

The Bridge Watch

January 2013

Newsletter of the Society of Master Mariners South Africa



“The authoritative voice of South Africa’s marine professionals”

PRESIDENT’S 2012 REPORT



The Society held its 68th National AGM in Cape Town in August of last year.

The 2011 National AGM of the Society had set the incoming committee two important tasks. These were:

- Produce a Strategic Plan for the Society
- Produce a new Constitution that will broaden the Society’s membership criteria and take into consideration the issues raised in the debate about the Society’s future.

I am pleased to report that both these tasks were completed, were widely circulated among the membership and were presented and discussed at all the Branch AGM’s during April last year. The final drafts of these documents were approved at the National AGM and are available to view on our website.

One of the highlights of the year for me as President and also of many members was the re-establishment of the Durban Branch. All of us must thank Colin Johnsen for putting his hand up to take the Master’s position in the Branch and to start the long rebuilding process together with his Deputy Master, Hugo Schuitemaker and Branch Secretary, Roy Martin.

I believe the lessons of the Durban Branch’s demise need to be understood and our “modus operandi” needs to take into account these lessons to ensure we learn and remain relevant so as to be able to stand up to our vision as [the authoritative voice of South Africa’s marine professionals](#).

Some of these lessons are:

- Members live and work at a very much faster pace than before and face a range of extra-mural options. They do not have the time or desire to attend business meetings where nothing substantive is achieved.
- Stricter enforcement of drink/driving laws have adversely impacted on social interaction.
- The majority of our members do not live within close proximity of Branch meeting venues. Many have returned to sea and/or live abroad or in more remote towns from the major centres.

- Email, Facebook, Twitter and the Internet generally are the new methods of communicating quickly and effectively, further making monthly meetings and the associated decision process almost obsolete. One email to our entire membership takes 5 minutes to send, is received and can be responded to immediately and the member remains informed, feels participative and is left with a sense of something having been achieved – all from the comfort of his workplace or home. As they say in the classics “it’s a no-brainer!”
- Banking is now electronic. No one needs a cheque book or a visit to a Bank. Society Branches don’t need Treasurers or bank accounts anymore – it can all be done in a more controlled and cost effective manner by a National Treasurer who can instantly pay a service provider while ensuring our consolidated tax liabilities are properly managed.
- Membership must become more issue driven. Our interactions with Parliament over the amendments to the Weather Bill, shore leave access for crew and the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund issues have all shown how quickly we can get our members and the Society involved in these relevant matters. On each occasion members have responded immediately and has allowed us to make urgent interventions.

During the AGM I will showed delegates a video clip from the Company of Master Mariners Australia, which illustrated to all of us that our challenges are not unique and that we have identified similar strategies to them for the changed environment we find ourselves in. You can view this video by clicking on this link: <http://www.mastermariners.org.au/video>

I have given a lot of thought to the re-focusing of the Society, its direction and the need for all of us to clearly understand why we have come together as a group of serving and ex-seafarers. The first step needed to achieve this has been to define our Vision for the Society. We have set it as follows: *“to be the authoritative voice of South Africa’s marine professionals”*. Everything we do – our Mission, our Objectives, our Constitution and our very actions as Branches and the Executive must be done in support this Vision.

An important part the process of creating our Strategic Plan was the questionnaire circulated to all our

members towards the end of 2011, which, for the first time in my experience, clarified the feelings of members on a range of issues. The results of this questionnaire have been well circulated among our membership so I will not repeat them in detail here.

Two issues that were debated extensively at the 2011 National AGM were those of expansion of the Society's membership criteria and the name of the Society. While change for both of these issues had strong support at the AGM, this did not come through as strongly in the questionnaire responses. 62% of members felt the criteria for Full Membership should be broadened while 74% opposed removing the emphasis on Master Mariner in the Society's name.

In a subsequent, recent "flash vote" via email on the issue of a name change, 59% of the members responding wanted to retain the name as it is, 30% wanted to change from Society to Company while only 11% wanted to change the name significantly. I believe that we can now put this issue to bed, as there is a clear majority who prefer the name to remain unchanged – something we must now all accept.

All of this interaction with our membership was taken into account in our Strategic Plan and new Constitution.

Apart from the work of developing the Strategic Plan and Constitution, the Society has been active with many other initiatives.

