

GCMA NEWS

The Voice for Mariners

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TOWING SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TSAC) CONSIDERS GCMA'S TOWING VESSEL REPORT

The Coast Guard announced in the Federal Register that a working group of the Towing Safety Advisory Committee would convene in Washington to consider GCMA Report #R-276 on Towing Vessel Inspection Standards on January 16 & 17, 2002. Since GCMA prepared the report, we sent two delegates to explain it.

At present, the Coast Guard does not inspect most

towing vessels. Although the Coast Guard has the authority to board any type of vessel from a recreational vessel to a super-tanker, Congress never gave them specific authority to conduct formal inspections on the nation's 5,200- "uninspected" towing ves-

The GCMA's report lists 49 major omissions in the rules that govern "uninspected" vessels as compared to those regulating "inspected" vessels of comparable size.

sels. Nor did the Coast Guard actively seek such authority in almost 30 years after the 1972 law requiring the licensing of towing vessel "operators."

Working without enforceable standards allows some companies to operate sub-standard

vessels at the expense of the mariners they employ. As mariners, we know exactly how some companies cut corners. Formal inspections are conducted while the vessels are in the water and on drydock on just about every other type of commercial vessel but not on towing vessels.

Workplace Safety

The Gulf Coast Mariners Association prepared Report #R-276 because "lower-

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CAPT. ROLAND RODNEY TO REPRESENT OILFIELD MARINERS ON COMMITTEE

One of the earliest goals of the Gulf Coast Mariners Association was to have a working mariner that shares our perspectives take a seat on the National Offshore Safety Advisory Committee (NOSAC). GCMA realized this goal with the appointment of Captain Roland F. Rodney to the NOSAC Federal Advisory Committee by U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta.

Captain Rodney, a native of Trinidad and resident of Harvey, LA, holds a 1,600 ton Master's license and several foreign licenses. He has worked as master and mate of offshore supply vessels in the Gulf of Mexico and in a number of foreign countries. He has served on vessels ranging from motor launches, tugboats, large commercial fishing vessels, oil spill response vessels, to container ships in over 47 years of service

in marine transportation.

Captain Rodney is an active GCMA member, attending all meetings when he is in port. The selection of Captain Rodney is a source of great pride for GCMA.

Captain Rodney and other GCMA members will travel to Washington for the next NOSAC meeting on April 24th and 25th. Issues of importance to our mariners include the matter of fatigue (i.e., the continuing abuse of the 12-hour rule) under discussion by NOSAC's Prevention Through People subcommittee. This issue was brought to the table by the Gulf Coast Mariners Association. Other pending issues of concern to our mariners are the proposed revisions to offshore supply vessel regulations and offshore workplace safety both on current Coast Guard dockets but stalled in the regulatory process for over two years.

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SUPREME COURT DECISION MAY AFFECT TOWING VESSELS

GCMA EDITORIAL

By Richard A. Block
Secretary, GCMA

Rumors are flying that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will regulate uninspected towing vessels because the Coast Guard failed to do its job of inspecting them for the past 30 years. It is an interesting rumor but is NOT TRUE. We can furnish our readers with the complete decision¹ to read and interpret for yourself. In the meantime, here are my two-cents worth on what the court decision says and does not say. [¹Request GCMA Report #R-300.]

In the first place, Congress never gave the Coast Guard the authority to inspect "uninspected" vessels which includes not only 5,200+ towing vessels and uninspected drilling barges, uninspected fishing vessels, and uninspected passenger vessels such as charter boats. Before it can act, the Coast Guard must have the authority to act. Only Congress can give it that authority.

Of course, the Coast Guard can ask Congress for this authority. In 1972, they did ask but were turned down. Congress decided to license towing vessel "operators" (OUV) at that time but decided not to inspect the vessels the operators worked on.

Following the tragic AMTRAK derailment at Bayou Canot in 1993, Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Robert Kramek recommended that "the Secretary advise Congress that inspecting towing vessels would not be the best use of Coast Guard resources in preventing marine casualties involving towing vessels." [¹Towing Vessel Inspection Study, Aug. 8, 1994, GCMA Document #A193-3.]

The Coast Guard, citing statistics showing that 62 percent of accidents involving towing vessels involved "human factors," proceeded to correct the problem by requiring all towing vessel operators to go to radar school. This move was "politically correct" since the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was also leading a "human factors" crusade at the time. Following several other towing disasters (both involving equipment as well as human failures), the Coast Guard implemented

sweeping new towing vessel officer licensing changes effective May 21, 2001.

In reviewing the opinion of the Supreme Court in CHAO, SECRETARY OF LABOR, v. MALLARD BAY DRILLING, INC., Decision #00-927, decided on January 9, 2002 and delivered by Justice Stevens, I found this statement significant: "The OSH Act imposes on covered employers a duty to provide working conditions that 'are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious bodily harm' to their employees, as well as an obligation to comply with safety standards promulgated by the Secretary of Labor." GCMA fully supports this statement.

