

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2009 – 079



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The SANKO CLOVER seen fitting out at the Niigata yard in Japan
Photo : Capt Bas van Hoorn ©

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"Internet use on board. Private? Or business use only? Request for Feedback."

We (**Rudy Puister** and **Jan van Asperen**) are polling for info regarding broadband internet access on board of ships and off shore in general.

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Please give us your info/experience and tell us how it is done in these days. Send an e-mail to:

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Prinses Margriet brengt Sirius binnen.

Vrijdag 20 maart om 15.43 uur werd de bemanning van de reddingboot **Prinses Margriet** van KNRM station Stellendam buiten, door het Kustwacht Centrum gealarmeerd voor een sportvisboot met motorstoring, 2 mijl noord van de SG 2 boei op de Noordzee. Er werd uitgevaren, en na ongeveer 20 minuten was de reddingboot ter plaatse. Het bleek te gaan om het charterschip de **Sirius** van 31 meter lengte en met 28 personen aan boord. Er werd een sleepverbinding gemaakt en het schip werd naar de thuishaven, Stellendam gesleept.



Van Oord's **HAM 316** seen operating in Rotterdam-Europoort
Photo : Harry van den Berg ©

More patrol ships to curb illegal fishing

China will send six more patrol vessels into the South China Sea during the next three to five years to curb illegal fishing in the region, an official told the International Herald Leader newspaper of the Xinhua News Agency on Friday.

"A patrol vessel with a water displacement of 2,500 tons is expected to be sent next year into the South China Sea, with five more 3,000-ton vessels expected to go in the next three to five years," the agriculture ministry official who is in charge of the administration of fishery in the South China Sea said.



Yuzheng 311, China's largest fishery administration vessel, is pictured as it arrives in the Xisha Islands in the South China Sea, March 17, 2009.

The patrol vessels will carry helicopters for efficient sea supervision, the report said. This is "in accordance with the need to curb growing illegal fishing activity and to protect China's rights and interests", the official said.

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He, however, denied that the plan was a response to the country's recent disputes with its neighbors over sovereignty of the Nansha Islands in the South China Sea.

Last Tuesday, China's largest fishery patrol vessel, China Yuzheng 311, which was converted from a naval warship, was sent to the waters around the Nansha, Xisha and Zhongsha islands.

The Philippines' President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed a baseline bill into law on March 10, which claimed the Huangyan Island and the Nansha Islands as Filipino territory, despite strong protests from China.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has repeatedly reaffirmed China's sovereignty over those islands during the previous fortnight. Amid mounting tensions, Liu Jianchao, the Chinese ambassador to the Philippines, has called for both sides to calm down and resolve the issue diplomatically.

"A spat over the issue will lead to no favorable outcome for anyone," Liu said on Thursday. On the Filipino side, government press secretary Cerge Remonde said the department of foreign affairs in Manila was "already using normal diplomatic channels to solve this diplomatically".

"While it is true that this is a cause for concern, let us not overreact," the Manila Times quoted him as saying, on Thursday. Gilberto Teodoro, the defense secretary of the Philippines, also said he did not really think China's deployment of the **Yuzheng 311** was "a big threat".

"There is yet no cause for alarm as sending patrol boats by different claimant nations into the areas that they claim is tolerated," the Philippines' Navy spokesman Colonel Edgardo Arevalo was quoted as saying by news agency AFP.

Chinese analysts have said that the Philippines should "face reality" and "return to talks" for a win-win solution to the dispute. Professor Li Jie, a senior naval researcher at the Chinese Navy's Military Academy, said: "China has shown restraint by sending patrol vessels to carry out routine fishery supervision.

"It has never occupied any islands in the sovereignty of its neighboring countries in the South China Sea by force."

Song Xiaojun, a Beijing-based military expert, also said that China was trying to avoid a conflict with the Philippines by sending only fishery patrol vessels to the troubled waters. The move to send fishery patrol vessels means Beijing is acting according to diplomatic principles, Song said, noting that it was only to protect China's rights in the sea.

Meanwhile, the Shanghai-based Oriental Morning Post said the South China Sea dispute has posed little threat to trade cooperation between the two Asian nations.

