

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2007 – 038



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News reports received from readers and Internet News articles taken from various news sites.

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**The SETIA FAJAR seen alongside Global's DB Seminole in the South China Sea
Photo : Capt. Jelle de Vries ©**

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EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS



The **POLITISA LADY** seen in the port of Cape Town – Photo : Ian Shiffman ©

Ocean queens heading Down Under

THE impending arrival in Sydney of a royal couple will have the cash registers in a spin - to the tune of \$3 million.

Sydney's shops, bars, restaurants and tour operators are expecting to reap record takings when Cunard's luxurious **Queen Mary 2** and grand old lady **Queen Elizabeth 2** stop on February 20.

With more than 6500 passengers and crew on our streets, the city will be awash with seafaring tourists from around the world, generating cash for local tourism.

As a bonus, the caviar set from the prestigious **Silver Cloud** will also be in town on that same day, along with passengers and crew of the European ship **Van Gogh**.

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Carnival Australia vice-president of marketing and planning, Mark Barnes warned Sydney stores and tourism operators to prepare for a spending spree. Each passenger is expected to spend about \$1000 during the stay.

"Never before has Sydney seen so many cruise passengers on the one day," Mr Barnes said.

"In addition, (about) 1000 **QM2** passengers will be joining and leaving in Sydney. That will mean they will be here for three or four nights before and after the ships' arrival," he said.

NSW Tourism Minister Sandra Nori echoed his views by describing passengers from the ships as often up-market - "with the potential to spend big".

"It's a great boost for the economies of Sydney and NSW, as passengers and crew spend on accommodation, entertainment and having fun in our great city," Ms Nori said. "The NSW Government is expecting 40,000 cruise passengers to visit Sydney this season, generating \$38million in tourist spending, of which the **QE2** and the **QM2** will contribute a great part."

It will be the \$1 billion QM2's first visit to Australia. The giant liner is set to make a gracious entry as "the largest moving object to call on our shores". Stretching the length of almost four football fields and able to carry 4340 passengers and crew, the world's longest, tallest and widest ocean liner will make the Manly ferry look like a tinny.

The QM2 will also call during a record-breaking 80-day global cruise as the world's swiftest liner.

Because of her gigantic frame, the 151,000-tonne **QM2** will tie up alongside Garden Island about sunrise while in the afternoon, her much older, smaller and more familiar relative **QE2** will berth in Circular Quay for the 25th time.

To celebrate the historic meeting of the two world-famous liners, fireworks are scheduled over the Harbour that evening. It will take place more than 65 years after Australia welcomed the ships' original name holders.

QM2 sailed from San Francisco yesterday after receiving a warm reception from tens of thousands of inquisitive Californians.

Two grand ladies of the ocean

Queen Elizabeth 2

- * Carried more than 3million passengers since its 1967 launch
- * Its steam turbines have driven the ship 2,622,858 nautical miles, about 120 times around the world
- * Can sail backwards faster than most cruise ships sail forwards
- * Has the only synagogue at sea and the largest cinema
- * World's largest caviar consumer

Queen Mary 2

- * More than twice the size of QE2
- * Has 17 decks and rises 62m above waterline, which is about the height of a 23-storey building
- * Is two-thirds the length of the Sydney Harbour Bridge
- * Stretches almost four football fields and, if stood on end, is about 40m higher than tip of Sydney Tower
 - Has the first planetarium at sea

Super fast boat to visit Malta

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A boat aiming to set a new record by circumnavigating the world in less than 65 days is expected to arrive in Malta for refuelling and a short break on April 18.

The **Earthrace** challenger boat is also the first to attempt to circle the globe using biodiesel. The boat will be berthed at the Grand Harbour Marina, in Vittoriosa, which has offered its support free of charge in view of the environmental nature of the project.



The **Earthrace's** visit also came about through the initiative of biodiesel suppliers Edible Oil Refining Co. Ltd, which have been in touch with the project promoters for the past year.

The boat's visit is expected to attract media coverage from over 70 TV stations following the progress of Earthrace. They are expected to arrive the day before the event in order to cover the boat's entry into the Grand Harbour.

Earthrace will begin the race March 6 from Barbados making only 12 stops during the circumnavigation. At each of the ports it will be picking up a sponsor, refueling and gaining provisions.



338 passengers of Senopati ferry still missing

As many as 338 passengers of **Senopati Nusantara** ferry, which sank in Central Java's waters late December, are still missing, a rescuer said Thursday.

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Coordinator of the search and rescue team in Tanjung Mas Seaport in Semarang Budi Prayitno said that rescuers have so far managed to rescue 235 people alive and to lift 55 dead bodies, 24 of which could not be identified.

Budi said the team has not found any sign of the location of the ferry wreckage, which took 628 passengers when it left seaport in West Kalimantan to Central Java.