GCMA Report #R-276. In 2001 GCMA took the lead in introducing and widely circulating Report #R-276 asking the Coast Guard to establish comprehensive towing vessel inspection standards. At that time, there was no leadership within either the Coast Guard or Congress to disturb the existing "uninspected" status quo. I believe the Supreme Court decision may provide the necessary impetus to move forward to our mariner's workplace on towing vessels. The full Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) convened a working group under Mario Munoz of ACBL to discuss GCMA Report #R-276 and to present the matter to the full TSAC committee in San Francisco in March 2002.

The "offshore" connection. While working on revising Outer Continental Shelf regulations, the Coast Guard is facing the challenge of coordinating OSHA workplace safety regulations with existing Coast Guard regulations. In the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, Congress gave the Coast Guard the authority to enforce matters of "workplace safety" since they are supposed to have the expertise in the marine field. However, even after being given the authority, the Coast Guard has done little to exercise that authority for over twenty years! GCMA asked: "What about workplace safety on towing vessels working on the outer continental shelf?" Forgive our impatience, but our answer to this basic question has stalled in the regulatory process at Coast Guard Headquarters for over two years!

Who will regulate towing vessels? The Supreme Court decision touches on problems that go back to the introduction

of the Occupational Safety and Health Act in 1970. The OSH Act's fundamental purpose is "...to assure so far as possible every working man and woman in the nation safe and healthful working conditions." [29 USC §651(b).]

In the opinion of the court "...another agency may "exercise" its authority within the meaning of the OSH Act (1) either by promulgating specific regulations or (2) by asserting regulatory authority over a certain category of vessels." However, in *Herman (Secretary of Labor) v. Tidewater Pacific, Inc.* the Coast Guard refused to assert regulatory authority over uninspected towing vessels. This still leaves open the possibility that the Coast Guard could "promulgate specific regulations" should it choose to do so. As I see it, that's up to the Coast Guard.

What does the government need to regulate? GCMA Report #R-276 outlines in broad strokes the areas that new regulations would have to fill simply to close the gap to protect mariners on existing uninspected vessels only to the same degree that regulations now protect mariners on "inspected" vessels. Beyond that, additional workplace protections need to be in place to improve our "workplace" to reach the same standards enjoyed by non-maritime workers in the rest of the country. Remember, employees covered by OSHA have a 30-year head start simply because OSHA and the Coast Guard never got their heads together! Such additional considerations include:

- Confined space entry regulations² for mariners who must enter void areas to check for leaks, repair or pump barges. [¹Based on OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910.146.]
- Address noise exposure and hearing loss problems on towing vessels³. Also address the effects of vibration problems on towing vessels where mariners are expected to sleep on board. [¹Based on OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910.95.]
- Provide out-of-water survival craft on all towing vessels on inland (LBS) and coastwise service. Require Coast Guard approved rescue boats meeting standards at 46 CFR 160.056 on vessels in river service.
- Require suitable personal protective fire fighting gear like that described

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GCMA TO USCG: GET MARINER INPUT ON FATIGUE ISSUE AND THE 12-HOUR RULE

[GCMA sent the following letter to LT Scott Calhoun (G-MSE-1) on December 26, 2001. On January 16, GCMA members Captain Bill Beacom and Richard Block discussed the matter at a TSAC working group meeting at Coast Guard Headquarters. Information presented in the meeting did not change the views expressed in the letter. However, we are always willing to consider any scientific evidence the Coast Guard may present that validates the "two watch" system. To date, we only have promises.]

Dear LT Calhoun,

Our Association's concern for the continued exploitation of lower-level mariners and continued abuses of the "12-Hour Rules" (i.e., the two-watch system) presses us to offer these further comments on the Coast Guard's "Crew Endurance Management" project.

We have submitted to your agency, and specifically to RADM Pluta, to Commander Close, and to yourself, copies of our book titled Mariners Speak Out on Violation of the 12-Hour Work Day that contain well over 50 cases where mariners were forced to work more than the legal number of hours simply to hold their jobs and feed their families. Yet, your agency has not taken even the first step to investigate a single one of our allegations.

The Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board has recommended and urged all modal agencies within the U.S. Department of Transportation to adopt scientifically based work-hour regulations. However, VADM Josiah, Coast Guard Chief of Staff, replied in effect that this could not be done. We disagree.

In regard to working hours, our protests to date have concerned cases where mariners illegally work in excess of 12 hours in a 24-hour period. However, we are also concerned with attempts to fragment and otherwise infringe upon our mariners' off-duty hours.