Barge tow takes out Biloxi bridge span

The Coast Guard continues to respond to the collapse of the Popp's Ferry Bridge in Back Bay in Biloxi, Miss., after the towing vessel **Cheryl Stegbauer**, owned by Southern Towing Company and pushing eight barges, struck the bridge earlier this morning.

No injuries were reported in the incident, but bridge tender Margaret Johnson had to be rescued by emergency workers, and her vehicle, which was parked next to the bridge tender's house, fell into the water.

The tow was two-barges-wide-by-four-barges-long and was carrying loaded rock. The first two barges were damaged. One barge has sunk and the other is listing due to being covered by a portion of the collapsed bridge. The tanks on the listing barge have been inspected for leaks and it is not taking on water.

Currently there is a 500-yard safety zone on both sides of the bridge. The Coast Guard says that while the investigation is still ongoing, initial reports show that the master of the towing vessel was properly licensed.

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Coast Guard Sector Mobile received a call from the Department of Marine Resources for the state of Mississippi at approximately 7:40 a.m., reporting that the bridge had collapsed onto the barges of the towing vessel.



Biloxi Mayor A.J. Holloway has been meeting with structural engineers and representatives of the Mississippi Department of Transportation to determine what repairs can be made to the Popp's Ferry bridge and how long those repairs might take. Until further notice, the city and MDOT are redirecting traffic to Interstate 110 or Highway 605. The marine channel at the Popp's Ferry bridge remains closed to marine traffic.

"We're very fortunate that there was no loss of life or injuries," said Mayor Holloway, who surveyed the scene and spoke to Margaret Johnson immediately after

emergency workers used ladders to lower her from the isolated bridgetender's house.

"Our bridgetender did everything she was supposed to do," Holloway said. "She was aware of the approaching tug, she lowered the crossing bars and raised the draw spans, but the barges began veering to the south and out of the channel, striking the bridge south of its bumper system."

Holloway, who has been pushing for more than a decade for a new and wider bridge at Popp's Ferry, said he hoped the accident could help speed up that project. The city, working with MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration, was able to have contractors replace the Katrina-damaged bridge in four months. That project cost about \$8.3 million, which included a million-dollar incentive bonus for the contractor.

"We've said all along that this was not an 'if' situation, but a 'when' situation," Mayor Holloway said. "Now, our goal is to see how quickly this bridge can be repaired, find the funding, and push even harder to get a new-and-safer bridge in place." **Source : MarineLog**



Court to discuss case of collision of Ukrainian, Chinese ships today

A court will today (Monday, March 23, 2009) consider the case of the collision between the Ukrainian **Neftegaz-67** tugboat with the Chinese **Yao Hai** bulk cargo ship near Hong Kong on March 22, 2008, according to the press service of the Ukrainian Transport and Communications Ministry.

Hearings on this case were postponed twice last year.

As reported, the **Neftegaz-67** and the **Yao Hai** collided in the South-China Sea near Hong Kong on March 22, 2008. The Ukrainian vessel sank within minutes. Of the 25 people on board the ship, seven of them, including six Ukrainians and one Chinese citizen, were rescued. The bodies of the 15 Ukrainian sailors who were drowned were found late in April. The captains of the ships are accused of violating navigation rules.



SAL's **PAULA** seen above departing from Antwerp bound for Bremen
Photo : Marcel & Paul van Luik - www.shipsoffterneuzen.nl ©

Cruise industry affirms safety



The brandnew **AIDALuna** seen above arriving in Amsterdam for the first time
Photo : Jan Ramaker ©

The cruise industry is banking on low prices to keep passengers booking rooms on cruise ships. According to Cruise News, a recent spate of negative events have tainted the cruise industry's image. For example, Fred Olsen's '**Balmoral**' was allegedly surrounded by pirates, and there was also a "mutiny" on '**Costa Europa**' when passengers were annoyed at having missed four out of seven ports because of engine difficulties.

Oceania Cruises Sales and Marketing Director Bernie Carter wanted to reassure passengers that such adverse incidents were rare.

"Events like these cause a bit of adverse publicity but there are a multitude of cruise choices out there and clients should not be put off by headlines," he was quoted as saying by Cruise News.

