

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2007 – 065



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The REPUBLICA DI GENOVA in better days seen at the Westerscheldt River
Photo : www.maritimephoto.com ©

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EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS



The **MATADOR 3** seen lifting a storage reel onboard the **SEVEN OCEANS** in Schiedam

Photo : Baris Klop ©

\$150,000 penalty for concealing deck cracks

Maltese corporation Twilight Marine has been ordered to pay a \$50,000 criminal fine and \$100,000 in restitution after an incident in which the ship's master ordered that two large cracks on the deck of the 1984-built, Maltese-flag bulker **Warrior** be covered with tape and painted over to conceal them.

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Yesterday, in Oakland, Twilight Marine pleaded guilty to grossly negligent operation of a vessel .

Twilight Marine admitted that in September 2006, the M/V **Warrior** crossed the Atlantic Ocean, traveling toward North America. During this crossing, several sailors onboard the M/V Warrior identified several small cracks and rust holes in the starboard side deck. The crew immediately welded these cracks and holes. Soon after, several sailors identified two large cracks, each approximately three feet in length, on the port side deck of the vessel.

Instead of directing that the cracks be welded, the vessel's Master ordered the cracks to be covered with tape and painted over to blend in with the painting on the deck. Twilight Marine admitted that it knew its vessel was in a hazardous condition during the Atlantic crossing in that these two cracks were not properly repaired.

In November 2006, the M/V **Warrior** arrived in the San Francisco Bay. On November 22, 2006, the Coast Guard boarded the vessel to conduct an inspection. During this inspection, the Coast Guard discovered the two large cracks on the Port side of the deck which Twilight Marine failed to disclose.

Restitution in this case was directed to be paid into the previously created Northern Coastal California Restoration Fund, which was previously seeded with \$700,000 in restitution from two prior criminal cases. The first case was United States v. Hoegh Fleet Services, in which the Norwegian operator of the motor ship the **Hoegh Minerva** paid \$500,000 in restitution into the Fund for violating the False Statement Statute, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001, and Failing to Maintain an Accurate Oil Record Book, in violation of 33 U.S.C. § 1908. The second case was United States v. MMS Co., Ltd., in which the Japanese operator of the motor vessel the Spring Drake paid \$200,000 in restitution into the Fund for Failing to Maintain an Accurate Oil Record Book, in violation of 33 U.S.C. § 1908.

As part of its guilty plea, the company also agreed to abide by an environmental compliance program under which its crew members would be properly trained. According to a court filing, the investigation forced 22 crew members to stay in San Francisco as the company repaired the ship.

Montrose Heads for Inspection

The cargo ship **Montrose** began its trip to safe anchorage in the Chesapeake Bay. Divers will conduct an underwater inspection after its arrival 12 miles south of where it ran aground. The divers will look for any damage under the ship. The 712-foot Liberian flagged ship was carrying 74,215 metric tons of coal when it ran aground Feb. 28 near Sharps Island, Md. Multiple tug boats working together were unable to free the **Montrose** from being stuck and a Unified Command determined coal needed to be offloaded to re-float the ship. Crews working for the Unified Command met their goal of transferring approximately 7,100 metric tons of coal to a barge alongside at about 10 p.m. Tuesday. Their operations were suspended Monday evening due to inclement weather and resumed Tuesday afternoon. After they transferred the coal, crews on the ship began a process known as de-ballasting. De-ballasting is the removal of water that was used to keep the ship stable during the lightering process. The Unified Command consists of the Coast Guard, ECM Maritime Services, Resolve Marine Group, Maryland Natural Resources Police, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of the Environment, and Motia Navigation who is the operator of the Montrose. The cause of the incident is under investigation.



SHIPPING HITS BACK AT PRESS REPORT

THE IMO and the International Chamber of Shipping have both respond to an article in last Saturday's issue of the UK newspaper The Guardian which said "carbon dioxide emissions from shipping are double those of aviation and increasing at an alarming rate which will have a serious impact on global warming".

The IMO dismissed that any attempt to play the shipping industry against the aviation sector as "futile and meaningless".

An ICS spokesman said: "The article was unfortunate and unfair and misses the point that in CO₂/km terms shipping is by far the cleanest form of transport, two or three times cleaner than road or rail and perhaps 20 times cleaner than aviation."

He added: "The figures quoted are at variance with other estimates, such as that in the recent UK Stern report. The article also misses the point that, unlike air travel, shipping carries 90% of world trade by volume."

IMO comments that it is developing an emissions strategy through its Marine Environment Protection Committee and an action plan has been agreed.

