

DAILY SHIPPING NEWSLETTER 2003 – 169



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The **Stolt Perseverance** came into BP Finnart. She was due to sail again with a cargo for New York.

Photo : Tommy Bryceland, Scotland ©

EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS

Essential science of salvage

Can maritime salvage be regarded as a science if it relies so much on a good sailor's intuition?

In salvage circles a good sense of humour is essential. A prominent member of Cape Town's salvage industry recently joked that salvage was a "science of vague assumptions, based on debatable figures, from inconclusive instruments, performed with equipment of problematical accuracy by persons of doubtful reliability and of questionable mentality".

This bit of self-inflicted denigration is typical of the light-hearted approach often taken when times are toughest on the ocean waves. Of course, it is not true as it stands. But there is a smattering of truth in the way it reflects the uncertainty salvors face every time a new job comes around.

Salvors are quick to point out that no operation is ever the same and that no set of circumstances will ever follow "the book". The fact is, as Smit Marine South Africa's salvage master, Nick Sloane, will tell you, there is no "book". Only the hardware used is ever fully predictable and even then, the type of hardware needed may have to be created uniquely for the job at hand.

The reality is sketched more accurately by the International Maritime Organisation in its 1983 Manual on Oil Pollution. In Section 3, page 17, it says: "It should be stressed that salvage is a highly technical and complex process which, whenever possible, is best placed in the hands of professional salvors."

Professional salvors employ specialist staff and sub-contract other specialists as new demands are placed on the salvage process. Specialist staff include the salvage master who will head a salvage operation much as a ship's master, or captain, has the final say and responsibility over a ship.

Then there is the naval architect, the salvage engineer, divers, oil pollution specialists and logistics co-ordinators. Included among the sub-contractors are welders, electricians, engineers, hazardous materials experts, chemists and marine surveyors.

And in today's world salvors would have a hard time coping with potential marine disasters without that wonderful little machine, the helicopter. At Smit Marine South Africa's stores at Paarden Eiland, salvage engineer Cameron Samuel illustrates just how important these unique flying machines have become. Just about every bit of equipment has been designed to be airlifted, underslung, to a "casualty" by helicopter.

While each job might be different, the initial response offered by salvors as soon as a contract is agreed upon is very much the same under most circumstances. "We call it our first aid equipment and that is what we send along with the salvage team when they go aboard the casualty for the first time," Samuel said. "Portable equipment that can be carried by one or two men at a time makes up the bulk of this - such as light-weight pumps, hoses, tools and personal effects.

"We supply each salvage team member with what we call a personal aid box (plastic), in which you find overalls, a hard hat, boots, gloves, safety goggles, a blanket, towels, items of clothing and shaving cream, to name but a few." Also on the inventory list are handy items like water purification tablets, barrier cream, toothpaste and toothbrush, a torch and batteries, a deck knife and a solar shower.

If the casualty is a dead ship (meaning a ship without its own power), a light-weight generator is another important addition. But salvors are not machines and on a dead ship there is no supply of

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meals, so a ration box is also issued for each salvor. The ration box contains enough food, cutlery and crockery for a man to live on for three days, from Oxo cubes and granola bars to water in sachets and canned or instant foods. Once aboard, the salvage master assesses the various elements of the job with the help of the experts in his team and decides on a course of action.

That is when a clearer picture emerges of the requirements, and equipment and tools are then flown in accordingly. A specific requirement might force salvage engineers ashore to make a piece of equipment such as the three-ton crane which was designed to fit on top of a 12m container needed for the removal of hazardous cargo from the Sealand Express recently. This crane may not be needed again soon, so after the operation it was placed in storage and registered on logistics inventories.

The most vital pieces of equipment that are almost always needed are various types of rope, pumps and specialised fittings. Ropes are needed mainly because a tug's pull or tow usually forms part of a salvage job. At Smit's salvage stores, various sizes of poly-propylene and other rope are stored, coiled neatly and on pallets, ready to be flown out when they are needed. Another high-technology rope, called Dyneema, is in frequent use these days. This rope, a specially patented development from Holland, is made of a unique combination of materials and forms the greater part of a tow line under many circumstances. Its biggest advantage is that while it is as strong as wire rope, it floats to ease the hooking up procedure.