Specifically, we find it extremely difficult to correlate the U.S. Coast Guard Guide for the Management of Crew Endurance Risk Factors, Report #CG-D-13-01, Final Report, September 2001 that repeatedly calls for 7 to 8

hours of uninterrupted sleep with your statements and attempts to juggle the existing 6 & 6 watch schedules of river mariners to a 7 & 5/ 5 & 7 hour watch schedule. The Coast Guard report cited above, starting on page 1-1, repeatedly and uncompromisingly states that anything less than 7 to 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep is insufficient sleep duration. The report also emphasizes the necessity for "uninterrupted sleep." Further, the report does not even consider the two-watch system as being a viable alternative to a three-watch system or any other system under consideration.

We do not believe that a 7 & 5 followed by a 5 & 7 hour watch schedule allows for a full 7 to 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep. In addition, the irregularity of the schedule itself tends to be disruptive.

Report #CG-D-13-01 was designed to remedy problems with the Coast Guard's own personnel. These problems came into plain view, especially to Congress as a result of the S V MORN-ING DEW accident in 1997 where, among other things, one key Coast Guard watchstander on 24-hour duty

was asleep at the time of the incident and another was insufficiently trained to act responsibly. Of course, the \$19,000,000 settlement against the Coast Guard served to emphasize the point.

Since GCMA's visit to Capitol Hill last September both before and after the MERPAC/TSAC meeting, many Congressmen and Senators now know "up close and personal" about our mariners' problems with abuses of the 12-hour rule.

Well, LT Calhoun, lower-level mariners are human beings, too. They have to have their sleep and a little leeway when they can't get to sleep aboard ship for any number of understandable reasons. They need to be well-rested when they join the vessel. They cannot afford to stand two consecutive watches during certain types of crew changes--which are only two of the problems faced by undermanned vessels.

The existing two-watch system, extended over a period of time, stretches "crew endurance." Eating, bathing, and simply relaxing slashes 7 to an eas-

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UNDERMANNING ON "SUPER" CREWBOATS REVEALED IN TIDEWATER'S LETTER TO USCG

One method of exploiting lower-level mariners working in the offshore oil industry was revealed by Larry T. Rigdon, Senior Vice-President, Tidewater, Inc., in a letter addressed to Coast Guard Docket #USCG-1997-3198 on June 1, 1998.

GCMA finds it very significant that copies of this letter also were e-mailed to and initialed by Captain William C. Bennett at the National Maritime Center (NMC). Captain Bennett's branch at NMC controls the nation's merchant marine personnel. Senior officers in this branch apparently were unwilling to step in to protect "lower-level" mariners working on large, undermanned "super" crewboats or to protect the environment. They simply ignored the message.

"Super" crewboats are under 100 gross tons. Their Certificates of Inspection do not require a trained

Tankerman (PIC) to take charge of pumping the large quantities of fuel, liquid mud, liquid chemicals and other pollutants at the dock or at offshore destinations. In contrast, on inland waterways, a trained and properly certificated Tankerman (PIC) must pump liquid cargo. Their Certificates of Inspection do not even require the vessels to carry an engineer.

Chances are, if you hold a license, you will be held responsible for an oil spill. Also, with a license, you may be the only person with enough knowledge of the engine room to change the oil on 3, 4, or 5 main engines and several generators. This is another example the Coast Guard overlooks and thereby allows potentially unsafe conditions to exist. In the e-mail that follows the emphasis by underlining is the GCMA's.]

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ANNUAL GCMA ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 15, 2002

A formal "Notice of Election" for three vacant positions on the GCMA Board of Directors was mailed to all GCMA members. The information packet you received contains these papers:

- GCMA election rules and procedures
- A form designating (either) a family member or another designated GCMA member to nominate and vote in your absence.
- A form for a designated family member or another designated GCMA member to accept the nomination for a member who can't be at the meeting.

GCMA annual dues must be paid in full by the close of business at 5:00 p.m. on Friday April 12, 2002 so that full members can vote in Monday's election. GCMA Associate members do not have voting privileges.

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES: The election on April 15, 2002 as well as the regular monthly membership meetings on Monday: March 18, April 15, May 20 and June 17 are scheduled for 7:00 p.m. at the Lafourche Merchant Marine Training School, 130 Rue de Chene, Raceland, LA (near the junction of US Route 90 and LA Route 1).

TOWING VESSEL REPORT CONSIDERED

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level" mariners who work on uninspected towing vessels do not have the same degree of workplace safety as mariners who serve on vessels inspected by the Coast Guard. Our report lists 49 major omissions in the rules that govern "uninspected" vessels as compared to those regulating "inspected" vessels of comparable size.

TSAC member and attorney Ms. Laurie Frost Wilson, after scanning the report at the TSAC meeting on September 27, 2001, asked to study all background material GCMA based its report on. After carefully reviewing the material before the January 2002 working group meeting, Ms. Wilson suggested that the working group recommend to the full TSAC committee that a sub-committee review each of the 49 points presented in the report with an eye to proposing solutions for the problems facing mariners.