It adds: "Indeed, since IMO adopted the 1997 Protocol to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), to add MARPOL Annex VI - Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships, the Organization (Member States and Secretariat alike) has been, and continues being, fully engaged in finding appropriate ways to prevent and mitigate all emissions from ships, including the effects of greenhouse gases (GHG) produced by marine engines, which are not regulated under MARPOL Annex VI."

FERRY SAFETY PROJECT SET TO START

FOUR potential demonstration projects have been defined under a joint initiative by trade association Interferry and the International Maritime Organization to cut the alarming death toll on domestic ferry operations in developing nations.

A working group including government and industry representatives from pilot country Bangladesh has proposed trial projects based on four key issues - training, weather forecasting, vessel design and overcrowding - after a meeting in capital city Dhaka.

Together with the IMO, where it has consultative status, Interferry has undertaken to provide technical resources and to seek financial aid for whatever trials the Bangladesh authorities choose to implement.

Hopes of an early decision have been encouraged by indications of financial and practical backing from the World Bank, specialist German banking group KfW, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and UK training specialist Videotel, whose president is former IMO secretary-general William O'Neil.

Three fishermen rescued after ship sinks

Three fishermen have been rescued after being stranded on a life-raft when their Nelson-based fishing boat the **Wallara K** sank about 400 kilometres off the Taranaki coast.

The trio were rescued by a passing container vessel, the **Alpana**, after activating a distress beacon shortly before 5am and abandoning ship.

Sister ship, **Al Tair**, is on its way and the crew will be transferred to the boat when it arrives.

Rescue Coordination spokesman Neville Blakemore says worsening weather conditions and winds of up to 25-knots were hampering the rescue, but the container ship did a fantastic job at rescuing them. He says there are some fishing buoys and crates floating in the water but there is no sign of the vessel.

The cause is unknown at this stage.

Boskalis: schip Fairway tot nader order buiten werking

Baggeraar Koninklijke Boskalis Westminster nv bevestigt dat het grootste baggerschip uit zijn vloot, de sleepopperzuiger **W.D. Fairway**, tot nader order buiten dienst is. 'Het schip kan niet varen,' aldus woordvoerder Roel Berends van Boskalis donderdag.



The W.D. FAIRWAY (File photo)

De woordvoerder kan nog niets zeggen over de mogelijke gederfde inkomsten doordat het schip buiten werking is.

'Het ongeluk is vanochtend om 07.00 uur lokale tijd hier gebeurd. Het is ook nog te vroeg om iets te zeggen over de schade,' aldus Berends in Papendrecht. Wel geeft de woordvoerder aan dat het schip 'herstelt zal moeten worden'.

Ook gaf de woordvoerder aan dat de Fairway, een zusterschip van de **Queen of the Netherlands**, in 2003 is verlengd en is daarmee het grootste schip geworden in de vloot van Boskalis. Ook voor de **Queen of the Netherlands** zijn al plannen voor verlenging, zo meldt de woordvoerder.

Berends gaf verder aan dat het schip voor schade verzekerd is en dat het bedrijf zo snel mogelijk meer duidelijkheid zal geven.

De **Fairway** is aan bakboordzijde aangevaren door een containerschip tijdens baggerwerkzaamheden in Tianjin, China. Boskalis kon wel al zeggen dat zich daarbij geen persoonlijke ongevallen hebben voorgedaan. Het schip is momenteel stabiel en de vaarbemannings is aan boord.

Australian navy rescues PNG sailors

An Australian navy ship has rescued seven sailors from Papua New Guinea whose fishing boat sank in the Torres Strait.

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The navy ship, "**Mermaid**", was sheltering from bad weather within PNG waters when it responded to calls for help from those on board the sinking boat.

The seven aboard, including six men and a woman suffering hypothermia, are all from the PNG island of Daru.

The group was given medical assistance and will return to Daru.

Smit achieves record result

Dutch Maritime service provider Smit has reported record results for 2006 with net profits of EUR75m (\$98.8m), nearly double those of a year ago.

The Rotterdam-based company reported strong performances across all its major divisions with the exception of its terminal operation. Full-year revenues jumped by 22.5% to EUR475m, while operational costs increased by over 16.5% to EUR372m.



SMIT Salvage diver **Roberto Robles** returns onboard the **IBIS** after completing his works down below at 38 mtr waterdepth, during the cargo & wreck removal of the **Twin Star** near Callao in Peru which **SMIT Salvage** hopes to complete during this month.

Photo : Piet Sinke ©

"It was a record year for Smit. In 2006, we nearly doubled our net profit," said Smit Group chief executive Ben Vree.

