

## HARD TIMES

Dear Sir

Okay, fair cop and a slap around the ears, but as an out-of-work commercial fisher come budding waterfront bum, what do you expect. You have the ability to say it as it is and in your latest issue I detect a sense of tetchiness in your writings. You are right and yes, we do tend to rely on your wisdom in these matters.

Keith, I have known you for a long time and I have not always agreed with you, especially when dealing with recreational fishing matters. How did we ever let you escape? If only we knew then what a passionate advocate you would become, things for our inshore fishing industry might have been different.

The New Zealand fishing industry has changed. It's stuffed, and any additional costs are making boat owners cut more corners to survive. If Maritime New Zealand can cut costs and make it easy for small commercial boat owners this would be great and supported. We just want to make a fair living and you are correct about the greed of company quota owners being the root cause. Unfortunately, many will now not speak out because they are frightened to. Why? Because a lot of guys are operating under the radar illegally and are scared of the safe ship management companies and inspectors finding out and closing them down.

All we want to do is make a living and must ask, why is it so hard and costly? The Ministry of Fisheries makes it hard enough without Maritime NZ adding further to the costs. The SSM companies charge enough as it is, so surely one has to go, as we can't carry any more costs. Please tell these people just how hard it is on us all.

Paul Henderson, Onehunga

## OIL RIG

Dear Sir

You mentioned the oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in the last issue of *Professional Skipper*, and you (and almost everyone else) are totally missing the boat on how big or bad a disaster this is.

The original estimate was about 5000 gallons (18,000 litres) of oil a day spilling into the ocean. Now they're saying 200,000 gallons (758,000 litres) a day. That's over a million gallons of crude oil a week!

I'm an engineer with 25 years of experience. I've worked on

some big projects with big machines. Maybe that's why this mess is so clear to me.

First, the BP platform was drilling for what they call deep oil. They go out where the ocean is about 1500m deep and drill another 9200m into the crust of the earth. This is right on the edge of what human technology can do. Well, this time they hit a pocket of oil at such high pressure it burst all of their safety valves all the way up to the drilling rig and caused the rig to explode and sink. Take a moment to grasp the importance of that. The pressure behind this oil is so high it destroyed the maximum effort of human science to contain it.

When the rig sank it flipped over and landed on top of the drill hole some 1500m under the ocean.

Now they've got a hole on the ocean floor 1500m down, with a wrecked oil drilling rig sitting on top spewing 200,000 barrels of oil a day into the ocean. Take a moment and consider that.

First, they have to get the oil rig off the hole to get at it in order to try to cap it. Do you know the level of effort it will take to move that wrecked oil rig, sitting under 1500m of water? That operation alone would take years and hundreds of millions to accomplish. Then, how do you cap that hole in the muddy ocean floor? There just is no way. No way.

On the longer-term side of things, there are signs this largest oil-drilling catastrophe could also become the worst natural gas and climate disaster. The explosion has released tremendous amounts of methane from deep in the ocean, and methane, when mixed with air, is the most powerful (read: terrible) greenhouse gas – 26 times worse than carbon dioxide. Our warming planet just got a lot hotter.

The only piece of human technology that might address this is a nuclear bomb. I'm not kidding. If they put a nuke down there in the right spot it might seal up the hole. Nothing short of that will work.

If we can't cap that hole, that oil is going to destroy the oceans of the world. It only takes one quart of motor oil to make 250,000 gallons of ocean water toxic to wildlife. Are you starting to get the magnitude of this?

We're so used to our politicians creating false crises to forward their criminal agendas we aren't recognising that we're staring straight into possibly the greatest disaster mankind will ever see. Imagine what happens if that oil keeps flowing until it destroys all life in the oceans of this planet. Who knows how big a ►

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reservoir of oil is down there. Not to mention that the oceans are critical to maintaining the proper oxygen level in the atmosphere for human life.

Unless God steps in and fixes this. No human can. You can be sure of that!

**An Engineer, lost in time**

## SEAFARER QUALIFICATIONS

Dear Sir

I've just read your editorial on seafarer qualifications with delight and in full agreement with the sentiment that when apathy prevails, bureaucracy wins. I'll be looking forward with great interest to any future comment on the changes to the seafarer qualification system.

**Captain Andy Watts**

## FISH MARKET

Dear Sir

Today I visited the Auckland Fish Market situated on the Sanfords site in Jellicoe St, Auckland. While returning to our car we decided to look at the outlets at the rear of the main building. There we found New Zealand Live Fish, presumably run by Chinese by the script underneath the name.