Then there is the normal wire rope, or cable as it is most commonly known. The main tow line carried aboard a tug is a wire rope of 70 to 76mm in diameter, 1 500 to 2 000m in length. A tow line, as used during the refloating of the Sealand Express, is made up of a Dyneema running from the casualty to a short piece of "polyprop" or nylon called a stretcher or spring, and the tug's tow line. These various sections are connected by either a D-shackle or bow-shackle of the appropriate strength. When tugs involved in a tow pick up the slack and start their work, it is done gradually and carefully. Snatching is avoided at all costs as it could only result in either breaking the tow line or a part of the casualty's deck fittings. "The salvage master will order the tugs to increase power incrementally," Samuel explained.

The difference between the safe working load and the breaking strain becomes a built-in safety margin. While the equipment is prepared and delivered, the salvage master will consult with specialists. For example, the naval architect is employed to study the strong points in the ship's hull, its ability to withstand stress such as the tugs' pulling strain and to determine where the hull has to be strengthened. In the case of the Sealand Express, considerable strengthening was done to the ship's port side by welding in extra longitudinal beams.

Up on deck, the salvage crew will put in place an item such as the clever Smit Bracket, a fitting brought in and welded down as an easy-to-use attachment point for the length of chain frequently fitted to the casualty's end of the tow line. The ship's fair leads, those fittings through which tow lines and ropes are guided, are protected from vigorous chafing by a special piece of equipment called a chafe bracket. The chafe bracket is designed to prevent the tow line from cutting through the ship's own steel.

A ship aground is often stuck to the seabed by the grip of sand or mud, or even by the friction between the ship's hull and rock on which it might be sitting. This grip of the seabed is called "sticktion" a term derived from the word "stick" or "sticky" and it is a calculable factor that is determined by geophysicists using special mathematical formulae after taking seabed samples.

A chemist is an important member of a salvage team when a ship has a variety of potentially hazardous chemicals aboard. He then has to test and match samples of the oils on board. Certified welding contractors are used for major welding jobs during a salvage operation, as all welding has to be certified for strength and safety purposes. All salvage team members are trained in medical first aid to some degree and a well-equipped medical first aid kit forms part of the first line equipment

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deployed. Known as a Medikit or Diver's Trauma Bag, it is equipped according to the unique demands a salvage job places on personnel.

Fire-fighting equipment also forms part of the bigger picture as the threat of fire aboard a ship in trouble is common. Once all the elements of the salvage operation have been determined, heavier equipment such as bigger pumps, large hoses for an oil removal operation and generators can be flown in.

"Salvors are hoarders," Samuel said. "We find it very difficult to get rid of a piece of equipment because we might need it in five years' time. It might have been uniquely made for a certain job, but it goes into the store in case of next time. "All our equipment these days is standardised according to Smit's international requirements. Fittings match universally, in case we need to add some of our things to an effort involving a sister team from another part of the world. "Of course, that comes at a premium, but it is essential. "Equipment for specific purposes is contained in dedicated boxes (of steel) to keep things together. We would, for example, have a box specifically carrying pollution cleaning equipment, or for hazardous materials handling.

"If we require tools specifically geared to be driven hydraulically, all those tools will be together in one box. All you need to do is to ask for the hydraulic tools and the box is hauled out of storage, underslung by the helicopter and flown out." Inside every box is an inventory list telling the salvors what is in it at a glance.

Samuel stresses that just as in war, the most important element is not strategy, but logistics.

"The salvors on the job are lost without the logistics personnel ashore. "When a situation develops far away from the nearest logistics base, it gets more difficult." With the Sealand Express, the stores were just a phone call away, but the Jolly Rubinho (a recent casualty) involved fire and hazardous materials on a ship aground in a sensitive ecological area on the northern KwaZulu-Natal coast, far from the logistics base. Equipment had to be taken from Cape Town, raising the costs and requiring critical timing. "Being prepared for every situation is just about impossible, but as we go along, experience and the accumulation of equipment add to our capabilities.