"We had the wind in our sails in nearly all our divisions, particularly during the second half of the year," he said.

Transport & heavy lift operations contributed EUR29m to group operating results, with harbour towage a close second with EUR24.2m.

Smit's salvage operation saw revenues increase to EUR18.7m from EUR8.3m in 2005, however revenue at its terminal operations fell 27% to EUR11.2m.

Couple still waiting for items lost from ship

Waiting for the recovery and return of possessions looted when a container ship ran aground on the Devon, UK, coast is beginning to feel like a "never-ending story", say a Swedish couple living in South Africa.

Items owned by Anita and Jan Bokdal, of Groenendal farm, near Wellington, were stolen from a wooden container broken open when the **MSC Napoli**, bound for South Africa, ran aground in January.

Some items, including an antique china set, have been returned to them. "We don't know of anything more that's on its way back to us," said Mrs Bokdal, speaking from the couple's farm on Monday. "We know the authorities in England are trying to collect our items and they plan to send them back to us once-off."

"This is just going to take a very long time and I don't think Jan and I will hear the end of it soon." Mrs Bokdal said British police officers were sending them photographs of items salvaged from the container ship in the hope they would recognise some as their own.

"We've identified only another of our paintings and some Christmas decorations, but the major things we really want back don't seem to have turned up. "At least we know the people in England are trying to track down our things and that means a lot to us."

Valuable antique tables, carpets, china and a number of paintings were missing. A painting that had belonged to Mr Bokdal's late mother, who lived on the west coast of Sweden, was found by a Norwich farm mechanic who had gone to the beach to try to salvage BMW parts that had washed up.

Mrs Bokdal said the couple were trying to put police in touch with the farm owner, David Hanington, so the painting could be sent to them with the other salvaged items. "Other than all this, we're very busy on the farm at the moment."

"We don't have all that time to focus on this and it's taking what seems for ever." Mrs Bokdal said she and her husband were expecting the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) to pay for the possessions they had lost. An MSC employee, who declined to be named, said the company was investigating the looting. "(Mrs Bokdal) has been in contact with us and we're trying to clarify if they are her items which have been stolen," the employee said.

"We're also trying to salvage items. "If it turns out they are (Mrs Bokdal's) things ... we'll take it up with the ... parties we need to contact and try to recover all we can, then take it from there."

Stakers Smit met tafel naar hoofdkantoor

De stakende medewerkers van het havensleepbedrijf Smit in Rotterdam houden vrijdag een manifestatie bij het hoofdkantoor. De actievoerders nemen een onderhandelingstafel mee en hopen de directie zover te krijgen daaraan plaats te nemen, meldt FNV Bondgenoten donderdag.

De manifestatie duurt van 12.00 uur tot 13.00 uur en vindt plaats aan de Waalhaven Oostzijde. SP-leider Jan Marijnissen en FNV-bestuurder Andries van den Berg zullen de stakers toespreken.

De 240 medewerkers van Smit verkeren in een cao-conflict met de directie van het bedrijf. Donderdag staakten de havenslepers voor de derde dag op rij. Vorige week woensdag en de vrijdag daarvoor legden ze ook al het werk neer. De slepers eisen een loonsverhoging en een eenmalige uitkering als tegemoetkoming in de reis- en verzekeringskosten.

Smit regelt ruim twee derde van de sleepwerkzaamheden in de Rotterdamse haven.

CASUALTY REPORTING

Container Ship Capsizes in Belgian Port

A large container ship capsized during loading Thursday in Belgian port city Antwerp, officials said. No injuries were



reported. The cause of the capsizing of the **Republica di Genova**, a roll on/roll off vessel of the London-based Grimaldi Lines, was not immediately clear, authorities said. Grimaldi Group vessels carry containers and Fiat cars from Italy to Antwerp. Port of Antwerp Captain Jan Persi said the 215-meter-long vessel slowly rolled onto its starboard side in a dead end dock early in the morning. He said the ship began taking on water and that the captain ordered the crew to evacuate. The white-and-yellow vessel lay resting on its side, part of its hull above the waterline in the dock.

