in their respective areas. Ms. Arenillas in St. John's and Mr. Spindler in Dartmouth have provided our members with thoughtful and energetic representation and have been excellent additions to an already hardworking staff. Last winter the Branch Board endorsed the hiring of further staff if events and workload warranted. That motion was timely and fortuitous. Mr. Mario Elrick's hiring has worked out very well so far, and he has been able to visit vessels and participate in a couple of successful organizing drives already.

Organizing

The Guild is pleased to announce that the Canada Industrial Relations Board issued two more certifications to us recently. The Guild is now the certified representative for all Mates and Engineers for the tanker "Overseas Shirley", and for the McKeil's vessel "Kathryn Spirit". We thank the Officers on board both vessels for their interest in the Guild and we are working on proposals now for the first contracts with each group. The Guild has been approached by the Deck, Engineering, and Electrical Officers at Marine Atlantic to ask if the Guild would represent them. The Guild has filed an application with the CIRB to represent this group of approximately 130 Officers. We expect this matter will be decided by a vote of the Officers, since they are currently represented by another group. We are responding to a request from a majority of the Officers who have indicated by joining the Guild that they want to change their current representation.



The Canadian Marine Pilots' Association (CMPA) elected its new Executive at their Annual Meeting, in October. From left: Capt. Ken Robinson (V.P. Pacific Region), Capt. Alex MacIntyre (President, Eastern Branch, CMSG), Capt. Michel Pouliot (President, CMPA), Capt. Marcel Poitras (V.P. Laurentian Region), Capt. Andrew Rae (V.P. Atlantic Region), Capt. Mike Burgess (V.P. Great Lakes Region) and Mr. Lawrence Dempsey (National President, CMSG).

GSO Negotiations

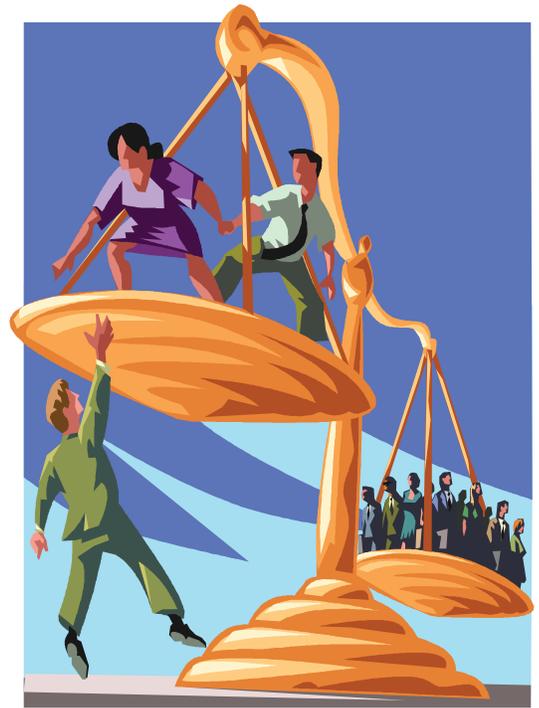
These negotiations continue at their usual pace, which is to say not very fast. The Guild Committee participated in mediation and it was then determined that we have no other option but to address the outstanding issues through Arbitration. Much work has been done on the preparations for Arbitration by the National Secretary Treasurer in his role as the Negotiating Committee Chairman. The lawyer handling the arbitration is the same person that did the previous one, so we are very comfortable with his abilities in that process. We thank the Committee for all their input thus far, and the GSO members in general for their patience in this process. It is long and drawn out, and while that is unfortunate, it is something we must follow to reach the end of the process and a Collective Agreement.