- Discussions have been held with SAMSA to encourage their involvement in the proper recognition of CoC's within the NQF. At the Nautical Institute Command Seminar in October 2011, Commander Tseitsi Mokhele agreed that this issue needed attention and undertook to ensure SAMSA's participation in resolving the issue. This issue has now gathered significant momentum and developments in this regard are reported on later in this newsletter.
- Also as a result of the Command Seminar, Exco members had the opportunity to make more personal contact with senior SAMSA management. From these contacts we have made significant progress in ensuring the Society is recognized as a valuable participant in SAMSA's consultative processes. Rob Young and myself represented the Society at the SA Maritime Industries Conference in July last year.
- Our interaction with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on the amendments to the South African Weather Service Bill introduced us to the effectiveness of monitoring and communicating with these important Government committees. Our submissions in this regard were well received and I believe were instrumental in ensuring the interests of our sea-going members were taken

into account with the legislation being appropriately amended. In the course of this interaction I made contact with the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (the PMG) – an NGO that monitors the work of Parliament and the various portfolio committees (the "engine rooms" of parliament). The Society is now registered with the PMG who keep us informed of any legislative developments affecting our industry or professions.

- Exco has been concerned that we have lost our traditional association with the NSRI over the years. Keith Burchell, who has been very involved with the NSRI in the past, has been leading an initiative to rebuild these ties and several meetings with the management of NSRI have been held to identify ways in which the Society can support the NSRI's work. One such area is in assisting crew training in navigation and I am pleased to report that we had a good response from members who offered their assistance in this regard.
- On the 14th and 15th of June 2012 I represented the Society at the IFSMA Annual General Assembly in Copenhagen. This was a wonderful opportunity to meet a wide range of Master Mariners and build our international network. I will report more fully on this later in this newsletter.
- Also in June I presented a paper on the challenges faced by Shipmasters on the African coast to the African Ports & Maritime Security Conference at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg. In this paper I focused on issues of Piracy, stowaways and criminalization of Seafarers and other issues affecting our members.

I would like to thank all members for their support during 2012, particularly those members who have given of their time in support of the Society's work.

The National AGM voted to separate the Bursary Fund from the Benevolent Fund given the rejection by SARS of the Public Benefit Organization (PBO) application submitted for the consolidated Funds. SARS ruled that the objectives of the consolidated Fund were too restrictive in that it did not benefit a broad enough section of the public.

Accordingly, a Bursary Fund has been separated from the Benevolent Fund focused exclusively at maritime education and training for members and non-members - something required by SARS for PBO status.

A new PBO application for the Bursary Fund has now been submitted to SARS.

Benevolent Fund report

The Benevolent Fund was very active during 2012 with 3 significant funding interventions during the year. These were:

- Providing a bursary for a first year student at CPUT studying S1 and S2 Maritime Studies.
- Financially supporting the family of one of our deceased members while she waits for the estate to be resolved.
- Supporting the medical costs of an active, long standing member.

A neglected area over many years has been the sourcing of new income into the Benevolent Fund (and recently re-established Bursary Fund). One new initiative in this regard was the introduction of a fund-raising golf day on the 15th of November 2012. This was done in coordination with the GB Old Boys Association in Cape Town. I am pleased to report that this event raised nearly R80,000 of which our Bursary Fund received R39,418.50. It is hoped that other Branches will join in with their own fund raising initiatives in due course to ensure the Benevolent and Bursary Fund's long-term sustainability.

SOMMSA OFFICE BEARERS FOR THE 2012 -2013 YEAR

The following Members were elected by the National AGM for the 2012-2013 year:

Executive Committee

President: Rob Whitehead
Vice President: Keith Burchell
National Secretary: Charles Kingon
National Treasurer: Neil Lawson

Benevolent Fund

Chairman: Rob Whitehead
Secretary: Charles Kingon
Treasurer: Neil Lawson
Member: Keith Burchell

Bursary Fund

Chairman: Rob Whitehead
Secretary: Charles Kingon
Treasurer: Neil Lawson
Members: Keith Burchell & Colin Flockhart

Contact details of these office bearers are available on our website: www.mastermarinersa.co.za

Membership update

I believe there are encouraging signs of revival within the Society. One key sign and something that has given me great encouragement has been the number of new, younger members – 19 in total – joining the Society during the last 12 months.

The introduction of Student Membership within our new constitution has further developed this trend. This is where our future success lies and must be the area we focus on.

I would like to welcome the following Student Members (all of the Cape Town Branch) to the Society:

Nelson Beja
Marco Henn
Esethu Hlokoza
Gift Jobela
Samkelo Ngongeni
Siyabulela Sajini
Samkelo Sayimane
Clint Newman
Michael O'Bery

There are still many untapped areas of potential members in our ports, in our universities and in SAMSA.