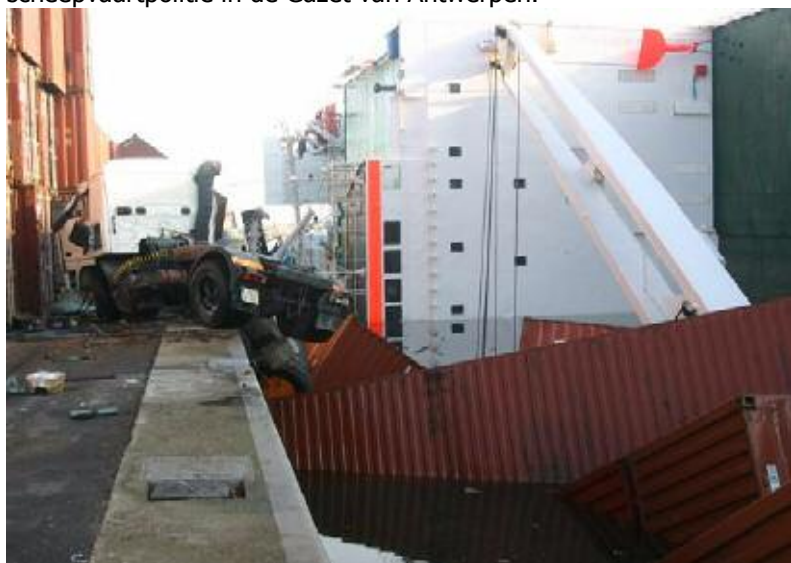
Shipping in and out of the

Verrebroekdock was halted, but not on the Scheldt River that links Antwerp to the North Sea

Containerschip gekapseisd in Antwerpse haven

De 216 meter lange **Republica di Genova** van de rederij Grimaldi Freightier Cruises is donderdagochtend rond 06.30 uur door nog onbekende oorzaak omgeslagen in het Antwerpse Verrebroekdok

Niemand raakte gewond, alle 34 bemanningsleden en 9 passagiers konden het schip verlaten nog voordat het slagzij begon te maken, er kwam er niet één in het water terecht. 'Dat hebben ze te danken aan de goede reflex van de kapitein die iedereen in veiligheid heeft gebracht toen het schip begon te bewegen', zegt commissaris Veyt van de scheepvaartpolitie in de Gazet van Antwerpen.



De **Republica di Genova** begon vermoedelijk slagzij te maken als gevolg van een technisch defect. Dat zegt het parket van Dendermonde. 'Kwaad opzet wordt uitgesloten', aldus het parket. Grimaldi, de rederij die eigenaar is van het gekapseide schip, zegt geen uitsluitel te hebben over de oorzaak en is een intern onderzoek gestart.

Het schip was in het Verrebroekdok aan kaai 1339 net geladen met een kleine 300 containers en auto's en zou koers zetten richting Luanda, de hoofdstad van Angola, in het zuiden van Afrika. Wat er daarna precies fout ging, is niet bekend. Veel containers belandden in het water tussen het omgeslagen schip en de kade. Het

3/8/2007

schip blokkeert elke doorgang. Het zou gisteravond ook al stabiliteitsproblemen hebben gehad.



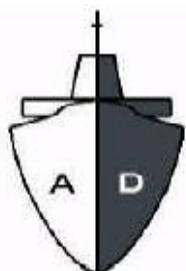
Photo : Wesley Bels ©

De Grimaldi Group uit Napels vaart al zes jaar op Antwerpen. De rederij vervoert jaarlijks meer dan 100.000 auto's van Fiat. Die zijn bedoeld voor de Benelux.

NAVY NEWS

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Navy to Commission Amphibious Transport Dock Ship New Orleans

The Navy will commission the **USS New Orleans**, the newest amphibious transport dock ship, at a ceremony in New Orleans on March 10. Sen. David Vitter of Louisiana will deliver the ceremony's principal address. The ship's sponsor is Carolyn Shelton, wife of Gen. Henry H. Shelton, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. She will give the first order to "man our ship and bring her to life!"

Iran Builds Wale Class Submarine

Iranian researchers designed and manufactured a wale-class submarine. Project spokesman Majid Heidari Mourche Khorti told FNA that the vessel, which has passed 700 hours of operational tests and has been used in the recent 'Great Prophet' war games, has already establish its capabilities in comparison with foreign rivals.

The submarine is an advanced military vessel with various operational performances proper for the environmental conditions of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, he added.

The design and production projects have been carried out by Iranian scientists and researchers of Malik-e Ashtar Industrial University and Subsurface Research Center within a period of 10 years and in compliance with the needs of the Iranian army, the spokesman said. Resources of over 49 academic, research and industrial centers as well as 70 scientific articles have been used during the design and production process, he further pointed out.

Stating that the home-made wale-class submarine is now ready to join the army fleet, he said that it is a vessel appropriate for the shallow and salty waters of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

French Navy Ship to Berth in Lagos

As part of its regular mission along the West Coast, a French Navy ship, **Commandant L'Herminier**, will berth in Lagos next Tuesday.

A statement signed by Emmanuel Gagniarre from the Embassy of France in Abuja stated that the purpose of the visit is to reinforce bilateral ties between France and Nigeria.