"Good value prices mean customers will still travel." Cruise Village Managing Director Phil Nutall added that he had never received calls from worried clients. "But if we did, we would assure them that...passenger safety is paramount for cruiseliners," he said. **Source : Baird**

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Spaanse overheid vrijgesproken in ramp Prestige

Ruim zes jaar na de milieuramp voor de noordwestelijke kust van Spanje, veroorzaakt door de olietanker '**Prestige**', heeft de Spaanse justitie de overheid vrijgesproken van alle medeschuld. Onderzoeksrechter Carmen Veiras zette het onderzoek naar het ministerie van Verkeer in Madrid stop. Greenpeace noemt de rechterlijke beslissing 'ontoelaatbaar'.

Volgens Veiras was de beslissing van de scheepvaartautoriteiten om de lekgeslagen tanker naar open zee te laten slepen 'moedig en verstandig'. De met 77.000 ton zware olie geladen '**Prestige**' sloeg op 13 november 2002 voor de kust van Galicië lek en raakte in zeenood. De beslissing van de toenmalige conservatieve regering-Aznar om het schip van de kust weg te laten slepen, stootte destijds op zware kritiek. Het schip brak zes dagen later in twee en zonk. Duizenden kilometers kust in Spanje, Portugal en Frankrijk werden door de oliesmurfte vervuild.

Rechter Veiras besloot daarentegen wel het onderzoek tegen drie bemanningsleden van de tanker voort te zetten. Het gaat om de kapitein en de eerste machinist, beiden Grieken, en de eerste officier, een Filipijn.

Voor de rechtbank in New York loopt ook een zaak in verband met de Prestige-ramp. Daar eist de Spaanse staat een schadevergoeding van één miljard dollar (735 miljoen euro) van een Amerikaans bedrijf dat de tanker zeewaardig had verklaard. Greenpeace vindt het rechterlijke besluit 'ontoelaatbaar'. De milieuorganisatie oordeelt dat de Spaanse staat de ramp heeft veroorzaakt en dat de beslissing om het wrak naar open zee te slepen 'volkomen fout' was. **Bron : De Standaard**

SS Rotterdam in juli open voor publiek



Ergens deze zomer, het streven is juli, kan het stoomschip **Rotterdam** aan het 3de Katendrechtse Hoofd open voor het publiek.

Foto : Wil Kik ©

Een exacte datum is nog niet vastgesteld. Die hoopt rederij **De Rotterdam** op 30 maart bekend te maken als alle plannings van de pachters van hotel, restaurants en theater op het schip op elkaar

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zijn afgestemd

Dan moet ook de countdown, het aftellen tot de dag van opening, gaan lopen. Vanaf 30 maart tot eind april is de bouwtechnische oplevering van het schip door de rederij aan de exploitatiemaatschappij. Dat gebeurt dek na dek. Na de goedkeuring door de brandweer van de brandwerende voorzieningen, onder meer een sprinklerinstallatie, kunnen vervolgens de stoffeerdere en meubelinrichters aan de slag. Zij brengen het schip terug in zijn originele staat.



The **CLUBMED 2** seen outward bound at the Orinoco River bound for Trinidad

Photo : Crew Volvox Hollandia ©

NAVY NEWS

MARAD Awards Contract to Earl Industries

The Maritime Administration has awarded a contract to Earl Industries, LLC., of Portsmouth, Va. to provide layberth services for three of the agency's Ready Reserve Force vessels—**Cape Ray**, **Cape Race**, and **Cape Rise**. Cost of the initial contract award is \$2,095, 500 with a total value of \$7,415, 100 including options for renewal. The vessels are currently docked at the Earl Industries facility.

These roll on/roll off vessels were purchased in 1993 by the Maritime Administration to meet a mobility requirements study. The three ships were re-flagged in the United States during 1993- 1994.

The vessels all operate in the same manner with their capacity to load both wheeled and tracked vehicles via the stern ramp and side port. The most notable feature of each vessel is the total deck capacity consisting of 176,278 square feet with 139,467 militarily useful. **Source : MarineLink**



Above seen at Falmouth March 19th The Brazilian Landing Ship **Almirante Saboia** (ex RFA Sir Bedivere) which will be commissioned into the Brazilian Navy in April. She has just completed a multi million pound refit at A&P Falmouth

Photo : Ian Denton ©

U.S. Navy vessels in Bahrain for evaluation after collision



A U.S. Navy submarine and a Navy amphibious ship that collided Friday in the Strait of Hormuz south of Iran have arrived in Bahrain to be assessed for damage, the Navy said.