"If we don't have the equipment, we will either get it or make it," Samuel said.

Karachi tightens hold on Tasman Spirit crew

TASMAN Spirit operator Polembros Shipping was last night negotiating with the Karachi Port Trust on the most suitable 'place to hold seven of its crewmen, writes Nigel Lowry in Athens .

Meanwhile, lawyers for Tsaviris, which salvaged the Tasman Spirit's cargo, have written to the KPT offering to send George Tsaviris, one of the managing brothers, to take the place of salvage master Nikos Pappas.

Mr Pappas is the last of the eight salvage personnel prevented earlier from leaving Pakistan.

He found his exit denied at Karachi airport on Sunday.

It is understood Greek and other European diplomats have been involved in talks over the KPT's move to tighten restraints on the Tasman Spirit crew, who include the wrecked tanker's master and another five Greek officers, as well as a Filipino AB.

"We understand 'arrest' is not quite the right word. It is more a formal detention," said Polembros spokesman David Gare.

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The men were previously held at a Karachi hotel and were said to have been treated well. The shipping company said it knew of no court decision that precipitated the change in the men's status.

"We are surprised," said Mr Gare.

"It looks like jumping the gun ahead of the initial inquiry."

ROYAL OLYMPIA CRUISES



Top : The **APOLLON** laid up in Piraeus – photo : **Hans Hoffmann** ©

Royal Olympia Cruises has sent three of its oldest ships to the breakers in India reports Greek shipping intelligence publication Newsfront. Greek brokers Masters Shipping confirmed the sale of the 1961-built 28,500gt **Apollon**, the 4,800gt **Stella Oceanis** built in 1965 and the 17,500gt **Stella Solaris**, built in 1953 reports Newsfront though the broker would not confirm a price of \$5.17m en bloc. The three ships have been laid up for a number of years. Sources in Piraeus say ROC's **Triton** is also close to sale.

Fears for man missing from ferry

Fears are growing for the safety of a man who disappeared while onboard a North Sea ferry. It is thought Simon Mark Gamble, 31, from Gateshead, may have fallen into the water.

Police believe he had travelled alone on a two night DFDS Seaways cruise to Amsterdam, which left the Tyne on Saturday. Crews raised the alarm when the ferry docked at North Shields on Monday, after finding Mr Gamble's luggage and passport in a cabin.

Personal problems

Chief Inspector Derek Scott, from Northumbria Police, said they were extremely concerned about his welfare. He said: "We have had close contact with his family and they have told us that he has not been particularly well recently." "He has been depressed and concerned about various things going on in his private and personal life." "They are extremely concerned, as are we, because it is completely out of character for him." A spokesman for DFDS Seaways said it was working working closely with police.

Uitstel baggerwerk irriteert Gent

door Wout Bareman

GENT - Het stadsbestuur en het havenbedrijf van Gent hebben verontrust gereageerd op het besluit van het ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat om pas in de periode 2007-2010 geld beschikbaar te stellen voor baggerwerken op het Kanaal van Gent naar Terneuzen. Op verzoek van havenschepen D. Termont heeft havenkapitein D. Vernaeye direct contact gezocht met Rijkswaterstaat Zeeland, de beheerder van de sluizen en het kanaal.

Volgens een woordvoerder van het havenbedrijf is de zorg zeker gegrond. Door geldgebrek kan het ontbreken van een slibdepot is al jaren sprake van achterstallig onderhoud op het Nederlandse deel van het kanaal, terwijl een inhaalmanoeuvre op het Vlaamse deel de slibberg daar grotendeels heeft weggewerkt.