"**Commandant L'Herminier's** visit bears witness to a renewed willingness to foster cooperation between the two navies and to resume regular ports of call by ships of the two countries. **Commandant L'Herminier's** call is the first one by a French Navy ship since September 2005," the statement said.

The French ship will be coming under command of Commander Fabrice Berthelot, with a 93 member crew.

The French Embassy said that series of official meetings and visits are scheduled during the 4-day stay of in Lagos, under the joint aegis of the Nigerian Navy and the office of the French Embassy's Defence Attache, and with the support of the French Consulate General in Lagos.

According to the statement, the French ship, **Commandant L'Herminier** the 11th frigate among seventeen sister ships built by the shipyard of Lorient in Brittany, Western France, was laid down in 1979 and launched on January 19 1986. She has a 1330 tons displacement and a top speed of 24 knots. She specialises in coastal anti-submarine warfare.

Commander Berthelot has been in charge of **Commandant L'Herminier** since June 2006. He is bearer of the National Defence Medal (Gold grade) and of a commemorative medal (Afghanistan) for his participation in the Enduring Freedom operation.

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The **P-57** seen at De Haas Shipyard in Maassluis – Photo : Jan Oosterboer ©

Keppel FELS delivers Vietnam rig ahead of schedule

Singapore's Keppel FELS Limited (Keppel FELS), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Keppel Offshore & Marine Limited (Keppel O&M), has delivered **PV DRILLING I**, a KFELS B class jackup rig, to PetroVietnam Drilling and Well Services Joint Stock Company.

The unit, which was contracted for on February 2005 was delivered to its owner on March 7, 2007--within budget and two months ahead of the contractual delivery schedule.

Keppel FELS' ability to deliver ahead of schedule has enabled **PV DRILLING I** to start work earlier for Hoan Vu Joint Operating Company.

At the naming ceremony at Keppel FELS in Singapore today, Mr Choo Chiau Beng, Chairman and CEO of Keppel O&M, said, "To deliver a rig two months early during this very busy period in the market is something special. It demonstrates the strong core values and close collaboration of both our companies. We have developed a strong working relationship characterised by teamwork, flexibility and mutual understanding."

Delivery was accomplished without any lost time incident in over 2.5 million man-hours of work.

Built to Keppel's proprietary design, the KFELS B Class rig is PV Drilling's first newbuild jackup.

PV DRILLING I is customized to PV Drilling's specifications for operations in water depths of up to 300 feet and drilling depths of down to 20,000 feet.

The rig can accommodate up to 110 men and is readily upgradeable for higher drilling capabilities in water depths of up to 350 feet. It will be deployed offshore Vietnam.



The **SMIT ZWEDEN** seen at the De Haas shipyard in Maassluis
Photo : Jan Steehouwer ©

Row over shipbuilder jobs crisis

Ministers have come under pressure over the crisis at Ferguson shipyard, where up to 99 jobs could be lost. The SNP, the Tories and the STUC said ministers must take responsibility for any job losses in Port Glasgow.

The Scottish Executive and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) have denied a deal was done to bring work on a fisheries protection vessel to the yard. Labour MSP Trish Godman is due to hold talks with the first minister on the future of the yard.

Unions have claimed that up to 99 of 126 workers could be made redundant. Ferguson is the last private shipbuilder on the Clyde. The yard had lost out on several executive orders under EU tendering rules but had hoped to win a £14m order for a new fisheries protection vessel.

I will be reminding Jack McConnell that we cannot be competitive if we lose all the basic skills. However, that tender has been delayed. Trish Godman, MSP for the area, has been seeking confirmation of reports that the MoD had offered Scottish ministers a solution.

The Royal Navy reportedly planned to extend its fisheries protection operation, adding Scottish waters to England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the commissioning of a new vessel as a warship.

Ms Godman told the BBC's Good Morning Scotland programme: "This is nearly 100 men and their families in a small town and Fergusons has been an integral part of that town.

"It's just appalling news and I hope something can be done."

She said there were reports that there had been an approach by the MoD to change the Scottish Fisheries vessel to a grey ship which means it would be lightly armoured. She said this would not change European rules but would instead change the definition of the ship.

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"At the moment they have not put this ship out to tender, so prior to it going out to tender they could change it to a grey ship," she said. "The Scottish Executive have the power to do that."

"I will be reminding Jack McConnell that we cannot be competitive if we lose all the basic skills." SNP deputy leader Nicola Sturgeon also called for the reclassification. "Before the contract for a new fisheries protection vessel is put out to contract it should be reclassified as a 'grey ship' in order that the work can simply be given to a Scottish yard."