He added that the rescuers still continued to search the wreckage

BAD WEATHER HITS MSC NAPOLI SALVAGE

SMIT, the salvors of the stranded container ship **MSC Napoli**, have moved the barge **Bigfoot** back to Portland Port and away from the vessel due to the prospect of poorer weather and bigger sea swells in the immediate area of the wreck for at least the next 72 hours.



The latest photo of the **MSC NAPOLI**, as can be seen all the containers on deck behind the superstructure are removed and transported to the port.

The UK's Maritime and Coastguard Agency says: "The condition of the ship remains the same. Pumping equipment is in place within the engine room and is now removing the remaining oils from tanks within the ship's engine spaces."

It adds that 314 containers have been removed so far. Of the 69 safely removed on Tuesday, 13 contained dangerous goods which remain a priority for removal.

Robin Middleton, Secretary of States Representative in Maritime Salvage and Intervention said "No further containers will be removed from the ship during the bad weather. It is likely that more containers will be lost from the ship during this bad weather. The oil removal operation will continue as long as safety is not compromised."

Erika trial starts Monday

The **Erika** trial will officially start in Paris on 12 February and is expected to last until mid-June. The numerous hearings will have three objectives: to determine the responsibilities in the 1999 sinking of the Malta-registered tanker, to evaluate the actual financial damages resulting from the sinking and to measure the environmental impact. The court will hear from many parties including the vessel's owner Tevere Shipping/Panship Management, class society RINA, charterer TotalFina and several of its shipping staff, and officers of the French Coastguard. It is not clear whether Capt Karun Mathur will appear in court, although his testimony is regarded as particularly important. The court will try to respond to several questions, including whether the **Erika** was a "rust-bucket", and if so, how could RINA have given permission to sail and how could Totalfina have chartered such a ship. The quality of repairs made to the tanker in Montenegro a few months before the sinking will also be examined. The parties incriminated in the

sinking of the **Erika** are being sued for pollution and complicity in endangering life. The parties found responsible risk up to a year in jail and fines of up to €350,000 (\$450,000).

P&O Officer charged over Ouzo deaths

A ship's officer on the P&O **Pride of Bilbao** has today been charged with the deaths of three sailors. Michael Hubble, 61, of Winehouse Lane, Capel-le-Fern, Folkstone, has been charged with three counts of manslaughter by gross negligence after the disappearance of the yacht **Ouzo** in August.

He was due to appear at Portsmouth Magistrates' Court this afternoon. **Ouzo** had left Bembridge, Isle of Wight, for Dartmouth, Devon, on August 20.

Days later the bodies of Jason Downer, 35, from Kent, Rupert Saunders, 36, and James Meaby, 36, both from London, were found in the sea days. The yacht has never been recovered.

Hubble was officer of the watch on the P&O ferry at the time of disappearance of the **Ouzo** and he was first arrested in connection with the deaths on September 21.

The watch officer is in charge of monitoring the radar and other instruments for obstacles informing the person steering the ship of objects that should be avoided.

Japan, China spar over ship intrusion

Tokyo and Beijing continued wrangling Tuesday over the presence of a Chinese ship in disputed waters in the East China Sea, with Tokyo demanding an "acceptable explanation" for the entry without prior notice into what it says is Japan's exclusive economic zone.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki told an afternoon news conference the issue "of course will be taken up" when Foreign Minister Taro Aso meets his Chinese counterpart, Li Zhaoxing, during Li's visit to Tokyo next week.

"The Chinese side was basically just repeating its position on the Senkaku Islands and that is not something we can accept," the top government spokesman said earlier in the day.

Japan calls the group the Senkakus and China refers to them as Diaoyu. Both nations claim sovereignty over the chain.

The two sides are arguing about the 3,235-ton **Dongfanghong No. 2**, which the Japan Coast Guard detected Sunday morning some 30 km west-northwest of the main islet in the chain.

Japan claims the ship was operating outside the area it was given advance notice about and that this is a violation of the agreement on prior notification. Japanese officials said they believe the ship was conducting surveillance activities in the area.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reiterated that Japan sees the Senkaku Islands as its inherent territory and demanded an acceptable explanation from Beijing.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said Tuesday that China has relayed its "strong dissatisfaction" to Japan and that Tokyo was "making a fuss" over a situation in which China was merely exercising its sovereign right.

"The Diaoyu island and the islands related to it are China's own territory from the past," a statement on the ministry's Web site quoted a Chinese ministry official as telling an official from the Japanese Embassy.

China and Japan disagree on where the boundary is dividing their exclusive economic zones in the East China Sea, based in part on their claims to the islets. Both sides had agreed to notify the other in advance of any maritime survey in the disputed area.

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We are asking for an acceptable explanation based on the understanding that there is a prior notification system between us, despite our different positions," Shiozaki said.

He gave no details of the Chinese response, which was given to the Japanese side Monday evening. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said Tuesday that China does not believe the advance-notice agreement applies in this case.

"The Chinese ship was carrying out normal scientific maritime research in waters near Diaoyu Island, which constitutes China exercising its just sovereign right," Jiang Yu said. "Thus this has no relation with the notification system," she said.