In 2001 verklaarde een vertegenwoordiger van Rijkswaterstaat dienstkring Zeeuws-Vlaanderen dat zich op de kanaalbodem en de oevers inmiddels een slibberg van 350.000 kubieke meter heeft verzameld. Die figuurlijke berg groeit jaarlijks met naar schatting 20.000 ton. Knelpunten zijn van oudsher de brugpassages in Sluiskil en Sas van Gent. Voor de Middensluis in Terneuzen, waar schepen door het opgehoopte slib vaak verkeerde manoeuvres uitvoerden, werd de drempel enkele jaren geleden weggebaggerd.

Rijkswaterstaat heeft, volgens een woordvoerder in Terneuzen, de ongeruste Gentse havenbestuurders gerust kunnen stellen. „Als zich in de periode tot 2007 acht grote problemen voor doen, zullen we zeker tussentijds in actie komen. In het verleden is wel eens gezegd dat de grotere zeeschepen tussen de brug bij Sas van Gent en Zelzate met hun kiel door de modder ploegden, maar dat is nu zeker niet het geval. Waterstaat heeft het havenbedrijf de peilingsresultaten van juni van dit jaar toegestuurd om te onderstrepen dat de situatie onder controle is.

Depot

Waterstaat wacht overigens met smart op de ingebruikname van het grote slibdepot in de Koegorspolder. In het nieuwe meerjarenprogramma van Verkeer en Waterstaat is de opleveringsdatum nu verschoven van 2005 naar 2007, het moment waarop ook weer geld beschikbaar komt voor de baggerwerken. In het verleden hield waterstaat, vanwege de onduidelijkheid rond de verwezenlijking van het depot in Sluiskil-Oost, aanvankelijk ruimte voor een alternatief depot in de Dekkerspolder bij Westdorpe achter de hand, maar die optie heeft men nu laten varen. De woordvoerder van waterstaat: „We zetten nu helemaal in op 2007. En daarnaast haken we op landelijk niveau ook in op de plannen voor grootschalige verwerking van baggerspecie. De bemonstering daarvoor hebben we al afgerond. Het betekent dat Rijkswaterstaat, dat in het verleden bij hoge uitzondering tienduizenden kuubs zwaar verontreinigd kanaalslib in het depot van Callemansputte bij Zelzate mocht dumpen, niet helemaal afhankelijk is van het nog aan te leggen depot in de Koegorspolder.

CASUALTY REPORTING

GLOBAL SPIRIT (LIBERIA)

Vehicle **Global Spirit** (47500 gt, built 1987) ran aground in Port Phillip Bay approximately one and a half miles north of Rosebud around 2215 hrs, last night. A spokesperson for the vessel's agent, Seaway Agencies, said it is understood the vessel grounded on mud, but the cause of incident is not yet known. Harbour-master Tim Muir said that the vessel was aground for just over four hours before it was refloated at 0230, with the help of two Adsteam tugs. Capt Muir said that there were no injuries to crew and no evidence of damage to the vessel or pollution to the bay. The vessel was refloated fairly easily after the arrival of the tugs, he said. "Two tugs from Adsteam arrived about 0200," Capt Muir said. "A combination of vessel's engines, the pull of the tugs, and ballast being released allowed the vessel to be refloated by around 0230." Capt Muir confirmed that there was a pilot on board the vessel when it grounded. The vessel is now berthed at No. 4 Webb Dock, and an underwater inspection was being made around midday today to confirm that it was not damaged during the grounding. Marine Safety Victoria's director of marine safety, Tony Middleton, said that it has begun an investigation into

the incident. "We appointed the investigator earlier this morning, and his report is expected by late October or early November," Mr Middleton said.

ANDERS WERNER (NETHERLANDS)

Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1025, UTC: Salvage tug **Anders Werner** (98 gt, built 1966), while towing a floating dock, took water and sank in German waters of the Baltic, in lat 54 34N, long 11 03.6E at 1358, UTC, Sep 21. Possibility that tug was holed by the floating dock. The floating dock was later taken in tow by another tug and towed to Rostock

WILSON RHINE (ANTIGUA & BARBUDA)

General cargo Wilson Rhine had a fire in its engine-room 15 nautical miles north of Utvaer lighthouse, between Floro and Bergen, at 0740, Sep 21. The vessel sustained damage to cables and pipes in the engine-room, which also affected some of the navigational instruments on the bridge. The vessel was towed to Bergen, where it is now alongside awaiting a decision by the insurers regarding repairs. The vessel has about 800 tonnes of cargo on board which might be discharged at Bergen prior to the vessel entering a yard.