"It's time for action now to save jobs and protect our shipyards." An executive spokesman said there had been no offer from the MoD.

An MoD spokesperson said: "The MoD has no plans either to extend the Royal Navy's fishery protection patrols into Scottish waters, or to procure any ships for this purpose."

Shipyard strike

All unions at Mississippi's Northrop Grumman shipyard are on strike after rejecting a proposed new contract.

The yard is Mississippi's largest private employer. Other facilities of the shipbuilding group have accepted a new contract and are at work, according to published statements by Northrop Grumman managers.

Local media report that the labour organisations that form the Pascagoula Metal Trades Council plus the independent International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers walked out at Pascagoula this morning. Office workers are expected to honour their picket lines as well.

All unions had already rejected a proposal presented last week by Northrop Grumman management to replace a collective bargaining agreement that has now expired.

Improved terms offered this week were also rejected. Workers say the proposals do not keep up with costs or the post-Katrina labour market on the Gulf coast. They also say that increased contributions for health coverage wipe out small increases in hourly wages.

The Metal Trades Council's members are said to have voted to strike on Wednesday evening by an overwhelming margin, 2,634 voting to walk out and 298 voting against the strike.

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Helderberg to berth tomorrow

According to the latest Safmarine advisory, the **SA Helderberg** remains at anchor off the coast of Singapore, in Malaysian waters, with the necessary repairs to the vessel underway.

"Progress is being made on repairs, and the vessel continues to generate its own power. All reefer containers remain operative," a spokesman said.

The vessel will enter the port of Tanjung Pelepas, instead of Singapore, once permission is granted by the authorities for her to proceed alongside.

The salvage company is still working to complete temporary repairs which will facilitate a safe entry of the port and now expect the vessel to berth alongside at the port of Tanjung Pelepas, Malaysia on March 7 after which the discharge of containers/cargo onboard will be effected.

"We are investigating potential oncarriage solutions, and will advise customers of the onward schedule for eastbound cargo as soon as this is available," the spokesman said.



The **STENA BRITANNICA** seen in Bremerhaven nearing completion, whilst the new mid-section for the **STENA HOLLANDICA** is ready to be installed.

Photo : Rob de Visser ©

Diana Shipping purchases UK-flagged CAPE PELICAN

Diana Shipping Inc. a global shipping transportation company specializing in dry bulk cargoes, today announced that it has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with an unaffiliated third party for the purchase of a Capesize dry bulk carrier of 180,235 dwt, built in 2005 by Imabari Shipbuilding Co., Ltd., for the price of \$110 million. The vessel, to be renamed Aliko, is expected to be delivered to the Company by the sellers on or about April 30, 2007.

The Company also announced that it has entered into a time charter contract with Cargill International S.A. for the Aliko for a minimum 46 to maximum 49month period at an average rate of \$48,500 per day with one year extension at the charterer's option at the same rate. During the first two years of the charter the gross daily charter hire rate will be \$52,000 and during the third and fourth years of the charter \$45,000. The charterer has the option to employ the

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vessel for a further 11-13 month period at a daily charter rate of \$48,500. The time charter contract is expected to commence immediately after the delivery of the vessel to the Company.

During the initial two years, this employment is expected to generate gross revenues of approximately \$37 million and is expected to generate gross revenues of \$32 million during the third and fourth years, amounting to a total of \$69 million. If the charterer exercises its option for the fifth year, the charter is expected to generate aggregate gross revenues of approximately \$86 million over the entire period.

Diana Shipping Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Simeon Palios, commented: "We are committed to growing the Company with accretive acquisitions while at the same time improving the visibility of our earnings. With this acquisition, the Company increases its already fixed gross revenues for 2008 to approximately \$80 million. The weighted average of our fleet, with the addition of Aliko and completion of the previously announced sale of Pantelis SP (not including the two newbuildings on order for delivery in 2010) will decrease to 3.1 years and the total cargo carrying capacity will increase to approximately 1.5 million dwt."

The vessel is the UK-flagged **CAPE PELICAN**, operated by Zodiac Maritime, London.



Carnival launches new ship

It's a big day for fans of Carnival, which is launching its first new ship in nearly two years.



The 2,974-passenger **Carnival Freedom**, christened Sunday in Venice, Italy, will set sail today on a 9-day maiden voyage around the Mediterranean. Starting next week, it'll switch to 12-day Mediterranean sailings out of Rome, which will continue through the fall.