The other full Members who joined during the year were:

Cape Town Branch

John Beadon – Director V.P. Systems
Keith Pletschke – Marine Consultant at London Offshore Consultants
Wessel Mc Donald – Deck Officer Safmarine
David Strydom – Master with De Beers Marine
Marek Lipowski - Master with De Beers Marine

Durban Branch

Louise Angel – Nautical Superintendent with Smit Amandla Marine
Andrew Walker – Marine Loss Control Manager with Chartis Insurance
Timothy Kelly – SHEQ/DPA Manager with Unicorn Shipping

Richards Bay Branch

Allan Heydorn – Attorney at Shepstone & Wylie
Mladen Brkovic – Principal Officer SAMSA

PLEASE NOTE

A new format membership application form, complying with our revised constitution, is now available for download from our website:

www.mastermarinersa.co.za

IFSMA REPORT



Our President, Rob Whitehead, represented the Society at the 38th AGA of IFSMA in Copenhagen on the 14th and 15th of June 2012. Fortunately he was in Europe at the time which significantly reduced the cost to the Society of his attendance.

The event was hosted by the Danish Maritime Officers - the Danish trade union for mates, masters, dual ship officers, engineers, harbour masters, pilots and a number of other professions in the maritime industry. Interestingly and in view of our own debates in this regards, this union has its roots in the Danish Association of Shipmasters which was formed in 1874 and over many years and many changes ended up as the Danish Maritime Officers with over 4,000 members.

IFSMA's international credentials were strongly re-enforced at this Assembly by the 60 delegates from around the world. Delegates included the members of the Executive Council consisting of the President Christer Lindvall (Sweden), Deputy President Koichi Akatsuka (Japan) and five Vice Presidents from the USA, Netherlands, Norway (2) and Germany.

Other delegates in attendance represented Master Mariner organisations from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, France, India, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan and Sweden. A number of Individual members also attended representing the countries mention above as well as the UK and Iran.

Our President reports that he was extremely impressed with the professional manner in which IFSMA conducted this Assembly. The agenda was tightly controlled and the papers presented were of great interest and relevance. **Our Society, as a founding member of IFSMA in 1974, needs to build closer contacts with IFSMA and the international membership it represents if we really want to have an influence within the maritime professional community and IMO's working committees where IFSMA is very active.**

The Assembly was opened by the IFSMA President, Captain Christer Lindvall of Swedish Ship's Officers

Association. One of the first items of business was the handing over of the Secretary General's position by Captain Roger MacDonald to the incumbent Captain John Dickie. Roger MacDonald has been at the day to day helm of IFSMA for the last 11 years and so the change in management may see new initiatives and emphasis emerging from IFSMA in due course.

Papers presented at the Assembly included:

- Experience of Armed Guards Onboard. Presented by Hans Sande, Norwegian Maritime Officers' Association (NMOA).
- Armed Guards Approach in Denmark & Coping with Capture. Presented by Fritz Ganzhorn (DMO) and Daniel Andersen (Citadel Solutions).
- MARPOL. Presented by Sudhir Subhedhar, Company of Master Mariners India.
- The Human Face of Piracy – The Seafarer's Perspective. Presented by Raffat Zaheer, Master Mariners Society of Pakistan.
- English as a Working Language. Presented by Matthias Meyer, Port & Pilot Consulting and Nick Cutmore, Secretary General of the International Maritime Pilots' Association.
- Protecting and Advancing Seafarers' Rights. Presented by Deirdre Fitzpatrick, Director, Seafarers' Rights International.
- Safety of Passenger Ships. Presented by Marcel van den Broek, Nautilus International (NL)
- Ballast Water Management Convention & Challenges for Masters. Presented by Peter Rasmussen, BIMCO, Individual Member.
- Safety at Sea and in Ports in time of Radiation Crisis. Presented by Shigeru Kojima, Japan Captains' Association.
- Theory or Practice – Which is More Valuable at Sea? Presented by Dimitar Dimitrov, Bulgarian Shipmasters' Association.
- Captain Under Pressure. Presented by Michel Bougeard, AFCAN.
- ECDIS/E-Nav from Pilots' Perspective. Presented by Nick Cutmore, Secretary General, International Maritime Pilots' Association.

The details of these papers, the Q&A's that followed them as well as the resolutions passed are all available for viewing and download from the IFSMA website: www.ifsma.org. You are urged to spend an hour or so visiting this interesting website to more fully understand the work of IFSMA and its members.

The next IFSMA AGA will be held in Melbourne on the 16th to 19th of April 2013. This occasion coincides with the 75th anniversary of the Company of Master Mariners Australia.