The submarine **USS Hartford** and amphibious ship **USS New Orleans** arrived Saturday in Mina Salman pier to "to further assess and evaluate the damage that resulted from their collision at sea," the service said in a written statement.

Fifteen sailors were slightly hurt aboard the **Hartford** in the collision, which occurred early Friday morning.

On Friday, Navy officials in Washington told CNN that there was significant damage to the sail, or tower-like structure on the topside of the submarine. On Saturday, the Navy said there was no damage to the submarine's propulsion unit.

No injuries were reported aboard the **New Orleans**. The ship's fuel tank ruptured, spilling 25,000 gallons of marine diesel fuel in the

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Strait of Hormuz, the U.S. Navy said in the Saturday statement.

"Aerial searches of the area where the fuel spill occurred were conducted yesterday, and revealed no indication of any remaining fuel on the ocean's surface," the Navy said. "The quick dissipation of the fuel is likely due to the type of fuel, and various environmental factors to include air and water temperatures, winds and seas."

When the collision occurred, both vessels were headed to ports in the Persian Gulf to stock up on provisions and allow for some recreation, Navy spokesman Lt. Nate Christensen said Friday.

Christensen said there were about 200 sailors in the sub and 1,000 sailors and Marines aboard the ship.

The Strait of Hormuz is located between the United Arab Emirates and Iran, linking the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf. It is heavily used by oil tankers. Both vessels are on regularly scheduled deployments to the U.S. Navy Central Command area of responsibility, and conduct Maritime **Source : CNN**



NAVSEA studying cut in LCS speed requirement?

Reuters reported Friday that the Navy is conducting a study, led by Naval Sea Systems Command, to see whether it can cut the cost of the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) by reducing the speed requirements.

If the Navy is indeed conducting such a study, it could just be that someone read a piece in the Washington Times in February by Admiral James A. Lyons, Jr. USN (Ret) in which he noted that:

"The overall costs of the LCS are largely driven by the speed requirement of 50 knots. It can be safely assumed that between 30 percent and 40 percent of the current hull, mechanical and electrical (HM&E) costs are directly attributed to the speed requirement. It is not transparently clear what a 50 knot capability (as opposed to 30 knots) confers in the threat today of Mach 1-plus air and surface launched guided-stealthy missiles plus 70-plus-knot torpedoes."

Source : MarineLog

SHIPYARD NEWS



At the Damen Galati shipyard the Damen ASD 2810 tug (as the last one in a series of ten) the **SMIT EBRO** was lifted out of the building hall by crane and was set into the water after a small christening ceremony, by Mrs. Oana Carmen Popa wife of Damens Ships Coordinator Tug & Workboat Mr. Stefan Popa. The next months the tug will be fitted out on the same yard. The tug will be built under Bureau Veritas Class and Dutch Shipping Inspection. Mrs Oana Carmen Popa received flowers and the christening axe from the her husband Stefan Popa. The "**Smit Ebro**" is the 23rd ASD 2810 designed vessel for Smit and third with the name **Ebro** under the Smit flag

Photo's / Source : Hans van der Ster ©

Silversea seeks price cut on cruise option at Fincantieri

Monaco-based luxury liner company Silversea is still keen on exercising its option for a second 36,000GT vessel, however it is seeking a substantial price cut from Italian builder Fincantieri.

Chief Executive Amerigo Perasso told Asiasis that the company was still interested in building a new cruise ship after the initial order for one vessel with an option for a second was placed two years ago.

The first ship, '**Silver Spirit**' will be delivered in December this year.

"I don't anticipate us taking delivery of a second ship until a couple of years after the delivery of the '**Silver Spirit**'," Mr Perasso was quoted as saying by Asiasis. "We have to look beyond the second half of this year and the first half of 2010. Hopefully in the second half of 2010, we will begin to see signs of recovery."

