

OIL RIG

Dear Sir

You very charitably printed the letter Oil Rig in the September/October issue of *Professional Skipper*. I note the writer had his name and address withheld. Had I written something of that quality, I would have asked for the same concession.

Readers can bowl out most of his (or her) errors from reading the newspapers and watching television. The biggest one is that the high pressure oil "burst all of their safety valves".

As reported, even before the successful sealing of the leaking well (contrary to Nameless' statement "No human can."), the blowout preventer failed to do its job, as various functions had been switched off because senior management was tired of being disturbed by false alarms.

I visited the Gulf Coast while the clean up and the sealing operations were going on. I had intended to interview people and write about the disaster, but I did not have the heart. It would have been like a reporter asking a bereaved mother, "Tell us, Mrs Smith, how did you feel as you saw your child being run over by a bus?"

Some memories are vivid – one bold family sitting on a clean piece of beach empty for a mile in each direction, holiday condos with empty carparks, jetties for visitors' boats absolutely deserted and a group of beach vendors, their chilly bins under beach umbrellas, with no customers in sight. Worst of all were the fleets of shrimp trawlers rafted up alongside wharves.

BP was running magnificent and heartwarming advertisements on television – propaganda pieces showing how well they were doing in the clean up and in compensating people. The theory was great, but the practice was something else.

The news media had many stories of self-employed people, from fishermen to restaurateurs to laundry owners, with on-going expenses but no money coming in, trying to claim from BP's much-vaunted compensation system and getting ignored, rebuffed or run around.

On a lighter side, we were heartbroken when we saw flocks of pelicans, all brown, we thought, from oil staining. Then we found out they were brown pelicans and that it was their natural colour.

R Lea Clough, Chatham Islands

Lea, as usual your words carry a very good message, even if they are tagged with a sharp barb. Likewise, as is our style, we like

to ensure freedom of speech and in doing so at times we respect an author's request for anonymity if the words are of value and of interest to readers. Ed...

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Dear Sir

In the September/October issue, Warren Clark opined in the letters page that "SEAFIC has control of the Ministry of Fisheries..."

If only this were true my job would be a lot easier and the industry's legal battles would never have occurred.

The role of the New Zealand Seafood Industry Council is to represent the interests of the seafood industry. MFish is one of many stakeholders we work with in this regard.

Peter Bodeker, chief executive
New Zealand Seafood Industry Council

FULSOME PRAISE

Dear Sir

On behalf of the Maritime and Seafood Educators Association Aotearoa I write to express our sincere thanks for your wide-ranging and thought-provoking presentation to our annual conference.

Delegates attending the conference were fulsome in their praise of the quality of the presentations, even if they were a little thoughtful about the immediate outlook for the seafood and maritime industries and the pending changes in the tertiary sector and the regulatory regime!

It will be interesting to see just what has evolved in 12 months.

It would also be good for you to attend next year's conference in your capacity as editor of *Professional Skipper*. Incidentally, did I read in the latest issue that you have had a wee health scare recently? Do take care. Our industry needs advocates like yourself.

John Hannah (for the MSEA)

WHO SHOULD PAY?

Dear Sir

Keep it simple. I and my fellow skippers and owners attended the recent rules review held in Lyttelton and were impressed at the openness of Maritime New Zealand, as all questions were answered except the cost.

One safe ship management inspector at the meeting was ▶

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Be sure to get your copy of *Professional Skipper* direct by mail

Name _____

Address _____

Postal code _____

Email _____

ENCOSE A CHEQUE FOR _____

 \$65.00 1 year – includes NZ Workboat Review 2011 (\$105 Australia + Asia, \$145 Rest of World)

 \$125.00 2 year – includes NZ Workboat Review 2011 & 2012

 Please include NZ Workboat Review 2010 @ \$10.50 available now

 Please include NZ Workboat Review 2008 & 2009 @ \$5.00 available now

Visa/Mastercard (other cards not accepted)

Card Number _____

Card Name _____

Signature _____ Expiry date ____/____/____

PROFESSIONAL
Skipper

**SUBSCRIBE
NOW**

and go into the draw to win a beautifully painted 600mm x 600mm oil painting of the trading tall ship *Parmir* running in stormy seas.



Artist value of \$800 to be drawn and announced in the January issue out in December.

www.marineartgallery.net.nz

POST TO: VIP Publications Ltd, 4 Prince Regent Drive, Half Moon Bay, Manukau 2012

GST No: 68-684-757

acting like a drowning man trying to justify his own existence as to why they can charge such a high hourly rate. Then, to the horror of all in attendance, he stated that if he had his way he would put a chainsaw through all the old wooden boats.

One of the fishermen said, "What about the old steam tug *Lyttelton*?" and his reply was, "I will use a gas torch." He was heckled at by all.

A week or so later I get a letter including a self-audit form from an SSM company to fill out and I did, then photocopied it and put in my manual and sent the copy to Maritime NZ.