It is important that SOMMSA is represented there and Exco will be exploring our options in this regard.

SOMMSA Crest Presentation

During the recent Queen Mary II visit to Cape Town, President Rob Whitehead was contacted by Capt Frank Kaleveld, Federal Secretary of the Company of Master Mariners Australia and a passenger on the vessel.



Rob Whitehead hands over SOMMSA crest

The two met for coffee and a chat in the V&A Waterfront and Rob took the opportunity to present the Australian Company with a SOMMSA Crest. Interestingly, Capt Kaleveld was born in South Africa and attended Hoerskool Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town before being sent to Holland to study for his sea-going career.

CAPE TOWN BRANCH VISIT TO UNIQUE HYDRA GROUP'S DYNAMIC POSITIONING SIMULATOR

Earlier last year the Cape Town Branch organised a joint function with the Nautical Institute to visit the recently opened, state of the art, Unique Hydra training center in Cape Town which hosts Africa's only Dynamic Positioning simulator.



25 Members attended and had an entertaining and very informative evening "driving" their tugs under all sorts of conditions.

The centre provides basic knowledge of Dynamic Positioning systems in combination with practical hands-on simulator training. Their courses are intended for Project related personnel, Ship owners, Field operators, Auditors, and personnel needing more information for quotations or other purposes. For more information check out their website at:

www.uhms.co.za/training-centre

The Society 70 years ago

Extracts from the Society's 1942 Log Book

The Bridge Speaks

Observations and Comments on Current Events

We feel proud to think that the specially bound copy of the first "Log Book" which was presented to His Majesty the King, has reached him safely, and acknowledgment has been received in which he sends greetings to all Master Mariners in South Africa.

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The issue of Merchant Navy badges would be of improved value in many ways if officers were issued with stamped badges in gold and other ranks be issued the silver variety as at present.

We would also like to see a "Merchant Navy Cross" for valour at sea.

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Looking arbitrarily at the controversy on the Merchant Navy which raged recently in the House of Lords, we are inclined to agree with Lord Marchwood that all is not as it should be with the Service. Firstly, the Merchant Shipping Act, as it affects discipline, is hopelessly out of date. We believe Masters of British ships should be empowered to dispense justice without recourse to Civil Courts. A higher Merchant Navy Appeal Court should be instituted to deal with cases of appeal after the termination of voyages.

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The entry of both officers and other personnel should be controlled and regulated to ensure uniformity and eliminate the cosmopolitanism which permeates the Service to-day. Britain now realizes what a well-found and contented "Merchant Navy" means to the nation, and every effort should be made to ensure that good ships and good men serve under the Red Duster. It is an avenue of employment which, after the war, should be made more attractive and endeavor should be made to run British vessels with Britons.

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Insofar as South Africa is concerned, the Government controlled ships are in a unique position of being able to start from scratch and if, as mooted, attention is to be directed more towards marine affairs, then the opportunity exists of cultivating a South African Marine which would develop an esprit de corps and a tradition of its own fashioning. A lead is required and perhaps is already embryonic in Mr. F.C. Sturrock's speech at Cape Town. South Africa has a coastline of over 1,000 miles, and it is our duty to use it and guard it.

2013 – THE YEAR AHEAD FOR THE SOCIETY

Issue #1

During 2012, the South African immigration authorities started implementing new and onerous restrictions on visiting seafarers wanting to go ashore for a spell of shore leave. This was experienced in Durban but we have been informed it is intended to be rolled out in all South African ports.

At one stage, crew members had to report in person to the single immigration office on every occasion they proceeded and returned from ashore. In Durban, this causes significant cost and time depending on where the ship is berthed. We have even heard stories of crew members being brought back from hospital to present themselves and to get their passports stamped.

Although vessels are cleared into port by immigration who attend the vessel on arrival, they are now not prepared to clear in the crew at the same time – as has been the practice for many, many years.

Compounding this problem is the difficulty in finding out exactly what the procedure is nationally as the Act and Regulations do not spell out the detail leaving interpretations to individual port immigration authorities.

The Society is monitoring these developments closely via information received from a range of persons involved including Ship Masters, crew management companies, ship owners and Department of Home Affairs.

We are fortunate to have secured the services of Malcolm Hartwell, of Norton Rose attorneys who, on a pro bono basis, has undertaken to represent the Society in this matter.

The issues are complex and involve interpretation of the Immigration Act and Regulations, Convention on the Facilitation of Marine Traffic Act, International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, Maritime Labour Convention, South African Maritime Policy etc. etc.