Negotiations and Grievances

The following is the status of negotiations being addressed by the Eastern Branch staff and negotiating committees:

- Bay Ferries – negotiations are ongoing – one session held so far.
- Marine Atlantic – an arbitration scheduled for last May took place and a Collective Agreement has been signed. Marine Atlantic has once again applied to the CIRB for a section 18 “consolidation of bargaining units”. This is the third application of this type in the past seven years. The Guild believes the Company has no more grounds to make the application this time then they had the last two times. We expect the Board to toss the application and we are monitoring the situation very closely.
- Nfld. Provincial Ferry Captains – a tentative settlement has been reached and at the time of this report the wording details are being examined, following which a package is going out to the members
- MV Arctic – proposals have been presented but we’re awaiting the return of Negotiating Committee members from the vessel dry docking in order to continue the negotiations.
- GLPA – all four districts are open and negotiations have started with the Authority.
- Oceanex – two negotiating sessions have been held and we’re awaiting the scheduling of a third session.
- Upper Lakes Mates and Engineers – packages are out now for both the Mates and Engineers. Both groups previously rejected offers and we have gone through conciliation and mediation. The results of these strike votes will dictate our next steps. The Guild is still waiting to hear back from the Canada Industrial Relations Board on our request to have both these bargaining units combined so we have to negotiate the agreements separately.
- Maersk/Seabase – Notice to Bargain has been given and we are currently receiving and collating member proposals.
- Cancrew – Notice to Bargain has been given and we are looking to exchange proposals with the Company.



Grievances:

Each Guild office has various grievances being worked on by staff. Grievances include dismissal issues, improper lay offs, benefit plan problems, accommodation issues, and many others.

These are at various stages so each grievance will not be explained in detail here. It is correct to say that many grievance issues arise from time to time and Branch staff follows each grievance on its own merits at each level.

The Guild asks members who have potential grievances to contact our offices early in the process to make sure the grievance process in your contract is followed. It is also beneficial to discuss the alleged violation with Guild staff to determine what part of your Collective Agreement has been violated.

All grievances need to be discussed with the member and investigated as required. The Guild will try to discuss issues with the various employers to attempt resolution before grievances arise and sometimes this approach works well. However we will use the grievance processes provided in collective agreements as needed to represent our members.





Health and Safety Issues at Marine Atlantic

The Guild and the other unions at Marine Atlantic are involved in some very intense discussions with the Company over health and safety concerns on one of the vessels at that Company. Specifically, the Atlantic Freighter has been discovered to have a serious problem with asbestos. Most Officers are fully aware that asbestos problems have occurred on vessels over the years, but have been addressed by removal or containment operations so that health issues have not been a concern.

In the case of the Atlantic Freighter the alarm has been raised on asbestos on that vessel. The Company has done some testing and determined afterwards that the vessel would have all the remaining asbestos on it removed. The planning for that operation is currently underway (right down to any engine room gaskets that are made of asbestos). Our response to that is two-fold and can be summed up like this: Good! And About time!

The Freighter was slated to be replaced in the future by the Company so we're not sure if the

removal of the asbestos now just makes the vessel saleable in the future. The only point that concerns us about the vessel in the future is that it is safe for our members to work on.

The other, and more pressing issue is the possibility of exposure to harmful asbestos to members who've worked on the Freighter in the past. There have been many Guild members who have worked on the Freighter during their careers at Marine Atlantic. They should contact the Company if they have any questions or concerns. The Company is sending out information to current and former employees, and has already set plans in motion to test employees identified as needing to be consulted.

The Guild has actively participated in discussions with the Company on this matter and we will continue to take part in all matters relating to this issue in the future.



Atlantic Pilotage Authority Christens Second New Pilot Boat for Placentia Bay, NL

On November 15, 2007 the Atlantic Pilotage Authority and invited guests watched as Reverend Donald Lawton, Chaplain of the Mission to Seafarers in Halifax blessed the "Atlantic Pilot". The "Atlantic Pilot" is a sister ship to "Avalon Pilot" that was christened on June 1, 2007. Both pilot boats were built in Meteghan, Nova Scotia by A. F. Theriault & Son Ltd. for service in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland.