Shipbuilding stimulus plan made public

China will extend the policy of giving a 17 percent subsidy on ship prices for domestic ocean-going ship buyers till 2012 and also offer preferential interest rates to shipbuilders as a part of the stimulus package for the industry, a local newspaper reported. The ship price, however, does not include the value added tax, Oriental Morning Post reported. The stimulus package also calls for the country to raise its annual shipbuilding capacity to 50 million dead weight tons in 2011 with three world-level shipbuilding bases in the Bohai Bay, Yangtze River entrance and Pearl River entrance, the newspaper said. Banks would also be encouraged to offer financing support for ship buyers through issuance of US dollar bonds to avoid order cancellations.

The nation will also help China State Shipbuilding Co Ltd and China Shipbuilding Industry Corp, the two largest shipyards in China, to carry out mergers and acquisitions through capital injection and the establishment of an industrial fund. Qualified domestic shipyards would be encouraged to list or issue bonds to solve capital shortage problems. **Source: China Daily**

China to buy up cancelled newbuildings

China Shipping Development and Sinotrans Shipping could be encouraged by Beijing to take on some of the vessels cancelled by foreign owners to support Chinese shipyards. Macquarie Research analyst Jon Windham estimated that more than 50% of the vessels on order at Chinese shipyards are from European customers and are at significant risk of cancellation. He said that China Shipping Development and state-owned shipping enterprises including Sinotrans Shipping "would be a potential conduit for the government to fund new ordering to offset foreign cancellations". Such a move "would be to facilitate the Chinese government's stimulus effort for shipyards".

The Chinese government's shipbuilding aid package announced in February included extending tax rebates and other financial support to Chinese shipyards until 2012, and a drive to scrap older vessels. A possible way forward is for Sinotrans Shipping to assume cancelled newbuild orders and match them with longer-term contracts with Chinese customers who continue to secure commodity ownership overseas. China Shipping Development has done similar long-term deals with large state-owned enterprise customers. **Source: MotorShip**



In Flushing Amels yard number 455 seen above for her first dancing lessons leaving the yard, the Amels 171LE yacht will be named **ADDICTION**

Photo : Wim Kosten – www.maritimephoto.com ©

Møkster confirms order for VS 482 Mk 2 at Gondan

Simon Møkster in Norway and the Spanish shipyard Astilleros Gondan have confirmed that they have recently signed a contract for construction of the multi-field support vessel of Vik Sandvik design (VS 482 Mk 2).

Stril TBN will be a sister ship to **Stril Herkules** and will be delivered by Astilleros Gondan in April 2011. The newbuild has long term commitment with StatoilHydro - 10 years firm including 5 yearly options.

Strilborg is currently working for StatoilHydro as a frontrunner for **Stril TBN**.

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Above seen AVRA Towage's **WEST** under command of capt. Radboud Polee underway coming up to the Opera House in Sydney (Australia)

Photo : IAN EDWARDS ©

Louis Dreyfus warns worst is yet to come for dry bulk

LEADING French bulker operator Louis Dreyfus Armateurs (LDA) has warned that the worst of the slump currently afflicting the dry bulk shipping market still lies ahead.

LDA chairman Philippe Louis-Dreyfus predicted tougher times ahead next year and the year after, as newbuilding deliveries reach their peak. "We think that the worst is yet to come," he told Lloyd's List, arguing that last year's market slump had not taken account of the heavy over-ordering, which he said was the dry bulk sector's main problem.

Mr Louis-Dreyfus, whose company is planning to spend up to €1bn (\$1.4bn) on new vessels over the next few years, many of them for its core dry bulk business, said that LDA expected further reductions in newbuilding prices as the market anticipated the glut of new deliveries expected in 2010 and 2011.

"We think that there will be some interesting bargains in the second half of 2009," he said. He added that he believed that the current crisis in the dry bulk sector would last longer than many people expected.

"It will not last for five years," he said, "but it will not last for six months either." The French company, which operates around 70 bulkers of various sizes at any one time, claims to have escaped the worst of last year's market collapse thanks to its strategy of giving priority to long-term contracts.

It reduced the size of its owned fleet, which currently comprises a dozen or so vessels, while prices were high with the intention of returning to the market following the slump which it had been predicting as inevitable months before it occurred. "This enabled us to constitute a cash mattress," he said. "This cash will serve to take advantage of opportunities to buy new or second hand ships, particularly bulkers."