SHIPYARD NEWS

Alstom-built Queen Mary II to test water



SAINT-NAZAIRE, France, Sept 24 (AFP) - The Queen Mary II, the biggest and most luxurious passenger ship ever built, is to take to the seas for the first time on Thursday for a series of tests ahead of its maiden voyage in January.

The liner, the first Cunard ship to be assembled outside of Britain, will leave dock in the western French port of Saint-Nazaire for several trial runs between the off-shore islands of Ile d'Yeu and Belle-Ile. French shipbuilder Chantiers de l'Atlantique - a subsidiary of troubled engineering giant Alstom, which was saved from near-bankruptcy this week by a state-backed EUR 3.2-billion (USD 3.7-billion) rescue plan - is counting on the Queen Mary II to stand as a shining example of its technical expertise.

The liner - which will be able to accommodate some 2,600 passengers and 1,250 crew members - is 345 meters (1,150 feet) long and 41 meters wide, and stands as high as a 23-story building.

The 150,000-tonne vessel will include a spa, five swimming pools, 2,000 bathrooms, 3,000 telephones, 4,500 steps and hundreds of works of

art. It will generate enough power to provide electricity for a city of 300,000 residents. Cunard, owned by US cruise group Carnival, is paying some USD 800 million dollars for the vessel. Some 450 engineers and technicians will be aboard the new crown jewel of the Cunard fleet during this weekend's tests to ensure that it meets the necessary standards for maritime certification. The cruise

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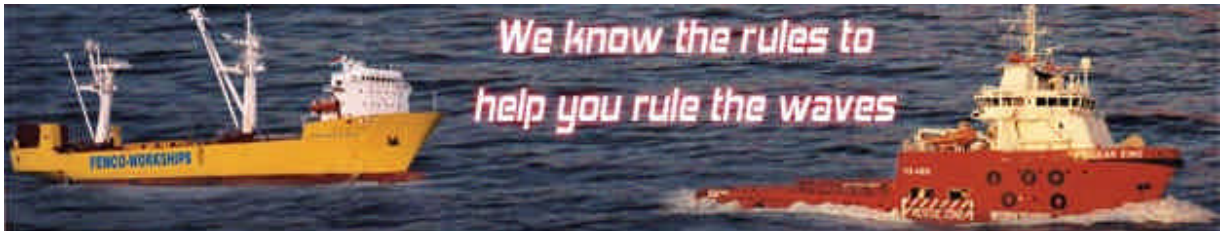
ship - expected to be in use for some 40 years – is scheduled to be delivered in December, and then to make its first trip from Southampton, southern England, to Fort Lauderdale, Florida on January 12, 2004.

Aesthetically, the ship will resemble its famed predecessors, the Queen Mary and the two Queen Elizabeth liners, with a 74-meter-high chimney stack and a tapered bow well-suited for Atlantic navigation. However, it will only cross the ocean about 20 times a year, with the rest of its schedule focused on luxury cruises in other parts of the world.

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Havenschap houdt vinger in pap ESM

door Ben Jansen

MIDDELBURG - Havenschap Zeeland Seaports kan ook in de verdergaande samenwerking met Rotterdam een stokje steken voor de vestiging van een bedrijf in het Sloegebied of de Zeeuws-Vlaamse kanaalzone. De statuten van de Exploitatiemaatschappij Schelde Maas (ESM), het samenwerkingsverband van het Zeeuwse havenschap en het gemeentelijk havenbedrijf van Rotterdam, voorzien daarin.