The debut in Europe is notable for the mass-market line, which more than any other is associated with fun-in-the-sun Caribbean cruises. Freedom isn't the first Carnival ship to sail in Europe -- the **Carnival Liberty** spent the last two summers there. But Carnival has planned a much more extensive European season for Freedom than it did for Liberty -- roughly twice as many

sailings, including the line's first visits to Greece and Turkey.

Freedom is the first of seven major ship launches scheduled this year (check out our recent story for details on all seven), and all but two are debuting in Europe -- a sign of where the industry sees its future growth. Indeed, demand for cruises in Europe this summer is running strong even as demand for trips in the ship-glutted Caribbean suffers. Expect more ships to head to Europe next year.

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What's **Freedom** like? The ship is the fifth in Carnival's popular series of "**Conquest Class**" vessels that began launching in 2002 and is, as one might expect, very similar to the others. At 110,000 tons, it's a big ship but not nearly as big as rival Royal Caribbean's new generation of 160,000-ton vessels that began launching last year (the first of which was, coincidentally or not, also named **Freedom**). Expect an expansive pool deck up top and lots of bustling nightspots down below.

One notable addition to **Carnival's Freedom** is an "outdoor movie theater" -- a 270-square-foot LED screen installed on the pool deck -- where passengers will be able to watch movies and concerts at night. The ship also is wired bow-to-stern for wireless Internet and cellphone service (expect a hefty roaming charge, though, if you use your cellphone out on the open ocean).



With the **Adventure of the Seas** at the Megapier and the **Sun Princess, Volendam** of HAL and the **Freewinds** at the quay in Otrobanda, it was Wednesday last, March 7, the busiest day of the year in Willemstad Curacao. All together some 6000 tourists visited the beautiful Island of Curacao

Photo : Kirsten Gorter ©

Newcastle coal vessel queue lengthens to record 69 ships

The queue of ships waiting to load coal at Newcastle, Australia, the world's biggest coal-export harbour, increased to a record 69, lengthening delays and raising costs for producers and buyers of the fuel.

The number of ships queuing outside the port in New South Wales state as of early Monday was up from 67 a week earlier, according to data on Newcastle Port Corp's website.

Ships waited an average of more than 21 days to load coal last week, compared with 0.14 days for general cargo ships, it said. Australian shipments of thermal coal have risen after China cut exports to meet increasing domestic demand.

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Almost 90 per cent of coal shipped through Newcastle last year was thermal coal produced in the Hunter Valley by mining companies such as Rio Tinto Group, BHP Billiton Ltd and Xstrata plc. The coal ship queue compares with an average of 23 in 2006. Newcastle Port shipped 1.57 million metric tons of coal in the week ended 7 am on Monday, taking the volume shipped in March so far to 1.24 million tons. Newcastle Port is budgeting shipments of 6.7 million tons for the whole of March.

Hunter Valley coal miners last month voted to re-introduce an export quota system at Newcastle to help reduce the ship queue. Port Waratah Coal Services Ltd, which operates the two coal terminals at Newcastle, said on Feb 21 that it would apply to the national competition regulator to reinstate the system through Dec 31.

The average waiting time at the port rose by 2.32 days from a week earlier to 21.10 days, amid the growing queues.

Coal stocks on hand at the Carrington and Kooragang berths rose by 55,000 tonnes to 1.071 million tonnes. Twenty ships carrying coal left Newcastle in the week ended March 3, two more than in the previous week, Newcastle Port said yesterday in an e-mailed report. Thirteen of the vessels were headed for Japan, four for Taiwan, two for South Korea and one for the Netherlands.

Newcastle last year failed to increase shipments as planned due to lower volumes of the fuel received from miners and port maintenance work. Newcastle accounts for about a third of total coal export capacity in Australia, the world's biggest coal exporter. GlobalCOAL's weekly index of export prices for power-station coal at Newcastle last week fell for a second week last week to US\$52.04 a metric ton, remaining above US\$50 for an 11th week.

Latest Island Offshore newbuild goes to Eni

Island Offshore's latest newbuild anchor handler, which was due to arrive in late February but slipped back to "early March" will start work with ENI Norway. Seabrokers reports that the newbuild UT 787 CD **Island Vanguard** has a 180 day plus 90 day option term charter with ENI Norway, beginning straight after her arrival.

The charter's workscope involves assisting with subsea construction and anchor handling support duties. It is understood that the contract is divided into three separate programmes and in between these programmes the vessel may be available for work on the spot market. The Island Offshore newbuild vessel comes equipped with DP II, moonpool, ROV hangar and accommodation for 54.

Swire swagger

A gain from the disposal of port interests in 2005 which was not replicated last year sent operating profit from marine activities diving in 2006 at Hong Kong-listed shipowner and operator Swire Pacific.