Mr Louis-Dreyfus said that the company's results had been "exceptionally good" in 2008 and that it was confident that it would be able to maintain strong performances over the next two or three years. He indicated that the company was "attentive" to the risk of counterpart defaults but that, to date, the difficulties it had experienced in this area had been "marginal".

The company had always been careful to choose customers and areas of business offering low risk profiles, he said. LDA generated about half of its €1.2bn revenues from bulk shipping last year, the remainder coming from industrial and offshore service shipping and its ro-ro and ferry business. **Source : Lloyd's List**

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The **MARDIVE 230** seen moored in Tripoli (Libya) - Photo : Arjan van Aalst ©

Liberia registers 3,000th vessel

The Liberian Registry has passed a major milestone by registering its 3,000th vessel, the 105,400 dwt aframax tanker Ise Princess, built this year for Fairsea Enterprises SA and managed and operated by Tsakos Shipping & Trading SA of Greece.

Scott Bergeron, Chief Operating Officer of the Liberian International Ship & Corporate Registry (LISCR), the U.S.-based manager of the Liberian Registry, noted that the first vessel registered with Liberia, in 1949, was also Greek--the World Peace, owned by Stavros Niarchos. Greece was in at the beginning of Liberia's maritime adventure and, sixty years later, is still contributing to its phenomenal growth."

"Second only to the national register," he said, "Liberia is the flag of choice for Greek shipping. Today almost 600 Greek-owned ships, aggregating 38 million dwt, are registered under the flag of Liberia. And that number will grow still further as an increasing number of Greek shipowners are choosing Liberia for their newbuildings and secondhand purchases.

"In view of the difficult economic outlook for most of the industry right now, the fact that Liberia has registered over 110 vessels in the first two and a half months of 2009 is truly inspiring," said Mr. Bergeron.

Captain Nicolaos Soutos, Liberian Honorary Consul in Greece, says, "This is a very special and happy day for me. Over the past sixty years, Liberia has overcome some well-publicised difficulties, unconnected with its operation of the ship register, to further strengthen its presence in the global shipping industry. In particular, over the last ten years, it has achieved growing recognition and support from the Greek shipowning community, and indeed from the international shipping industry." Source : MarineLog

Thrustmaster of Texas Inc. will open New Facility in Houston, TX



Thrustmaster of Texas, Inc. is the largest U.S. based manufacturer of bow thrusters and Z-drives for the marine industry, is breaking ground on a new 65 acre, 200,000 square foot factory near it's current location in Houston, Texas. The new factory is scheduled for opening by 3th of may 2009.

With overhead cranes up to 100 ton capacity, the new facility will produce thrusters in the range of 100 to 6,000 HP (75 Kw to 5,5 MW) for marine transportation, offshore industries, and military craft applications. Employing more than 150 skilled technicians, assemblers, welders, and machinists, the offices will house PhD and MSc engineers along with expanded support personnel.

Built on 65 acres the site will include a large test pond and have plenty of room for expansion to include heat treatment and expanded finishing facilities. Thrustmaster received new orders well in excess of 100 million USD of which 75 million USD is for export outside the USA.

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S.Korea's Hanjin Shipping to lift 2009 investment to US\$875 mln



The **HANJIN XIAMEN** - Photo : Harry van den Berg ©

Hanjin Shipping Co., South Korea's largest shipping line, said Friday it plans to spend US\$875 million this year to buy ships and build container terminals. The earmarked capital spending is up 17 per cent from last year's US\$748 million, according to the company. Hanjin said earlier it plans to add 11 container vessels and 20 bulk carriers to its fleet by the end of 2012 to grab a bigger share of the global shipping market. **Source: Yonhap**

Marseille Box Traffic Plunges

Container traffic at Marseille, France's biggest port and second largest box hub, tumbled 32 percent in February from a year ago on sharply lower imports from Asia and sporadic strikes by longshoremen. The Mediterranean seaport handled 62,049 TEUs last month compared with 91,059 TEUs in February 2008, taking traffic for the first two months of the year to 127,991 TEUs, down 25 percent from 169,925 TEUs in the same period in 2008.

Marseille blamed the decline on reduced volumes in the Asia-Europe trade, which accounts for around 60 percent of its box traffic, and rolling strikes by dock workers protesting government plans to privatize container handling later in the year.