Extensive research has been completed by Malcolm Hartwell in consultation with the Society and draft letters laying out our opposition to these unreasonable and unacceptable restrictions on seafarers access to shore leave have been prepared.

While the Society is ready to work with likeminded bodies to resolve this issue, we see ourselves as the only independent body that can take up this important issue on behalf of seafarers and we intend to monitor developments closely while being ready to take action (including legal action if necessary) at the appropriate time.

Issue #2

For some time now it has been apparent that the SOMMSA Certificate of Competency (CoC) does not sit well within a university environment where the emphasis is on academic education towards degree level.

Further, it is generally accepted that the Master CoC is not properly recognized within the National Qualifications Framework where it is only considered at diploma level whereas we believe it should be at least Bachelor Degree level. This is because only the academic time is recognised while the time served component is ignored.

Enter the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (the QCTO). This body has been established to provide appropriate recognition to trades and occupations generally falling outside of the university framework.

The QCTO is one of the three Quality Councils provided for in the National Qualifications Framework Act (NQF Act No 67 of 2008).

The Council was established under the Skills Development Act and became operational on the 1st April 2010 following the publication of Government Gazette No 33059, 1st April 2010.

The QCTO has been putting in place the necessary building blocks for it to begin operating. On 20th July 2011 it delegated functions to the first generation of 'official' Development Quality Partners. That signaled that work had begun in earnest.

At a workshop attended by the Society in August last year it was proposed that SAMSA embark on an application to be recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority as a Professional Body and that the following designations be applied for: Master Special Grade, Master, Chief Mate, Deck Officer, Chief Engineer Special Grade, Chief Engineer, Second Engineer, Engineer Officer of the Watch.

Furthermore, it was proposed that all occupations supported by a Certificate of Competency, be registered on the QCTO as occupations. These occupations cover all CoC's, all rating Certificates of Proficiency, all Port Operations CoC's, some 'Small Vessel' and Yachting CoC's and Specialist programmes.

For the purposes of the above, The Maritime Chamber of the Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA) is to be the 'Development Quality Partner' (DQP) and SAMSA the 'Assessment Quality Partner' (AQP).

It was noted that this proposal did not include any occupations which fall outside of SAMSA's mandate.

It was agreed that these could be accommodated via the 'Professional Body' route.

For the purposes of the Project being rolled out, it was agreed that the single qualification that would be used for a test-run is to be "Able Seafarer Deck".

The above proposal was accepted by those present and it was agreed that TETA (Maritime Chamber) and SAMSA would produce lists of occupations for consideration and match these up to an Organising Framework of Occupations Code (OFO Code) supplied by TETA. This and other information will be circulated to all Community of Expert Practitioners (CEP) Members (i.e. including the Society).

Although the Society has provisionally agreed to support this process there is one major area of concern that has been debated within the Cape Town Branch.

By agreeing to SAMSA as the Professional Body representing marine professionals, control will be vested in what is essentially a political body rather than in an independent body governed by the professionals themselves.

SAMSA, as currently constituted, is well placed to do this job and is respected by the Society and the maritime industry generally. Our concern rests with the potential for SAMSA to change radically in the years to come (when different people are in places of

authority) and decisions, adversely affecting our profession, could be taken.

However, the significant benefit of supporting SAMSA as our Professional Body is that SAMSA will provide all the administrative infrastructure and costs associated with this undertaking. The Society's relatively small membership does not realistically have the financial capacity to fund a professional body. It is also unlikely other organisations like SAIMENA (who are already registered as a Voluntary Association with the Engineering Council of South Africa) would be prepared to join in a collective effort to establish our own Professional Body.

It is early days for this project and the Society will be intimately involved in the process, particularly where our member's qualifications are involved.

SOCIETY DATES TO DIARISE IN 2013

Branch AGM's

Port Elizabeth	Mon 22 nd April
Durban	Tue 23 rd April
Richards Bay	Wed 24 th April
Cape Town	Fri 26 th April

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National AGM	Fri 16 th August
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As the successful candidate you will be responsible for delivering a range of simulator based courses and the design of new courses as dictated by clients needs. You will be joining a team of professional and committed instructors who provide training to world standard.

The ideal candidate will be self driven, hold a Master Mariner's qualification, with a minimum three years experience as Chief Officer, knowledge of the greater maritime industry, able to work in a team or alone and with the empathy, interpersonal skills and ability to teach effectively.

Recent seagoing experience on foreign going container, tanker or support vessels will be an added advantage.

Submit applications to – admin@samtra.co.za by 25th January 2013.