The **C. PLANNER** seen approaching the SBM off Durban – Photo : Capt. Mike Skinner ©

Four months too long for Capt Schroder

For Shippingnews readers who have been closely following the case of **Capt Wolfgang Schroder**, the German master of the boxship **Zim Mexico III**, we are pleased to report that he has been set free on time already served in an Alabama jail by a federal judge who deemed that punishment enough for his role in a fatal crane accident.

It was reported by Tradewinds that Wolfgang Schroder is required to leave the US within 72 hours according to the decree from Chief US District Judge Ginny Granade, who passed sentence after a federal jury found the Captain guilty of one count of negligence last October.

Schroder, 59, has been sitting in the Baldwin County Corrections Center since, and Granade departed from federal sentencing guidelines that could have dictated a prison term of between 10 and 21 months, according to veteran maritime defense lawyer Michael Chalos, who represented vessel operator Rickmers Rederei of Germany.

Schroder will now have the opportunity to return to his friends and family in Ireland where he was living prior to the accident.

All in the industry will be united in wishing Captain Schroder a safe and speedy passage home.

Vehicles moved off stricken ship

All 53 vehicles left on an Isle of Man ferry which collided with a cargo ship on the River Mersey have been removed.

None of the 294 passengers and crew were seriously injured when the **Sea Express One** collided with the Alaska Rainbow in fog on Saturday morning.

The Steam Packet Company, which owns the vessel, said it would now make every effort to return vehicles to owners as quickly as possible. The Marine Accident Investigation Board (MAIB) is investigating the incident.

The company has suspended sailings between Liverpool and Douglas until a suitable replacement ship can be found.

We have an absolute commitment to the Douglas to Liverpool route and that will continue. At present, all passengers booked on the route will be transferred to the twice-daily crossings between Douglas and Heysham.

A Steam Packet spokesman said the company was co-operating fully with the MAIB investigation and could not comment until its was completed.

Meanwhile, managing director Hamish Ross has assured customers that the future of the service is not under threat.

"There should be no speculation. We have an absolute commitment to the Douglas to Liverpool route and that will continue," said Mr Ross. **Sea Express One** has been stabilised and moved to a Shipyard at Birkenhead for repairs.

Iran stores 14m barrels of oil on ships in Gulf: source

Iran is using supertankers in the Gulf for storing at least 14 million barrels of crude, a tanker industry source said on Wednesday, in a strong sign Teheran was complying with an Opec pledge to cut supply.

The source said that a week ago, Iran had stored up to 20 million barrels of crude on 10 Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCC) in the Gulf, but had since released three of the ships back on to the market.

'We now count seven VLCCs used for floating storage with most filled in January and February. One has been there since November,' said the source, linked to one of the world's biggest oil tanker operations.

He said the big ships, moored around Kharg Island, were all owned by the National Iranian Tanker Company and were fully laden with heavier sour grades of Iranian crude.

'They've also used a couple of third-party vessels in the past, but those are back in the market as well,' he said.

'The Iranians have done this kind of thing for at least two years and possibly more. They store and release, store and release, that's the familiar pattern,' he said.

Last year, Iran, Opec's second biggest producer, placed some 20 million barrels of crude, mostly Soroush and Nowruz grades, in floating storage because it was having difficulties finding buyers.

Analysts at Lloyd's Marine Intelligence Unit (LMIU), a shipping consultancy that estimates seaborne exports by tracking tankers, corroborated the new floating storage estimates.

'All I can tell you right now is that it's single figures, but more than three or four - at the high end of single figures certainly,' said James Davis, a senior analyst with London-based LMIU.

'There's definitely been a build up of vessels used for storage, around Kharg Island and the wider Gulf, which fits with the need to cut exports,' he said.

He also said Iran appeared to find it easier to store supplies or exports instead of taking down production.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries cut its output by 1.2 million barrels per day from Nov 1 and by a further 500,000 bpd from Feb 1.

Iran's oil minister said on Tuesday he was 'very hopeful' that Opec's two production cuts would keep oil prices around current levels.

Iran cut production by 176,000 bpd in November. Its share of the February cut was 73,000 bpd.

Captain of sunken Indon ferry held for questioning

The captain of an Indonesian ferry which sank six weeks ago with more than 300 people still missing has been released from hospital and is being held for questioning, a navy official said yesterday.

Wiratno, 53, has been treated for depression since he was picked up by a navy ship on Jan 3, following the sinking of the ferry in rough seas north of Java island late on Dec 29.

Eastern fleet commander Moekhlas Sidik told state Antara news agency that 'the captain had been taken (from the hospital) by the national commission for transport safety for questioning on Tuesday'.

The **Senopati Nusantara** was carrying some 600 passengers and crew when it sank in rough seas while en route from Kumai on Borneo island to the Javanese port of Semarang.