Strikes were also largely responsible for a 15 percent fall in 2008 traffic to 848,000 TEUs from over one million TEUs the previous year as thousands of containers were diverted to Barcelona, Genoa and other Mediterranean ports.

The port was at a standstill on March 19 as dock workers joined a 24-hour general strike to protest the government's economic policies.

Total traffic in February fell 21 percent from a year ago to 12.7 million tonnes with all sectors showing declines, including general and break bulk cargo down 50 percent. This was an improvement on January when traffic slumped 24 percent to a 10-year low of 6.5 million tonnes. **Source: Journal of Commerce**



The **COASTAL WORKER** – Photo : Bas van der Wurf ©

Vintage tugboat, last of its kind, comes home

From the wheelhouse high atop the nation's last working steam-powered, sternwheeler towboat, downtown Portland shimmers with skyscrapers, light rail and other sleek trappings of modern life.

But step below, into the belly of this beautiful, vintage beast, and soak up the city's gritty, hard-working past: one that required oil-fired burners to make steam, steam to move pistons, pistons to power a paddle wheel -- all of it to keep Portland's maritime commerce churning.

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The Portland, named after this city, for decades pushed around ocean-going ships many times its size, maneuvering them under bridges and nudging them into berths along the Columbia and Willamette rivers. The towboat returned to the water recently after nine months of repairs and maintenance. Today, the Oregon Maritime Museum housed aboard the Portland celebrates its return with an open house, free admission and tours of the wheelhouse, engine room and main cabin.

The boat's moored next to Tom McCall Waterfront Park, at the foot of Southwest Pine Street, downtown.

Late last June, the 219-foot, 928-ton stern wheeler was damaged when its steering mechanism failed 100 yards shy of its destination, Cascade Locks. No one was injured, but the damage was heartbreaking for the museum's dozens of volunteers, who had spent at least 15 years restoring the Portland.

Still, as any mariner knows, work on a boat never really ends. They rolled up their sleeves and got back to it. "They pour their hearts and souls into keeping this boat afloat," volunteer coordinator Gloria Holman said Friday. Northwest Marine Iron Works built the steel-hulled vessel with the tall black stack and bright red paddle wheel for the Port of Portland in 1947. She cost \$500,000.

Don Ray, the museum's librarian, said the craft's maneuverability, with massive rudders and superior backing power, "was something that the other ports didn't have." Such a towboat, which could inch enormous grain haulers, for instance, into and out of spaces barely big enough for them, helped the Port stay competitive.

The Port retired the Portland in 1981, when propeller-driven tugs took over. The old tug, with its clean lines and peacock-blue trim, was likely headed for the scrap yard when the maritime museum came to the rescue.

The Port "graciously sold it to us for \$1," said Doug Bomarito, the museum's acting president. The all-volunteer, labor-of-love restoration began. Workers rebuilt the deckhouse, refurbished engines and other systems, and turned the main cabin into a museum and ship's store.



Evidence of the ongoing effort is obvious in the wheelhouse, where a polished brass tiller stands before the lovingly sanded wood wheel, a monster at about 5 feet across.

The engine room feels much as it must have when the Portland plied the river daily and the temperature inside would climb to 100 degrees. Dust and grime coat engines and boilers. Ropes as big around as a man's wrist rest, ready for action. Dozens of pairs of work gloves, black with grease, line a bench. On a shelf, dingy orange life vests squeeze together like so many passengers.

The Portland is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Plus, the tug's had a couple brushes with fame. The tug appeared in two movies, "Bend of the River," the 1952 film with Jimmy Stewart and Rock Hudson, and

1994's "Maverick," with Mel Gibson, Jodie Foster and James Garner.

Wildly expensive to operate -- "she drinks diesel oil as if you poured it out of a fireman's hose," Bomarito said -- the Portland makes four to six cruises a year; the museum typically opens one of those cruises to the public.