I have to admit I was disgusted by what I saw. Quite a few of their tanks had fish dead or nearly dead at the bottom of the tanks. I am not one who would purchase fish via this method, however, if these people are going to sell fish this way, it must be done in a humane and professional manner.

This is simply not a good look for the thousands of tourists and locals who visit the Auckland Fish Market when we position our seafood industry at the very top of the clean and fresh end of the market.

Surely to goodness, with all our rules and regulations we must have something to combat this sort of thing? I must admit I felt ashamed that we let this sort of thing happen in New Zealand. I am not an animal extremist, I have worked in the commercial fishing industry and I am a keen recreational fisher. Let's sort this matter out.

**Baden Pascoe, Auckland**

## ADY GILL

Dear Sir

In reply to Barry Keon's letter in the July/August edition of *Professional Skipper*, a collision such as the likes of the *Ady Gil* vs the *Shohan Maru 2* was inevitable. Sea Shepherd has been ramming vessels for decades. The Japanese were never going to back down and Sea Shepherd wanted a confrontation. Well, they got it and the outcome was predictable; a vessel made of eggshells up against one built to work in the ice.

The International Collision Regulations are quite clear on the rights and obligations of both the give way and the stand on vessel, and if followed, collisions at sea should never occur. The limited television footage is too brief to determine exactly who did what, and we don't know what manoeuvring or actions were taken by either party leading up to those last moments before the collision.

Assume the *Shohan Maru 2* was the give way vessel. That's what everyone wants isn't it, for her to be the bad guy? So she didn't, and under the collision regulations, the onus to avoid a collision then fell on the right of way vessel to do so, in this case the *Ady Gil*.

The rules state any action taken to avoid a collision must be positive and made in ample time with due consideration to good seamanship. So, once the *Ady Gill's* skipper, Peter Bethune, had established the *Shohan Maru 2* wasn't going to give way, he

was obliged to take necessary action and to take that action in ample time.

He could have slowed, allowing the other vessel to pass clear ahead. He could have stopped. He could have, in ample time, made a bold turn to starboard and come around, passing astern and clear of the *Shohan Maru 2*. He didn't because he didn't want to. He wanted a confrontation.

Irrespective of the Japanese master's actions, or lack thereof, the video footage clearly shows the *Ady Gil's* propeller wash under power going ahead. Peter Bethune may have had the moral high ground but his actions of deliberately running his vessel under the bows of the *Shohan Maru 2* when he was bound by law to have avoided a collision is, in my opinion, grossly negligent and reckless and he put the safety and lives of his crew in peril.

He lost his boat. He could have quite easily killed someone.

**Chris Carey, Christchurch**

## CHANGING RULES

Dear Sir

Your coverage of the pending changes facing the maritime industry is commendable, even if most of us are still in the dark. The charter boats in our small ports play an important role although most work is seasonal, meaning costs are our greatest threat.

Scaremongering from our surveyor says costs will rise and Maritime New Zealand will be making it tougher to comply. Just what is the truth? All we want is an easy process with simple to understand rules.

Surely that cannot be hard to do. My safe ship management company tells me the rules keep changing every time they see me and it's all to do with Maritime NZ, who are out to make more money.

If it gets any harder I will just drop out of survey and take my now very large network of friends out fishing in the summer, the same as most of the pirates in our club do.

Yes, that's right, we would have five or six pleasure fishing boats doing more trips in a season on shared costs and making more money than the legitimate charter boats, and Maritime NZ and the SSM companies ignore them.

Keith, it is because of people like you who care that we have a charter boat industry at all. Please tell those who are making the decisions to keep it simple and get it right. Remember, the golden goose has now run out of eggs.

**Name withheld by request**

## FOREIGN CHARTERS

Dear Sir

I heard you on National Radio this morning and have to say I agree wholeheartedly with your comments on foreign charter vessels such as the *Tomi Maru 87*. "When caught thieving and prosecuted, the vessel should be forfeited and not sold back as a fishing vessel to the owners. The vessel should be sold to be cut up for scrap and removed for good from our waters."

You are right on the button. If it is forfeited to the Crown the government does not have to make money out of it. Cut it up for scrap and word will soon get out that we mean business when dealing with fish thieves.

The problem is SEAFIC has control of the Ministry of Fisheries and my guess is the boat will be sold back to the owners for a quarter of the value and we will see it raping our fisheries again.

You are a strong voice Keith and while you are not afraid to say it as it is and ruffle a few company fish scales from my reading it's not often that you are wrong. We need voices like yours to cut through the crap.

**Warren Clark, Southland** 