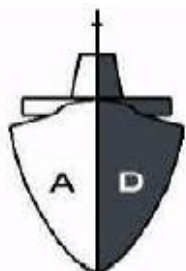
About 250 survivors and a couple of dozen bodies were found during a massive search hampered by bad weather, with some survivors rescued after drifting hundreds of kilometres from where the ship sank. More than 300 people are still missing.

The exact location of the wreck of the ill-fated ferry remains unknown and the search for it has been hampered by World War II sea mines and shipwrecks. Commander Sidik said four navy ships were still searching the Java Sea.

NAVY NEWS

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3.5 billion increase in US Navy shipbuilding budget

The Administration's FY08 budget, requests \$12.5 billion for new naval ships. This is a \$3.5 billion increase over the FY07 appropriations of \$9.0 billion for new ship procurement.

"It is very positive that the budget for shipbuilding at long last proposes an increase. This is an encouraging step from last year's level, but it does not meet the increased funding level Navy leadership stated was needed in accordance with the 30-year shipbuilding plan," said Cynthia Brown, President of the American Shipbuilding Association (ASA).

The Navy's 30-year shipbuilding plan called for a FY08 new ship procurement budget of \$14.1 billion to begin the long process of rebuilding the fleet to 313 ships--the minimum force required to defend the Nation and project power around the globe, according to Navy leaders.

In 2001, the Fleet numbered 341 ships compared with a 90-year historic low of just 276 ships today.

The shrinkage of the U.S. Navy is a result of persistently low procurement budgets. Since 2001, the budget for the Department of Defense has increased 68%, excluding war supplementals, while the Navy shipbuilding budget has experienced only a 17% increase. In 1988, the Nation invested \$27 billion in today's dollars to build a Navy. While the FY08 increase is significant, shipbuilding budgets will have to be increased much more if the United States is to continue as the leading sea power.

The FY 2008 Navy shipbuilding budget request seeks funding for construction of the lead next generation of aircraft carrier, the Ford Class or CVN-21, ship, the **USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78)**, in both FY 2008 and FY 2009 and advance procurement funding for CVN-79 in both years.

The FY 2008 budget provides the second increment of funding required to complete the two FY 2007 lead ships in the DDG 1000 program, formerly the DD(X) program. Meantime, though there's currently a hold on construction of one Littoral Combat Ship (LCS), the Navy budgeted for three more LCSs in FY 2008. Procurement of two mission module packages is also planned in FY 2008.

The budget provides for procurement of one Auxiliary Cargo and Ammunition Ship (T-AKE) in the National Defense Sealift Fund (NDSF). This will be the eleventh ship of the class dedicated to the Combat Logistics Force.

The NDSF budget also continues funding for the development of future sea basing ships. The Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) (MPF(F)) squadron of ships, leverages current designs and production lines where possible, such as T-AKE variant ships, modified Large, Medium Speed Roll-On/Roll-Off (LMSR) ships and LHA(R) ships. MPF(F) new construction commences in FY 2009 and includes one T-AKE variant and one Mobile Landing Platform (MLP). MPF(F) ships will be interoperable with current and planned Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) craft and Joint High Speed Vessels (inratheater connectors). The LCAC modernization program continues with a service life extension for five craft in FY 2008. The budget request also includes RDT&E,N funding in FY 2008 for transformational Sea Base to Shore, intratheater, and intertheater connectors to support Seabasing.

The budget also provides advance procurement funds in FY 2008 for the **USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71)** Refueling Complex Overhaul which will commence in FY 2010.

Submarine Programs: Construction of the Virginia class continues to be performed under a teaming arrangement between General Dynamics Electric Boat and Northrop Grumman Newport News Shipbuilding Company.

FY 2008 funds the fifth of five Virginia class submarines under a multiyear procurement contract awarded in January 2004. A follow-on multi-year procurement will be pursued to continue construction of the class beginning in FY 2009. The proposed contract would increase the Virginia class build rate to two submarines per year beginning in FY 2012.

The joint Navy and DARPA "Tango Bravo" initiative to investigate and remove technical barriers to future submarine design continues in the FY 2008 budget.

Carrier JFK To Be Decommissioned In March



After nearly 40 years of service to America and the US Navy the aircraft carrier **USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67)** will be decommissioned on March 23, 2007.

Five International Companies To Compete For New Type Submarine Project Of Turkey

Five international companies are intending to submit offers for a new type submarine project of Turkish Undersecretariat for Defence Industries (SSM).

Those companies are: French Armaris, Italian Fincantieri Cantieri Navali Italiani S.p.A., German HDW/MFI, American Lockheed Martin Maritime Systems & Sensors, Spanish Navantia S.A..

Turkey plans to procure six submarines within the framework of New Type Submarine Project to be carried out by SSM. Deadline for the delivery of submarines, to be built in Turkey, is 2016.

SHIPYARD NEWS

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The logo for DLSA (Dredging and Salvage Services) features a large, stylized anchor in the background. Overlaid on the anchor are the letters "DLSA" in a bold, serif font. To the right of the logo, a list of services is provided.