Ensuring Safe Conditions

GCMA views this as significant preliminary step. TSAC is an advisory committee appointed by the Secretary of Transportation that can offer recommendations to the Coast Guard on matters that affect the towing industry. In light of the recent Supreme Court decision, we believe that GCMA Report #R-276 highlights specific shortcomings on the part of both OSHA and the Coast Guard to enforce the fundamental purpose of the 1970 Occupational Safety and Health Act's that is "to assure so far as possible every working

man and woman in the nation safe and healthful working conditions."

What are these regulatory omissions? GCMA Report #R-276 lists 49 points as a starting point for discussion. The recent focus on OSHA's audit revealed eight additional areas that need to be considered. See *GCMA Report #R-276* available from GCMA on request.

Mariners who work on uninspected towing vessels have a right to work in a safe workplace. When they reported to the Coast Guard for workplace violation, they found a government agency that was so overwhelmed with many other concerns to give attention to 32,000 towing vessels...and that was before 11"

Clearly, each one of the shortcomings listed in Report #R-276 do not exist on every uninspected towing vessel in the industry. However, on vessels where a number of deficiencies do exist, mariners often must work under substandard and even dangerous conditions. Consequently, we believe that a comprehensive set of federal regulations...establishing minimum standards for all towing vessels comparable to regulations that govern other classes of commercial vessels is long overdue.

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GCMA CONDEMNS THE PRACTICE OF BLACKBALLING

Our principles: The Gulf Coast Mariners Association strongly condemns the widespread practice many employers follow in "blackballing" our licensed and certificated lower-level mariners.

Drug & Alcohol Record Follows You By Law

"Blackballing" or "black listing" is an effective way for an employer or former employer to ruin any mariner's career for any reason whatsoever. In its most basic form, it provides a means for an employer to avoid hiring someone else's undesirable employees. The first steps occur when a prospective employer asks you to fill out an employment application that asks you to list the names of your last three employers. There is nothing illegal about this.

In fact, new DOT regulations¹¹

require that "...as an employer you must after obtaining an employee's written consent, request the (following) information about the employee...from DOT-regulated employers¹² who have employed the employee during any period during the two years before the date of the employee's application or transfer:

- (1) Alcohol tests with a result of 0.04 or higher alcohol concentration;
- (2) Verified positive drug tests;
- (3) Refusals to be tested (including verified adulterated or substituted drug test results);
- (4) Other violations of DOT agency¹³ drug and alcohol testing regulations (etc.)... [¹¹Refer to 49 CFR 40.25(a)(b) effective August 1, 2000. ¹²e.g. other boat companies. ¹³The U.S. Coast Guard is an example of a "DOT Agency."]

So, your "drug and alcohol" record must follow you from job to job. That record also may include any drug and alcohol use relative to your driving record. Remember that the Coast Guard checks your driving record at the National Drivers Register (NDR) with your permission at license renewal or upgrade time! A bad report here can destroy your future in the entire transportation system!

Now we get off the highway and into the grass when your "new" employer checks your record with your former employer(s). This is an area that a reputable employer approaches very cautiously. Other employers cherish their connections with the "good ole boy" system. This is an area where an individual mariner

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THE LOADED EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

[Contribution by Michael E. Shelton, Esq.]

The story started with an employment application that a GCMA member found so invasive of his privacy that he refused to fill it out and reconsidered working for the company. He took his 20+ years of service as a river pilot and went to work somewhere else...and sent us the employment application.

We asked our team of maritime attorneys whether the specific fifteen items called for in the application were "legal" questions to ask. Houston attorney Michael E. Shelton¹¹ provided this response. [¹¹Michael E. Shelton, Esq., 5615 Kirby Drive, Suite 300, Houston, TX 77005. Phone: (713) 807-0700; 1 (800) 423-9745; FAX: (713) 807-0713.]

QUESTION #3. Have you ever been given a Coast Guard letter of warning or been assessed a civil penalty for violation of maritime or environmental regulations? If Yes, please explain.

QUESTION #4. Have you had a spill to the deck or water in the past 12 months? If Yes, where and when?

[Comment by Mr. Shelton regarding Questions 3 and 4: Though a prospective employer is able to ask this, an applicant would not have to answer. The practical effect is that employment would be refused.]

QUESTION #6. I certify that the facts contained in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any falsified statements on this application or omission of fact on either this application or during the pre-employment process will result in my application being rejected, or, if I am hired, in my employment being ter-

minated.

[Comment by Mr. Shelton: I have run into this in suits where the seaman didn't tell the truth about some history and the defendant will invariably argue that if they had been told the truth the seaman would not have been hired, i.e., that this was a "threshold" requirement.]

QUESTION #9. I voluntarily consent to all such examinations, screenings and investigation. I release (XYZ Company), its officers, employees and agents from any claims arising from any information obtained from such examinations, screenings and investigations.