Het dagelijks provinciebestuur heeft gisteren een overeenkomst openbaar gemaakt die Zeeland Seaports een half jaar geleden met ESM heeft gesloten. Daaruit blijkt dat Zeeland Seaports grond in de beheersgebieden van het havenschap aan ESM moet aanbieden wanneer de gezamenlijke exploitatiemaatschappij dat verlangt. ESM kan die grond vervolgens uitgeven aan een bedrijf dat zich er wil vestigen. Zeeland Seaports mag zelf geen grond uitgeven.

Deze afspraken hebben tot veel wenkbrauwgefrons geleid, onder meer in de Staten van Zeeland. De kritiek was dat de provincie en de gemeenten Borsele, Terneuzen en Vlissingen, die samen het havenschap Zeeland Seaports vormen, daarmee de zeggenschap over de uitgifte van grond in Vlissingen-Oost en de kanaalzone uit handen gaven.

Slot

Er zit echter nog een slot op de deur. Een claim op grond in de Zeeuwse haven- en industriegebieden moet door de raad van commissarissen van ESM worden goedgekeurd. Die besluit bij meerderheid van stemmen. In de statuten van ESM staat dat ieder lid benoemd door Zeeland Seaports evenveel

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stemmen heeft als er leden benoemd door Rotterdam aanwezig of vertegenwoordigd zijn en omgekeerd.

Dat betekent dat in het geval van een voorgenomen gronduitgifte voor een vestiging die Rotterdam wel en Zeeland Seaports niet wenst, evenveel voor- als tegenstemmen zijn. „Bij staking van stemmen``, zo vervolgen de statuten, „komt geen besluit tot stand.``

Om te waarborgen dat de vertegenwoordigers van Zeeland Seaports niet verschillend stemmen, is afgesproken dat de stellingname in de vergaderingen van de raad van commissarissen van ESM vooraf aan de orde komt in het dagelijks bestuur van het havenschap. In de overeenkomst is ook vastgelegd dat Zeeland Seaports op eigen houtje geen grond mag uitgeven. Opmerkelijk is de ondertekening van de overeenkomst waarmee Zeeland Seaports ESM het recht geeft een optie te nemen op Zeeuwse havengrond. De ondertekenaar namens beide partijen is D.J.P. Bruinooge.

NAVY NEWS



The guided missile destroyer **USS Gonzalez (DDG 66)** escorts **USS Enterprise (CVN 65)** during the Comprehensive Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX). The Enterprise Strike Group is underway participating in COMPTUEX in preparation for a Mediterranean Deployment.

MOVEMENTS

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The **MAERSK DETECTOR** arrived in Rotterdam
Photo : Frans van Wilgenburgh ©



The **OOCL LONG BEACH** arriving in Southampton on 13th September. Supposed to be one of the biggest in the world at over 8000 TEU
Photo : Chris Brooks ©



The **WOLRAAD WOLTEMADE** arrived in Rotterdam, her ETD is Sunday September 28th
Photo : Job van Eijk – Tugdoc ©

AIRCRAFT / AIRPORT NEWS

Overleg KLM en bonden stuwt geruchtenstroom over alliantie

Overleg tussen KLM en de vakbonden over het alliantieproces heeft woensdag tot de nodige ophef geleid. Het gonsde van de geruchten dat KLM en Air France zeer binnenkort, misschien zelfs woensdagavond al, een verregaande samenwerking bekendmaken.

KLM benadrukte dat er de komende dagen geen belangrijke mededelingen zijn voorzien. „Maar er kunnen altijd onverwachte ontwikkelingen zijn“, voegde een woordvoerder daaraan toe. De maatschappij zou de bonden eerst 's middags bijpraten, maar dit is uitgesteld naar het begin van de avond. Door dit uitstel sluiten FNV Bondgenoten en De Unie niet uit dat KLM nabeurs een verregaande alliantie met Air France aankondigt. „Het proces lijkt in een stroomversnelling te zijn gekomen“, zei FNV-bestuurder J. van den Brink.