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Damen Teams with Vinashin

Dutch shipbuilder Damen is teaming up with Vietnam state yard group Vinashin to found a new joint venture company in Haiphong.

According to TradeWinds, Damen Vinashin Shipyard (DVS) will cover 42 hectares and have a 500-metre waterfront.

DVS will build offshore support ships, tugs, workboats and high-speed craft mainly for the export market, Damen said.

The company is an extension of the existing cooperation between Vinashin's Song Cam Shipyard and Damen.

Song Cam chiefs will help run DVS, which will have 400 workers.

Earlier on Tuesday, Vinashin revealed it had opened a new facility called Vinaoffshore to make floating storage and offloading (FSO) units. It already has a joint venture yard with the Hyundai group of Korea called Hyundai-Vinashin.

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The tug **Aries**, operated by the Saveiros / Wilson Sons Group fleet, operates in the port of Paranaguá, Brazil.
Photo : Carlos A. Calvo ©

Carnival in Deal to Expand in Spain

Carnival Corporation & plc and Orizonia Corporación, Spain's largest travel company which operates its own cruise fleet under its Iberojet division, announced the signing of a letter of intent to form a joint venture to operate and expand the existing Iberojet Cruceros brand in Spain.

Iberojet Cruceros operates two modern cruise ships, the 834-passenger **Grand Voyager**, built in 2000, and the 1,196-passenger **Grand Mistral**, constructed in 1999, which represent the newest ships in the contemporary Spanish cruise market. The new joint venture would eventually be comprised of a multi-ship fleet serving the rapidly expanding Spanish vacation sector.

Under the proposed agreement, the two existing vessels would be transferred to the joint venture company. The intention is to grow that fleet over the next several years through the acquisition of existing tonnage from Carnival Corporation & plc's current fleet.

"Iberojet operates a very successful cruise brand, along with a wide range of quality and affordable vacation products, which have garnered extremely strong brand awareness with Spanish consumers. With their extensive experience marketing in Spain, combined with a keen understanding of Spanish vacation trends, Iberojet provides a solid partnership for expanding in one of the fastest-growing segments of the European vacation industry," said Micky Arison, Carnival Corporation & plc's chairman and CEO.

Commented Pedro de Esteban, Orizonia's chairman and managing director of The Carlyle Group, Orizonia's principal shareholder, "We are very proud in partnering with Carnival, the world's leader in the cruise vacation business. With Carnival's support and expertise, we intend to continue expanding our operations, adding high quality vessels and providing specialized top services to our Spanish customers."

Added Gabriel M. Subias, Orizonia Corporación's CEO, "It is a great opportunity for us and Iberojet Cruceros to join forces and develop a strategic alliance with Carnival, a world leader in cruising. Through the years, we have always

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enjoyed close professional and personal relationships with Carnival. Our collaboration in the development of a successful joint venture will position us as the preeminent Spanish cruise operator."

Under the proposed transaction, the Iberojet cruise business being contributed to the joint venture company will be valued at €320 million, with €180 million in debt, representing a net capital value of €140 million. Carnival will own 75 percent of the joint venture with Iberojet owning 25 percent.

Iberojet Cruceros would utilize the current Iberojet cruise management team with its president Alfredo Serrano reporting to the joint venture's board of directors. It is expected that Pier Luigi Foschi, chairman and CEO of Carnival's Costa Cruises unit, will serve as chairman of the board of the joint venture. Costa already has a strong presence in the Spanish sector. "With the combined strengths of the Costa and Iberojet organizations, the new joint venture should generate even greater brand recognition in our efforts to grow the interest in cruising in a market that we believe is primed and ready for expansion," Foschi said. Carnival expects the transaction to be neutral to earnings on an annualized basis for the 12-month period following the transaction closing. The transaction is expected to close in the second quarter of 2007, pending approval of both companies' boards of directors, all necessary regulatory approvals, customary due diligence and execution of definitive agreements.

Diana Shipping buys vessel for \$93M

Greek shipping company Diana Shipping Inc., which specializes in dry bulk cargo, said Tuesday it plans to buy a Capesize vessel currently under construction for \$93 million, and has already placed it on charter.

Shortly after delivery around June 15, the Semirio will go under charter by Diana Shipping Marketing AG for four years, with an option for an additional year.

BHP Billiton will charter the vessel at a daily rate of \$51,000 during the first two years and at \$31,000 during the third and fourth years. The charterer has the option to employ the vessel for another 11 months to 13 months at a daily rate of \$48,500.

Diana Shipping said it expects gross earnings of about \$57.4 million over the four-year charter. If BHP Billiton takes Semirio for a fifth year, the charter is expected to generate a total of \$74 million in gross earnings.

With the delivery of Semirio, the age of Diana Shipping's fleet will fall to 3.7 years. Its overall size will increase to 13 Panamax and five Capesize dry bulk carriers.