[Comment by Mr. Shelton: This would concern me. I can easily see an employer using this to "blackball" a seaman and with this language maybe get away with it.]

QUESTION #10. Employment at (XYZ Company) is on an "at-will" basis and is for no definite period and may, regardless of the date or method of payment of wages or salary, be terminated at any time with or without cause. Other than the president of (XYZ Company), no supervisor, manager, or other persons, irrespective of title or position, has authority to alter the at-will status of your employment or to enter into any employment contract with you. Any agreement with you altering your at-will employment status must be in writing and signed by the President of XYZ Company.

[Comment by Mr. Shelton: Texas is an "at will" state; this is legal here. Additional GCMA Comment: The same is true

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GCMA CONDEMNS BLACKBALLING

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seeking employment literally "with hat in hand" is most vulnerable.

"Would You Rehire?" Is More Subjective

Some but not all employers use a service that maintains records of employment. This service is known to mariners as "Pretiem" or the "Marine Index Bureau" ("MIB") or "Hirechek." This service provides information to employers for a fee. "Pretiem" must also provide a mariner with a copy of their files upon request. GCMA has the request forms available! [Request GCMA Report R-306.]

A "blackball" may be based on something serious such as negligence, incompetence, or misconduct—the "big three" generalizations that could, if reported, bring you before a Coast Guard Administrative Law Judge. At the other end of the scale, a blackball can result from a personality conflict, a misunderstanding, failing to place the concerns of your employer above those of your family, refusing to work beyond 12-hours a day, refusing to operate an unsafe vessel, or someone's pet peeve passed along with a simple "NO" or a quick "X" or check mark. In using the blackball, your employer is your judge and jury. The penalty is simply the word "NO" as an answer to the question "Would you rehire?" on a Pretiem report.

GCMA Will Fight Practice

The "blackball" practice in the marine industry operating in the Coast Guard's Eighth District is pervasive. It is one of the principal tools that employers use to keep their employees in line. It has caused many good people to leave the industry with their talent and accumulated years of experience. The blackball is applied without complying with any code of fairness and in the absence of any uniform set of standards. It is a millstone around the neck of an industry that holds less and less attraction for fewer and fewer available candidates who have a real

interest in making a career on workboats of any type. The blackball wastes valuable training dollars, both public and private, to train a person for a career and then cashier him or her because of irritating the wrong person.

The key to this issue is each individual mariner. Your employment record is your own responsibility. If an employer does not want you back

because of something you did wrong or failed to do, that may well be your fault. If so, live with it and learn by it! However, you owe it to yourself to find out if any previous employer "stabbed you in the back" with an unfair "Would NOT rehire" notation.

At the GCMA, we will attempt to give our members any guidance we are able to give should the mariner feel he or she has been "blackballed."

THE LOADED EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

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in Louisiana and in many other states. Some employees who work for a company for years often fail to realize the "at-will" status of their employment until it is too late. Recall p. 20 GCMA's Sept. Oct. Newsletter where Captain Kevin D. Kelly received the "Silver Shaft Award" from ACBL after 26 years of service! A properly negotiated union contract gives company employees definite enforceable rights.]

QUESTION #11. A consumer report and/or an investigative consumer report including information concerning your character, employment history, general reputation, personal characteristics, police record, education, qualifications, motor vehicle record, mode of living, and or credit and indebtedness may be obtained in connection with your application for and continued employment with the Company. A consumer report containing injury and illness records and medical information may be obtained after a tentative offer of employment has been made. Upon timely written request of the Human Resources Department of the Company, and within 5 days of the request, the name, address and phone number of the reporting agency and the nature and scope of the consumer report will be disclosed to you.

[Comment by Mr. Shelton: This concerns me. It is way too much big brother! What possible concern could a credit rating be for qualifications for a seaman to his employer. Under Item #9, the employer could disclose this to the

world with impunity. Additional GCMA Comment: A credit report shows an employer how desperate you may be for a job in his company and, indirectly, how far he can push you once you are employed. More about these "pretiem" reports appears in this newsletter.]

QUESTION #13. I authorize any investigator or representative of the Company bearing this release to obtain information from schools, residential management agents, employers, criminal justice agencies, or individuals, relating to my activities. This information may include, but is not limited to, academic, residential, achievement, performance, attendance, personal history, disciplinary, arrest, conviction records, and prior drug and alcohol testing.

[Comment by Mr. Shelton: (This) would allow an employer (not just a prospective employer) to have access to virtually every facet of the seaman's life. (It is) way too broad in my opinion for what an employer needs to know. Also, (it) could be released to the world under #9 (above).]

QUESTION #15. I release any individual, including record custodians, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me on account of compliance, or any attempt to comply with this authorization.

[Comment by Mr. Shelton: A global release like this would allow an employer or prospective employer to walk away free even if information was maliciously disclosed.]