One day, if museum members' dreams come true, the Portland might move downriver, where, if things go according to plan, the maritime museum will have a new home once the old Centennial Mills is redeveloped. Until then, the tug will float in the heart of its namesake city. **Source: OregonLive.com**



The 1997 built **SKS TAGUS** Departing Hound Point for Portland USA, 21st March 2009. **SKS Tagus** is the fourth SKS tanker in recent weeks to depart to cross the Atlantic. Others were **SKS Spey**, **SKS Satilla** and **SKS Skeena**. **SKS Satilla** departed Hound Point just after midnight on the 20th of February this year and collided with **ENSCO 74** in the Gulf of Mexico earlier this month.

[See **DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2009 - 067-10-03-2009**, page 9]

Photo: Iain McGeachy ©

HMC installs Shell's Perdido topsides



Photo : Crew Union Manta ©

Heerema Marine Contractors (HMC) has completed installation of the 9,500 tonne topsides and living quarters atop the floating Spar of the Shell Perdido project.

The installation took place in a water depth of almost 2,500m in the Gulf of Mexico. HMC's **Thialf** is one of only two vessels in the world capable of lifting the 9,500 tonne topsides.

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The Perdido project, which Shell operates on behalf of partners BP and Chevron, set several records such as the installation of the deepest Spar mooring system and the deepest Pipe Line End Termination yet at 2,950m.

HMC Project Director Eric Romijn said: "Earlier in the project, another HMC vessel, **Balder**, carried out the Spar and the subsea installation, consisting of nine suction piles and polyester mooring lines, five flowlines, one water injection line and three Steel Catenary Risers necessary for the project."

"The nine polyester mooring lines averaging more than two miles in length now hold the 50,000-ton floating structure in place, which will be nearly as tall as the Eiffel Tower when fully operational."

René de Koeijer, Perdido project manager for HMC, said: "The kick-off of the engineering phase for Perdido was in June 2006 and the offshore installation part started in June 2008. Working in ultra deep water meant we had to upgrade several parts of our equipment."

The Perdido Spar facility is located in the Gulf of Mexico, some 240km from Corpus Christi and 290km from Galveston. The nearest platform is 130km away.



The **FSO ORKID** which was installed recently at her location in the Bunga Orkid Field in Malaysia
Photo : Capt. Jelle de Vries ©

Hellespont signs up Wilhelmsen

Wilhelmsen Ships Service has been awarded a major contract by Hamburg-based shipmanagement company Hellespont Hammonia. This agreement covers all product deliveries for the entire fleet under Hellespont Hammonia's management and will be handled by WSS' German office. Hellespont's senior purchasing manager, Matti Früchtenicht, said, "From the start it was clear that Wilhelmsen Ships Service possess both the global network and expertise necessary to meet the requirements of our fleet. It is critical to us that we have a reliable supplier who understands our business and is committed to helping us improve operational efficiencies wherever possible"

The Hellenic fleet currently consists of five Suezmaxes, one Aframax, six Panamax tankers and six OSVs. A further eight handy size chemical tankers are scheduled to join the fleet in 2009 through 2010.

To help facilitate a smooth change over, a Wilhelmsen port sales engineer will be available on board every vessel.

"We are pleased to have the opportunity to further develop our relationship with Hellenic Hammonia. This contract allows us to demonstrate our capabilities to a leading shipmanagement company, in an area where we have a proven track record," said Peter Ketz, account manager Germany, Wilhelmsen Ships Service.

The contract is valid for three years and covers all deliveries on a global basis. Wilhelmsen expects to handle about 60 product deliveries per year as a result of this agreement. **Source: TankerOperator**

New ferry lines from Bulgaria to Romania and Georgia

A new Danube ferry service the route between Nikopol, Bulgaria and Turnu Magurele, Romania will commence operations at the end of March.

Bulgaria will also establish a permanent ferry line between the port of Varna and the port of Poti, Georgia, in May.

Bulgarian Minister of Transport Petar Mutafchiev said that the bilateral contract for the new ferry line would be ready shortly and that service could start as early as the beginning of May. **Source : Baird**

.... PHOTO OF THE DAY



Above seen the **Left Coast Lifter** crane on the **Zhen Hua 22** in San Francisco Bay on 3/16/2009. A \$50 Million project built in China. The crane is needed to finish the new East span of the San Francisco Bay Bridge. It will lift the prefabricated spans into place, connecting the completed part of the bridge with Treasure Island.

Photo : O'Neil Dillon ©

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