OSG to Build More Tankers

Overseas Shipholding Group, Inc. (OSG), signed an agreement in principle pursuant to which Aker Philadelphia Shipyard, a subsidiary of Aker American Shipping ASA, will build up to six additional Veteran Class MT-46 Jones Act Product Tankers (three fixed plus three options).

Once transferred to another Aker subsidiary, American Shipping Corporation, OSG will bareboat charter the vessels for initial terms of 10 to 15 years. The agreement in principle is subject to, among other conditions, approval by the Boards of Directors of OSG and Aker American Shipping, preparation and agreement of final documentation and relevant government approvals.

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OSG also announced that a time charter agreement has been signed between OSG and BP for one more of the 46,000 dwt Jones Act commercial product tankers being built at Aker Philadelphia Shipyard. Of the original 10-ship order announced in April 2005, the BP charter brings the number of vessels OSG has chartered out to customers to nine. The first ship, the Overseas Houston, is scheduled to deliver to Shell and begin trading the week of February 26, 2007.



The Clipper "**Stad Amsterdam**", seen in "Sopers Hole", Tortola, British Virgin Island, Caribbean.

Photo: René Papavoine ©

"SHIPPING NERVOUS OVER PANAMA TOLLS": ICS

INTERNATIONAL Chamber of Shipping secretary general Tony Mason told a conference in Panama this week that the global shipping industry was concerned about the newly announced Panama Canal toll fee increase proposals.

He said: "Everything in life has to be paid for, and a US\$ 5.25 billion capital project is certainly no exception. It is therefore perhaps no surprise that while the majority of shipowners have in principle welcomed the additional capacity and greater lock dimensions that this project will bring, they are somewhat nervous as to how they will be expected to pay for it!"

Mr Mason added: "We have read the basic parameters set out in the ACP's business plan as to how it is intended to finance the expansion, and we have just seen the detailed proposals from the ACP of their intended toll increases for the next three years. The quantum of the increases in each of the next three years looks to be a matter of concern. ICS will be commenting in detail once we have studied the detail, and we will be taking the opportunity to make formal comments on them. However one question which I am sure we will be asking [Canal Administrator and CEO Alberto Alemán Zubieta] is what his intentions are beyond the three year horizon, given that the average increases for these three years would appear to be well above what was indicated as an average annual increase in his Business Plan discussed with the industry previously.

Mr Mason went on to make a number of cautionary points: • Where there is a move to sectoral pricing, the ability of individual sectors and markets to absorb cost increases must be carefully considered. • Increases need to be both

manageable and predictable, so that users can build them into their own business plans. • Any increases need to be proportionate and not such as to challenge a sector's ability to compete with other routes with other modes or indeed with other sourcing of cargo. • The burden of the cost of financing the expansion should not be too heavily loaded on current users, given that the major proportion of the benefits of expansion will accrue to future users. Clearly that may involve the ACP in financial mechanisms to carry capital costs until they can generate the additional revenue stream from the expansion. This is indeed quite normal with capital expansion projects.

He concluded: "I make these points not only from the self interest of the industry and indeed of my members, but also with a genuine wish to see this project succeed for the benefit of users, the ACP and the Panamanian people alike."

ECO to continue with newbuilding plan

Edison Chouest Offshore (ECO) in the US has announced plans to construct several new anchor handling towing supply vessels as well as more than a dozen new generation 280ft PSVs in its affiliated shipyards in the US. All vessels are scheduled to join the ECO domestic fleet within the next three years.

Construction highlights feature seven new anchor handlers: two 348ft, 21,600hp new generation anchor handlers and five 288ft, 16,000hp vessels.



The **EDISON CHOUEST** seen in Port Fourchon

Photo : Piet Sinke ©

Also slated for construction are 14 4,700 deadweight ton PSVs.

All the vessels are slated for delivery between February 2007 and mid-2010, and will be constructed at ECO affiliated shipyards: North American Shipbuilding (NAS) in Larose, LA, North American Fabricators (NAF) in Houma, LA and Gulfship in Gulfport, MS.

One year ago ECO announced plans for the first three AHTS vessels, and has now ordered the equipment for the additional four.

"ECO continues to provide the new generation vessels that meet the requirements of the deepwater operators," said ECO President Gary Chouest.

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The first 288ft x 66ft x 29.5ft AHTS, **Max Chouest**, is slated for delivery in March 2007 from NAS. **Joshua Chouest**, the next 288ft AHTS vessel in the series, is due for delivery in November 2007 from NAS. Three more are to follow with delivery dates at six-month intervals beginning in mid-2008.

These vessels feature 200 MT bollard pull, DP2, increased capacities for both deck and below-deck cargoes and a deadweight tonnage of 4,236 LT. The ships will also be equipped with a 500 MT three-drum winch, secondary winches, chain lockers, dual tow pins, shark jaws and stern rollers.

The first 348ft x 72ft x 31ft AHTS in the series, **Dino Chouest**, is scheduled for May 2008 delivery from NAS. An identical ship is slated for delivery in June 2009 from NAS. These vessels are also DP2, 210 MT bollard pull, new generation anchor handlers similar in size to **Laney Chouest** a 348ft AHTS that has operated successfully for the past three years.