DOT RELEASES REPORT ON USCG SEARCH & RESCUE PERSONNEL; FINDINGS SHOW FATIGUE AND LACK OF TRAINING ARE PROBLEMS

The Department of Transportation Inspector General submitted a landmark report on its audit of the Coast Guard's small boat station search and rescue program on September 14, 2001, just three days after the terrorist acts on New York City and the Pentagon. The date is significant because the report obviously reflects the situation that existed before September 11.

In reading the report, GCMA Directors, who understand the frustrations of working on small commercial vessels under 1,600 gross tons and of being ignored by the Coast Guard for years, can sympathize with the substandard treatment the Coast Guard has given many of its own seamen. This report is significant and will not disappear in that it was done in response to congressional direction.

The report deals with the Coast Guard's 188 Search and Rescue (SAR) stations located along the 95,000 miles of U.S. coastline. These stations are authorized 4,049 personnel operating a fleet of 554 rescue boats 57 feet in length or less. During fiscal year 2000, they responded to 40,068 calls for help from recreational boaters and other mariners in distress. These responses assisted 54,368 people and saved 3,365 lives. More than 90 percent of all offshore SAR missions occur between 0 and 10 nautical miles of the U.S. coast line.

The statistics are impressive and are meant to be. But the full story behind these statistics touches a very sore spot with us because the internal organizational problems Coastguardsmen face are usually masked from public view...as are problems our mariners face. All the public sees are the spotless white boats appearing in public news releases. The report revealed certain significant points...ones that we will issue our (probably unwelcome) comments on:

- "Staff shortages require boat crews at 90% of SAR stations to work an average of 84 hours per week."¹ Although that figure is the same fig-

ure worked by our "lower-level" mariners under the "two-watch" system. It is interesting to note that "...eighty-four (84) hour workweeks exceed Coast Guard's sixty-eight (68) hour workweek standard established in 1988."² The standard was established to limit the fatigue and stress among station personnel. The same Coast Guard officers that violate their own policies see nothing wrong with turning a blind eye to the violations of the 84-hour workweeks our mariners protest. [*Executive Summary, p.1* Refer to *Commandant Instruction M5312.11A, Staffing Standards Manual.*]

To this point, GCMA has been fighting the abuse of the two-watch system that leaves 12-hour days as only a starting point. Does the Coast Guard ignore our mariners because they also ignore their own mariners' needs? Guess what! This policy backfires on them as it has backfired in the towing and offshore oil sectors of the marine industry! The "Coast Guard acknowledged that experience levels have declined throughout the service due to personnel leaving the Coast Guard for various reasons." [*Report, p.3*]

- "There is no formal entry-level training for boatswain's mates, who are key SAR staff and comprise one of the largest of the Coast Guard's enlisted job specialties"...accounting for 65% of the coxswains and boat crew members assigned to stations. The report points out that no formal school exists for active duty boatswain's mates. While formal schooling for these ratings scored a flat goose egg, Public Affairs Specialists receive 12 weeks of training. Perhaps that explains why the Coast Guard gets "good press." Just read the newspaper, watch TV, go to the movies. No good rescue at sea takes place without inevitable press coverage. Without press coverage, it is a non-event. Good old on-the-job training (OJT) is how it's done in the

Coast Guard and just like it was done before 1998 in the oil patch...that's before STCW arrived. [*Executive Summary, p.ii*]

- "84% percent of the standard rescue boat fleet inspected by the Coast Guard in FY2000 were found 'Not Ready for Sea' for reasons that were often corrected within two days of the initial inspection." The Coast Guard Commandant wanted to quibble with the words and introduce a new term that would state the vessels were "Not Fully Mission Capable." The Inspector General balked at changing his report because..."The audit report uses data from inspections conducted by some of the Coast Guard's most experienced small boat personnel using the Coast Guard's own inspection standards."³ Zappo! [*Report, p.29*]
- "The Coast Guard has not requested funding to either replace or extend the useful life of its 41-foot utility boat fleet, which is reaching the end of its service life."⁴ 92% of their 41-foot utility boats have been in service for over 20 years. According to the Coast Guard, these vessels have an average of 3 years of engine life and 8 years of hull life remaining. Based on past procurement projects, designing, constructing and deploying a replacement has taken three years or more in the past...and they haven't even asked Congress for the money. [*Executive Summary, p.ii*]
- "Over the last 5 years, the ratio of trainer to trainee has declined from 5.5 to 1 to (only) 1.5 to 1 increasing the on-the-job training workload for experienced staff and diminishing the overall quality of on-the-job training." [*Executive Summary, p.ii*]

The GCMA is concerned that Coast Guard personnel face these conditions. We are not only concerned for the Coast Guard's employees, but also for the mariners who rely on the Coast Guard's search and rescue program in times of emergency.