Taking out the non-recurring item, however, the segment of the predominantly property and aviation owner performed well buoyed by increased freight rates and a larger fleet.

Operating profit for the marine division dipped from HKD 3.04bn (\$389m) a year ago to HKD 834m as 2005 benefited from the hiving off of Hong Kong port interests. Turnover in the segment was up last year by 34% from HKD 1.49bn to HKD 2bn. The shipowning and operating division was responsible for all of this turnover and experienced a 50% rise in operating profit from HKD 467m to HKD 701m. The increased rates and improved fleet utilisation heralded "another year of record profit for Swire Pacific Offshore". The company commenced activities off Sakhalin Island with two new ice-class vessels on 15 year charters while nine vessels were bought during the year at a cost of HKD 1.3bn.

Although Swire did hive off some marine interests in 2006, selling its minority interest in Shekou Container Terminals at a profit of HKD 1bn, this sum will only be realised in 2007.

Swire is optimistic about the prospects for the offshore segment going forward with a strong orderbook and demand set to continue from the oil and gas sector. It also has eight newbuildings to be delivered over the next 18 months.

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Overall the group performed well with earnings from aviation interests growing and high demand for property rental in Hong Kong pushing the segment up 34%.

Total turnover for 2006 stood at HKD 19.11bn, a 9% hike on the HKD 18.94bn seen the previous year. Net profit was HKD 22.77bn as opposed to HKD 19.63bn, the inflated figures resulting from changes in the fair value of investment properties.

MOVEMENTS

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The **SUN PRINCESS** seen entering Willemstad port, as can be seen the passenger liner nearly hit the famous "Pontjesbrug"

Photo : Kees Bustraan ©

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The **FLINTERBELT** seen loading in Ayr Harbour

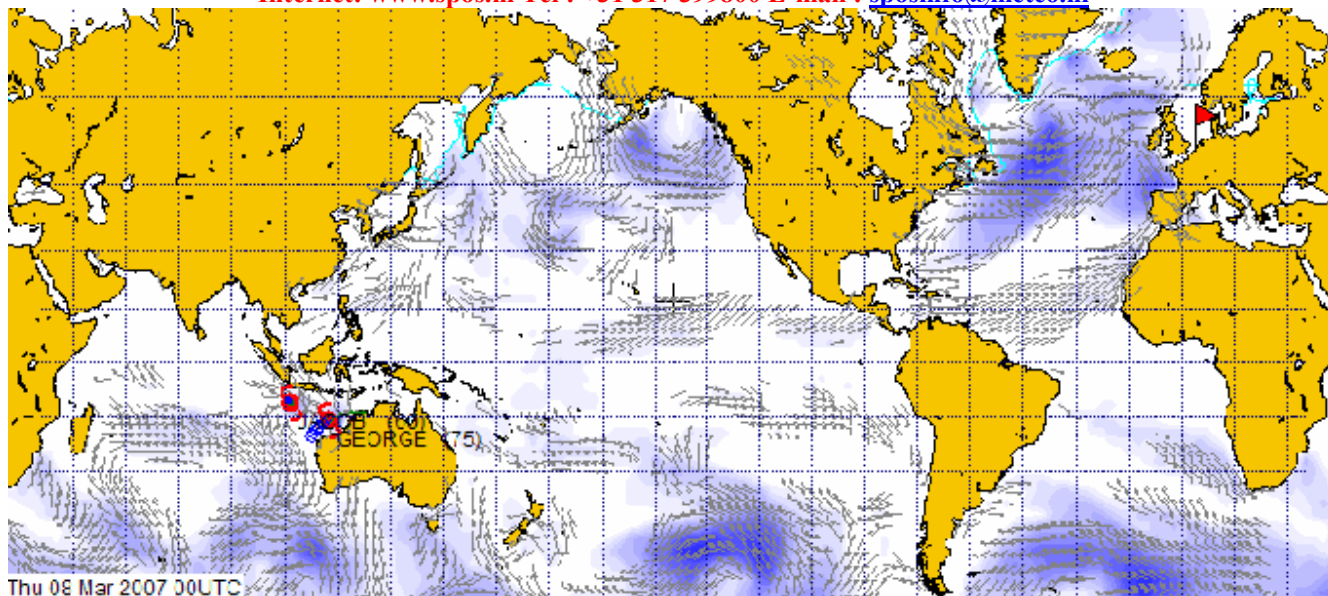
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MARINE WEATHER

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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 German **FFGH 221 HESSEN** arrived in the port of Zeebrugge
Photo : Henk Claeys ©

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