These new larger anchor handlers will be equipped with a 600 MT four-drum winch.

To date ECO has delivered twelve (12) 280ft x 60ft x 24ft PSVs, with **Carol Chouest** slated for delivery and service in the Gulf of Mexico on March 1st 2007.

The remaining 14 PSVs in this class are scheduled for deliveries every eight weeks afterwards.

"The 280ft PSV series has truly revolutionized the supply vessel industry in the Gulf of Mexico," claimed the company. Featuring a deadweight of 4,700 LT, these vessels feature dedicated below deck tankage for 15,000 barrels of liquid mud.

The vessels also provide a clear deck area of 10,251 square feet (203ft x 50.5ft), with a capacity of 2,700 LT.

ECO also continues to add to its fleet by taking recent delivery of several new 160ft fast supply vessels, designed and built by Breaux Brothers in Loreauville, LA.

ECO is also announcing the continuation of that newbuild relationship, with plans for an additional 12 fast supply vessels, with delivery dates between February 2008 and August 2011.

Maersk wins Australian contract to operate semi submersible rig

Maersk Contractors has been awarded a drilling contract by Woodside Energy Ltd for lease of a deepwater development semi-submersible to operate in Australia. The drilling contract has a duration of three years and will commence when the rig arrives in Australia in the second quarter of 2009.

The rig is the second in a series of three highly advanced deepwater development semi-submersibles presently under construction for Maersk Contractors in Singapore. Although substantially larger and even more sophisticated, the design of the rig is based on the experiences gained from Maersk Contractors' latest newbuilt deepwater semi-submersible **MAERSK EXPLORER**.

With its large capacities and highly efficient drilling equipment the new rig is capable of drilling 10,000 m (30,000 ft) into the subsoil measured from the seabed. This makes the rig particularly well suited to drill deep and technically complicated wells as seen off the Northwest coast of Australia. The rig is able to operate in water depths up to 3,000 m (10,000 ft) and can maintain its station either in dynamic positioning (DP) mode or with a pre-laid mooring system.

A total of 180 people can be accommodated onboard. This will be a combination of Maersk Contractors' rig crew and specialists from Woodside.

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"We currently have an extensive business relationship with Woodside and we are looking forward to expanding this relationship even further," says Claus V Hemmingsen, CEO of Maersk Contractors.

Maersk Contractors is part of the AP Moller - Maersk Group and is a leading drilling contractor and supplier of floating production solutions. The fleet counts 29 drilling rigs and four FPSOs including six high efficiency jack-up rigs, three deepwater development semi-submersibles and one Floating Production Storage and Offloading vessel (FPSO) under construction. Maersk Contractors employs an international staff of 3,000 people.

MOVEMENTS

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The **FAIRPLAY 23** departed from Brest with the **AUTOPROGRESS** bound for Emden, The **AUTOPROGRESS** encountered an engineroom fire whilst enroute from Santander to Zeebrugge with 895 cars and was towed into Brest January 31st by the tug **Abeille Bourbon**

Photo : Jacques Carney ©

From Friday 9th till Monday 12th February the French Navy **DURANCE CLASS** Underway Replenishment Ship **FS MEUSE A 607** is visiting Valletta & she's berthing @ Pinto 4+5.

From Monday 12th @ 1000 or 2200 as its not confirmed yet till Tuesday 13th @ 1100hrs the German Navy 143 CLASS intelligence collector **FGS OSTE A52** is visiting Valletta.

The largest tall ship in the world **SEDOV** from Friday 16th - Monday 19th February to visit Valletta.

From Friday 23rd to Saturday 24th the German Navy 143A Class schnellboots **FGS GEPARD P6121 & FGS FRETTCHE P6126** to enter Valletta as well.

OLDIE – FROM THE SHOEBOX

Herald of Free Enterprise zonk twintig jaar geleden



Op dinsdag 6 maart is het precies twintig jaar geleden dat de Britse ferry '**Herald of Free Enterprise**' kapseisde voor de kust van Zeebrugge. De ramp kostte aan bijna 200 opvarenden het leven. Het was de zwaarste Britse scheepsramp in vreedstijd sinds de schipbreuk van de legendarische Titanic in 1912.

De ferry voer op vrijdag 6 maart 1987 de haven van Zeebrugge uit. Op dat ogenblik waren 80 bemanningsleden, 459 passagiers, 81 auto's, 3 bussen en 47 vrachtwagens aan boord van de 'carferry'. Het moest een routinetrip worden naar de Britse havenstad Dover. Na een draaimanoeuvre van 180 graden, stevende de **Herald of Free Enterprise** op open zee af.