Since then, each month I get the bill for the work I did doing the self-audit, plus a telephone call. "Why have you not paid the \$393.75. It's now overdue."

My reply is, "I did the work. You pay me."

So, fellow readers, yes we do need a shakeup with the SSM companies who use us as a cash cow. We need to take charge of our own safety. A rolling stone gathers no MOSS. Watch this space.

Michael Rossouw, Jack Tar Sailing Co, Lyttelton

UNIFIED STRUCTURES

Dear Sir

I never cease to be amazed at the depth and strength of the information found in *Professional Skipper* magazine. Just how you do this issue after issue is a credit to the publishers.

I note the discussion regarding changes to your safety management system, something that is happening over here in Queensland.

I have to say it looks like your outfit is streets ahead of ours in this regard. Hopefully our Australian Maritime Safety Authority will note what the Kiwis are doing and try and bring some unified structure to the Australian states and New Zealand.

Professional Skipper makes fantastic reading and is well worth the subscription cost.

Craig Hansen, Sunshine Coast

NO ACCOUNTABILITY (ABRIDGED)

Dear Sir

I am writing this in sympathy after reading Dave's letter in *Professional Skipper*. Having been through a similar grinder I thought he might like some support.

After three stressing days in court spread over 18 months with Maritime New Zealand trying to prosecute me on four false charges, I used the Official Information Act to find out what it had all cost.

Maritime NZ paid out \$52,000 seeking a \$5000 fine, only for the judge to dismiss their charges with a mention of their spurious nature!

They then could not write up the very significant but defamatory incident report in the annual record because they would have been sitting ducks for a defamation suit.

Once again, neither the judge's remarks nor the fact that the very badly deficient and foundering ship involved had just passed its survey by an immigrant surveyor who had never been to sea, had no sea time or maritime seagoing or engineering qualifications would be allowed to go on the record.

A Bachelor of Science and engineering was enough to become a ship surveyor. It cost me \$5500 and way more in stress and loss of enjoyment of life to defend it and I didn't even get an apology. I wrote a detailed complaint and requested a formal interview.

They agreed, so I spent another \$900 driving the 1800km round trip from Whangarei to attend, only to have the investigator not show up, then not be put under oath or recorded and them not going to sign confidentiality forms, calling it unnecessary

and then treating me like another leper to sweep under the carpet... What?

They then froze me out of getting anywhere with compliance and licensing. So I now have a long paper trail of letters and emails all the way to the minister, politely requesting acknowledgement and information on the whereabouts of my vanished paperwork!

I have just spent 10 years fighting them for an Overseas Master exam permit I had first complied with in 1999, only for them to delay enough for something else to expire so they could send back my application "not in order".

It was only because I finally bullied (them) with the threat of an outside agency that I got to sit the exam. Ten years late and my first skipper's ticket was three years late, which cancelled out any catch history for quota. They have cost me millions...

The introduction of MOSS will be an utter disaster stuck in treacle. I am going to completely ignore MOSS with a vote of no confidence. If I choose to have a private day out on my boat, I'm not going to be asking!

Before any changes are made to SSM, Maritime NZ needs to be taken over by a highly qualified and experienced master mariner and get involved in real consultation and proper liaison with the industry.

Conrad Gray, Whangarei

PROPOSED QOL FRAMEWORK AND STCW

Dear Sir

In response to recent questions over how the current Qualifications and Operational Limits (QOL) review will impact on the application of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers (STCW), I make the following points:

The STCW Convention does not apply to fishing vessels and pleasure craft, or to seafarers on ships which operate exclusively within sheltered waters or those waters closely adjacent to sheltered waters. This will not change under the proposed QOL framework.

Additionally, the convention does not define "sheltered waters" or "waters closely adjacent to sheltered waters". This means New Zealand has the ability to determine the boundaries of these waters (ie, those within 12 miles) as appropriate, which is a key part of the review process.

For coastal area qualifications that go beyond restricted or sheltered limits (ie from 12-50 miles), Maritime NZ is proposing that these meet STCW requirements. However, there is flexibility within the convention so that skippers of coastal ships won't for example be expected to meet the same standards as masters of foreign-going vessels.

This proposed change will have the advantage of increasing the portability of qualifications for those seafarers wishing to work overseas, and will require only a minor amendment to current requirements for coastal qualifications.

For those operators working within the New Zealand coastal area, MNZ will adopt a commonsense approach when making the transition to the new structure. This will reflect the current skills and experience of these seafarers.

As it is not yet known what final shape the proposed QOL framework may take, speculation by some commentators regarding the transition requirements is both premature and unhelpful.

In the meantime, Maritime NZ welcomes constructive feedback on the QOL review and is committed to developing a framework that will be robust, sensible and workable for all seafarers.

Catherine Taylor, Director, Maritime New Zealand 