MARINER INPUT NEEDED ON FATIGUE ISSUE AND 12-HOUR RULE

Continued from page 3

ily predictable 6 hours and 5 to 4 hours that falls far short of the 7 to 8 hours Report #CG-D-13-01 calls for. And, the sleep deficit only builds up as time passes.

The two trade associations that you appear to cater to, namely the American Waterways Operators (AWO) and the Offshore Marine Services Association (OMSA) are the organizations whose members profit from the exploitation of lower-level mariners. AWO deals primarily with uninspected vessels while OMSA deals primarily (but not exclusively) with inspected vessels. As for the offshore oil industry, the manning levels have been reduced so low that personnel seldom if ever have the opportunity to gain adequate sleep. The Coast Guard and the vessel owners (and their trade association) are responsible for setting appropriate manning levels. Many OSVs do not even post meaningful watch schedules because undermanning makes their work schedules hopelessly irregular. Mariners do not even enter into the picture of setting manning levels. [Refer to GCMA Report #R-279...]

Even though you may have seen people happy or even delighted with 7 & 5 / 5 & 7 watches as opposed to 6 & 6 watches, I hope you realize that you were dealing with a captive audience working with full crews for reputable companies. In your letter, you stated that: "We are continuing to learn more about the industry and we feel this is an excellent opportunity." To the contrary, by ignoring the real mariners—as when you ignore us—you are simply allowing yourself to be flattered and conned by the experts. I suggest you read our book and our reports to learn about the lives of lower-level mariners and then act both appropriately and responsibly. Very truly yours, s/Richard A. Block, Secretary/GCMA



TIDEWATER LETTER REVEALS UNDERMANNING ON CREWBOATS

Continued from page 3

To Whom It May Concern:

The following pages contain a response to the USCG request for industry input concerning the establishment of alternate tonnage design criteria and/or thresholds. Tidewater, Inc. (Tidewater) would like to offer some general information about the negative impact that existing tonnage design criteria are having on one segment of the offshore petroleum industry, and we will provide a Tidewater response to the alternative tonnage questions provided by the USCG for industry consideration.

In general, it is agreed that any design criteria, which incorporate tonnage reduction techniques, can be manipulated to allow very high risk or unsafe vessel operations. Tidewater cannot emphasize enough our support for continuing action to stop tonnage manipulation resulting in the operation of vessels at high risk or in unsafe conditions. In order to help illustrate the significant risk associated with tonnage manipulation, Tidewater has provided examples of aggressive manipulation of the U.S. tonnage regulations in this document.

A primary example of the manipulation of tonnage reduction techniques is the current "super" crewboat, (actually a fast supply boat). The "super" crewboat class, is made up of vessels between 150 and 200 feet in length, are powered by up to 6,000 horsepower and are remarkably under 100 U.S. Gross Tons. These vessels can be and are typically operated by a four (4) person crew, composed of one master with an under-100 GT USCG license and three (3) ordinary seamen. None of these individuals are required to have any engineering based training. The only requirement for the three ordinary seamen is the completion of basic safety training under STCW.

These new "super" crewboats are actually working as offshore supply vessels, not as crewboats. The "super" crewboats routinely operate at speeds

in excess of 20 knots, around the clock, while carrying up to 400 tons of cargo consisting of general oilfield supplies and equipment, fuel, water, and containerized items, including dry cement and barite in portable tanks. In the same manner of operation as an OSV, this cargo is off-loaded at offshore rigs and platforms either through transfer by crane or by pumping the liquids or dry bulk cement and barite off the vessel utilizing the vessel crew. Unlike an OSV, none of the crewmembers of the "super" crewboat are required to be DDE licensed engineers or tankermen. We do not believe that this is what the rule-makers envisioned when the Subchapter T rules were first drafted. Manipulation of this type should be stopped.

It is Tidewater's opinion that operators are deploying "super" crewboats (really aluminum supply boats with passenger seats) as OSVs, to avoid the training impact of STCW, with fewer crewmembers with less training. Tidewater can evidence that recently delivered 165 foot "super" crewboats, built with three (3) main engines of 2,000 horsepower each are only required to have a crew of four (4) persons having the absolute minimum qualifications described above. This compares to the most recent new build 200 foot plus offshore supply vessels with only two (2) main engines of 2,000 horsepower each which is required by its COI to have a highly qualified crew of nine (9) persons.¹⁰ [GCMA Comment: Mr. Rigdon knows that many 200 foot OSVs operate with far fewer than 9 persons!]

Having cited only a single (extreme) example of the potential hazards associated with tonnage reduction schemes, Tidewater recommends no further consideration be given to the future use of any (including the current U.S. Regulatory) tonnage reduction techniques. Instead, the USCG should focus all its attention on the use of "International" tonnage and the establishment of acceptable corresponding thresholds for all new construction.

MARINERS SPEAK OUT

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

In this section of the newsletter, mariners can tell their own stories. You can tell your story to a GCMA board member who will write it up. You can write it down and send it in. You can take pictures and we'll describe them or run them in the GCMA Newsletter. The stories of several courageous mariners are told in this issue. Please join them and send in your experiences.