Dat manoeuvre gebeurde met openstaande boegdeuren, en tonnen water stroomden de garagedekken binnen. In nauwelijks een minuut kapseist het schip en gaat het op zijn linkerzij liggen op een zandbank, op amper anderhalve

kilometer van de Belgische haven. Het was precies 19.28 uur toen de ramp zich voltrok. Onmiddellijk start een reddingsactie. Belgische maar ook Britse en Nederlandse helikopters vliegen uit, maar de actie is tevergeefs voor bijna 200 opvarenden, die in het ijskoude water aan onderkoeling sterven.

Een dag later bracht de toenmalige Britse premier Margaret Thatcher hulde aan de Belgische autoriteiten voor de snelheid en de doeltreffendheid van het optreden van de reddingsploegen.

Achteraf verliep de identificatie van de slachtoffers vrij moeizaam, omwille van een onvolledige passagierslijst. Slechts een honderdtal passagiers had een reservatie op naam. Velen waren ingegaan op een aanbod van de Britse krant The

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Sun, om de overtocht te maken voor slechts 1 pond. Zelfs in de weken na de ramp spoelden nog lijken aan op de Belgische stranden.

Op 27 april werd de ferry naar een voorlopige ankerplaats gesleept. Duikers bergden toen de laatste lichamen. Daarna werd de Herald naar de marinebasis van Zeebrugge gebracht om er door experts te worden onderzocht. Op 13 mei 1987 werd de Herald naar het Nederlandse Vlissingen gesleept en verkocht aan een Nederlandse firma om te worden gesloopt op een scheepswerf in Taiwan.



De **Herald of Free Enterprise** onder de naam **FLUSHING RANGE** op weg naar de sloop in Taiwan gezien in de haven van Kaapstad waar de sleper moest bunkeren.

De conclusie van het officiële onderzoek, gevoerd in Groot-Brittannië, is dat kapitein David Lewry verantwoordelijk is voor de schipbreuk. Na een lange procedure wordt zijn vaarlicentie ingetrokken.

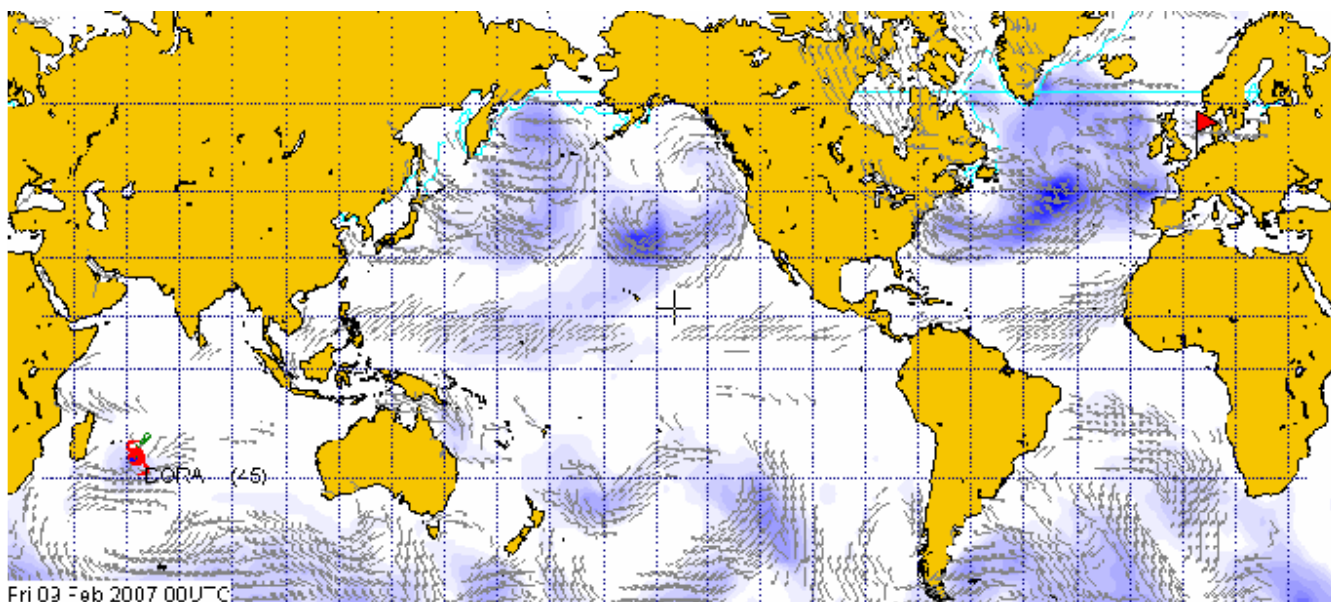
De carferry was eigendom van rederij 'Townsend Thoresen', dat later 'P&O European Ferries' werd. Momenteel varen de ferry's onder de naam P&O Ferries.

MARINE WEATHER

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Today's wind (+6Bft) and wave (+3m) chart. Created with SPOS, the onboard weather information & voyage optimisation system, used on over 500 vessels today.

.... PHOTO OF THE DAY



The **SKANDI NAVICA** seen moored in Vitoria (Brazil)

Photo : Erland Haagenrud - Skandi Navica ©

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