Olie op het vuur was het nieuws dat de topman van de Franse luchtvaartmaatschappij, Jean-Cyril Spinetta, op het laatste moment een afspraak voor woensdagavond heeft afgezegd. „Dringende zaken“ waren hier de reden voor. Beleggers speculeren er ondertussen lustig op los. De beurskoers van KLM stond door de geruchtenstroom al de hele dag flink hoger. Halverwege de middag bedroeg de winst meer dan 7 procent. De algemene verwachting was dat KLM en Air France vorige week de samenwerking al bekend zouden maken. Maar de twee bedrijven ontkrachtten deze geruchten met de mededeling dat er nog enkele belangrijke hobbels genomen moeten worden. Welke dat precies zijn, is onduidelijk. De vakbonden hadden om het op woensdag geplande overleg gevraagd. Ze ergeren zich aan de gebrekkige informatieverstrekking van de KLM-directie. De Franse vakbonden lijken veel beter op de hoogte te zijn over het alliantieproces dan hun Nederlandse collega's, aldus Van den Brink. Bovendien maken de Nederlandse bonden zich zorgen over mogelijke ontslagen bij KLM als gevolg van

de samenwerking.

RIJNMOND WEATHER

Vooruitzichten van donderdag t/m zondag:

LICHT WISSELVALLIG!

Veel bewolking, ook af en toe zon en een enkele bui. Middagtemperatuur dalend naar een normale 17 graden.

© Ed Aldus 2003	DO-25	VR-26	ZA-25	ZO-26
Maximumtemperatuur:	19	19	17	17
Minimumtemperatuur:	4	8	11	9
Zonnekans in %:	90	40	30	30
Neerslagkans in %:	0	30	40	40
Windrichting kracht:	ZO-3-4	ZW-3-5	NW-4-5	NW-3-5

.... PHOTO OF THE DAY



The passenger liner **The TOPAZ** – photo : **Hans Hoffmann** ©

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Microsoft sluit chatrooms op internet

Microsoft heeft woensdag aangekondigd dat het binnenkort zijn chatrooms in 28 landen sluit. Volgens de Amerikaanse softwaregigant zijn de openbare ontmoetingsplekken op internet tot een verzamelplaats van verspreiders van 'junkmail' en porno verworden. Ook zouden kinderen gevaar lopen doordat pedofielen via 'chatrooms' contact zoeken.

De MSN-chatruimtes worden 14 oktober stilgelegd in 28 landen in Europa, waaronder Nederland, het Midden-Oosten, Afrika, Azië en Latijns-Amerika. Alleen al in Europa maken miljoenen mensen er gebruik van. „De onverbloemde waarheid is dat het chatten zonder begeleiding niet veilig is”, zei Geoff Sutton, de Europese directeur van de internetdiensten van Microsoft. „Het is een teken dat de vrolijke begintijd van internet een beetje voorbij is. Chatten was hippie-achtig. Het was vrij en open, maar een kleine groep heeft dat veranderd voor iedereen. Dat is triest.” Microsoft gaat door met de zogenoemde messenger-service. Daarbij kunnen bekenden via internet direct contact met elkaar hebben. In Europa telt de dienst 22 miljoen gebruikers, in de Verenigde Staten zelfs 100 miljoen.

Volgens een woordvoerder van MSN Nederland blijkt dat de „ongekende populariteit” van de messenger het gebruik van chatrooms grotendeels heeft vervangen. De dienst geeft gebruikers meer controle over met wie zij communiceren, zei hij. In de VS, Canada en Japan wordt binnenkort een chatservice geïntroduceerd waarvoor moet worden betaald. Doordat hiervoor persoonsgegevens en een creditcardnummer moeten worden ingevuld denkt Microsoft dat eventuele 'overtreders' makkelijker zijn op te sporen.

Het sluiten van de 'chatrooms' is een van de maatregelen die Microsoft voorbereidt om misbruik van internet tegen te gaan. In april kondigde het bedrijf samen met Yahoo! en AOL aan 'spam', ongewenste en vaak misleidende e-mail, te willen bestrijden. Ook voert het concern een agressieve campagne tegen virussen, nadat was gebleken dat vaak Microsoft-software wordt gebruikt voor de verspreiding daarvan.