

In brief...

Deep-sea vessel designer dies

Harold Froehlich, who designed the deep-sea vessel *Alvin*, which explored the wreckage of the Titanic and searched for ocean life, died on May 19 of cancer. He was 84 years old.

The *Alvin*, nicknamed after Allyn Vine of the Oceanographic Institute, could dive to over 4200m. In 1986, Robert D Ballard used her to explore and photograph the *Titanic*, which rests more than 3650m below the surface of the North Atlantic Ocean.

The *Alvin* has made over 4100 dives. In 1966 her crew found a hydrogen bomb lost after a United States military plane crashed off the coast of Spain.

Service honours seafarers

Mariners and their families around New Zealand will be able to attend special church services on Sea Sunday, July 8, to remember seafarers and those who lost their lives on the ocean.

The services are organised by the Mission to Seafarers.

“To do their jobs, seafarers have to leave their homes and families for long periods and face loneliness and danger,” says the New Zealand secretary-general, The Revd Canon Bill Christianson. “The Mission to Seafarers reaches out to them on behalf of the church to offer them spiritual and practical support in some 230 ports worldwide.”

Sea squirts reach Wellington

Biosecurity New Zealand says it found three sea squirts, *Styela clava*, during a survey of the Clyde Quay Boat Harbour in Wellington in May, each on the hull of a different vessel. All the sea squirts were removed.

The search was commissioned following the discovery of some mature specimens of *Styela* in March on a heavily fouled vessel. The boat was removed from the water and thoroughly cleaned.

“While these small individuals may not have been reproductive, we can’t entirely discount the possibility that there is now a small population in this boat harbour,” said Biosecurity NZ.

Owners of boats in the quay are being asked to clean their vessels on the hard to stop the sea squirt from spreading, along with boat club meetings other initiatives.

Oyster festival under scrutiny

EVENTS SUCH AS the Bluff Oyster and Southland Seafood Festival should not be judged solely on their profitability, says Venture Southland.

The event has come under scrutiny after ticket sales for this year’s festival slumped to a 10-year low to 2640 tickets, almost 50 percent down on three years ago. Southlanders made up just 30 percent of overall numbers.

The chief executive of Venture Southland, Jeff Troon, said the organisation could no longer absorb the

\$40,000 deficit posted last year.

The leader of the National Party, John Key, said it would be mad to move the festival to Auckland, as had been suggested. “For goodness sake, it’s iconic to Bluff.”

Key recommended the festival look at possible sponsorship, and funding from a government agency such as New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. International surveys showed promotions like the oyster festival helped draw visitors into regions, he said.

EXCHANGE RATE WIPES OUT MILLIONS

THE FISHING COMPANY Sanford says the high New Zealand dollar has wiped out more than \$7 million of its foreign exchange earnings.

The Auckland company issued the warning ahead of the announcement of its result for the half-year to the end of March.

“The strength of the New Zealand dollar is decimating earnings across all products and resulted in foreign exchange losses,” said managing director Eric Barratt. The losses compared with a gain of the same amount for the same period last year, he said.

Sales were up 15 percent in the first quarter of the year, but had been disappointing in the second quarter. “While demand has been strong for many species in Europe, weaker markets in the United States have resulted in lower volume sales of orange roughy, Greenshell mussels and toothfish.”

Catches and aquaculture production had been satisfactory at six percent ahead of last year.

Fire damages Cutty Sark

FIRE RAVAGED THE 138-year-old clipper ship *Cutty Sark* at Greenwich, London at daybreak on May 21. She was undergoing a £25 million restoration and the damage could have been far worse, but much of the ship, including the masts, coach-house and planking, had been removed and stored elsewhere. Her bow and stern also escaped relatively unscathed.

The major concern was to her wrought iron frame. “Buckling of the hull remains a big fear, but until we do the measurements we are not going to know,” said the chief executive of the Cutty Sark Trust, Richard Doughty. “As far I have been able to see, the structure of the ship seems to be intact.” The Metropolitan Police is treating the fire as suspicious, and security camera footage is being checked.

The 64.8m clipper left London on her maiden voyage on February 16, 1870, sailing around the Cape of Good Hope to Shanghai. She made eight journeys to China as part of the lucrative tea trade



until steam replaced sail. She was later used on the Australian wool trade. Her best run was 360 miles in 24 hours, an average speed of 15 knots.

The *Cutty Sark* fire highlighted the need to further protect one of New Zealand’s own maritime rarities, the 154-year-old sailing ship *Edwin Fox*, which is in permanent dry dock in Picton. The museum now needed about \$100,000 to finish the walls and protect the ship from damage, said the manager of the Edwin Fox Maritime Centre, Fran West-Rendel. Last year the sprinkler system saved the ship from a potentially disastrous fire, she said.

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

This vessel has 2000hp of outboards across the stern. How many litres of fuel per hour do you suppose they drink?

This beast of a boat belted across the English Channel three times per week for some months and was just a blur on the British Coast Guard’s radars.

Having identified that this sea-level UFO had established a regular pattern of high-speed flights, mainly at night, they were so blown away by the speed, and so concerned for the safety of other shipping, that they brought in a special night attack helicopter with night vision and radar to catch, identify and track her.

A boarding party found about 300kg of pure cocaine. I guess one would need a substantial payload to fuel these babies.



Scientists target fishing subsidies

A GROUP OF 125 international marine scientists from 27 countries is urging the head of the World Trade Organisation to push for a global accord to slash subsidies that many countries pay their fishing industries.

In a declaration to be delivered to the WTO’s director-general, Pascal Lamy, they warned that unless support was reduced soon, overfishing would damage the ecosystem of the world’s oceans beyond recovery.

“The WTO has a once-in-a-lifetime chance to demonstrate that it can not only balance trade and the environment, but make one of the greatest contributions to protecting the world’s oceans,” said a signatory, Andrew Sharpless. He called on Lamy to use his

“skill and leadership” to ensure that this was achieved.

Talks on fish subsidies are part of the WTO’s Doha Round of global negotiations on lowering barriers to trade in goods and services which were launched in 2001, but are bogged down in disputes on agricultural support and goods tariffs.

Total fishing subsidies, including cash for research and stock management, are estimated to cost around US\$34 billion a year, or a third of the sector’s overall annual sales.

But some WTO member states oppose a drastic reduction in support, arguing that it will deprive thousands of fishermen of their livelihood.

NOZZLE IMPROVES FISHING EFFICIENCY

WARTSILÄ HAS FITTED a new nozzle-type propeller to a trawler that it says has increased its bollard pull by 29 percent while improving efficiency by 13 percent.

The single-screw *MV Trygvason*, built in 1988, was originally equipped with an open-type 260mm diameter controllable pitch propeller. It is powered by a Wartsilä Nohab F38A producing 1580kW. The owner was seeking a propulsion retrofit to save fuel.

Wartsilä’s proposal was a 2400mm design operating in a high-efficiency nozzle. The nozzle effect meant that cavitation and pressure-pulse performance improved considerably over the original equipment.

Trials showed a bollard pull of almost 30 tonnes, compared with 21 tonnes before the conversion. The owner, Captain Støle Lønning, also reported that fuel consumption had reduced by 30 percent, so he could now trawl using a larger net.

“It’s much quieter onboard now. We can now use more efficient trawling equipment, and we haven’t suffered any loss in sailing speed,” he said. Even though it wasn’t the cheapest option, the nozzle solution was the most effective.

Wartsilä says it can offer the improvements to both its own and third-party installations.



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