MARINER HEALTH ISSUES

By Captain Roland Rodney

[Captain Roland Rodney is a GCMA member and now serves on the National Offshore Safety Advisory Committee.]

I would like to bring to your attention a very serious and on-going situation that arises when many mariners renew their licenses with the Coast Guard. In many cases, the Coast Guard requires a special medical report from a physician when a mariner's physician reports high blood pressure. In one case I know of, a mariner has had to pay in one up to \$12,000 to complete the process of renewal.

Good health is vitally important to all working mariners. One of the keys to maintaining good nutrition and good eating habits. Yet, on many vessels in the Gulf of Mexico and the western rivers (and on many other companies) do not provide good food and the vessels are not well-maintained on a regular basis. This is true on towing vessels, other support vessels, and offshore supply vessels where their crews are operated for long periods of time.

Good eating habits, good nutrition, and good health are essential for a crew member to perform his or her job. One or simply being healthy is not enough. The "Food Handler" document that is required by the Coast Guard demands no less. The Coast Guard demands no less than a "Food Handler" document that is signed by a physician. On inland waterways, many mariners document their health status, but even a basic medical examination or assessment is not required. This is a most basic sanitation and health requirement!

After using the "Food Handler" document as a sign of health, it is a reminder of the fact that the Coast Guard requires a "Food Handler" document for all vessels intending to operate in the Gulf of Mexico. The Coast Guard requires a "Food Handler" document for all vessels intending to operate in the Gulf of Mexico.

eration of its nutritional preparation.

On vessels in 24-hour service, proper food preparation is essential to maintain the so-called 12-hour rule. Diet on board is especially important to the crew on board these vessels. This is borne out by a recent Coast Guard report that deals with the health of crew members on their own cutters! What's good for the goose should be good for the gander!

On vessels where our mariners work continuously for as much as 3 months on and 1 month off, or 28 days on and 14 off, we work on board these vessels and away from our families. What use are we to our families without our good health?

CONCERN FOR DRUG TESTING PROCEDURES

[A concerned GCMA member recently wrote this letter to Senator John Breaux (D-LA), Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.]

Dear Senator Breaux,

I recently e-mailed you and previously wrote to you about drug abuse on inland towing vessels; and you did help with the problem. This is why I am following up my e-mail.

Senator, drug use on the inland waterways today is out of control. In spite of DOT and USCG regulations, there are NO pre-employment drug tests done by some of the companies. I just worked for a company that in its "random" drug testing of employees, would tell everyone a month ahead.

Some companies bail previous employees who were busted for drug use or drug dealing out of jail, hire them lawyers, and then put them back to work on their boats.

By doing this, the employers now have leverage. When they put drug abusers back on their boats, they pay them very low wages because they lit-

Good health is one of our most precious possessions!

In contrast, we see Coast Guard vessels leaving ports for sea with cooks on board. We see rigs and platforms with cooks that are trained to know the variety of food needed to maintain a good diet and that the food must be stored at the right temperature and cooked properly. On some vessels, the crew's fondest wish is a hot plate of good, healthful food sent down in the basket by a thoughtful cook on the rig! It can make your day much brighter.

We ask all concerned, especially maritime employers as well as the Coast Guard that documents "Food Handlers" to look seriously into these matters. We believe it should be mandatory that a trained and disease-free cook be required on these vessels that are in 24-hour service in the towing and offshore oil industry.

erally hold their future in their hands. It is nothing more than slave labor in an industry that can no longer attract legitimate help.

Now, if word reaches the U.S. Coast Guard, you are tagged as a trouble maker, blackballed and will not be able to find work. There are companies that even go as far as to pretest their crews to find out who can pass a piss test. The companies use this knowledge of a "positive" drug test on their employees. They buy your silence if not your "loyalty." They know that you probably won't quit and that you don't have a case on them even if you do. Random drug testing is used when they want to fire someone or keep someone in line. There are companies that give their own test by their own administrator that they sent to school to get certification.

We really need your help on towing vessels because we fully understand that drugs support terrorism! Senator, I would very much like to talk to you in person about this matter and get into specifics!

Yours Truly, s Name withheld

RIVER MARINERS: MORE HOURS, LESS PAY

[Sometimes our mariners lose track of what takes place in the rest of the "world of work." Richard M. Plant and Captain Bob Flannigan of the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots (IOMM&P) regularly correspond with their river mariner members. Edited extracts from a recent newsletter appear below.]

The article below was recently published in the newspaper. We thought this might be of interest to river mariners.

AMERICANS WORKING MORE HOURS: HAVE HIGHEST PRODUCTIVITY.

"Americans are working more hours than workers elsewhere in the industrialized world and have the highest productivity rates, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO). The average U.S. worker put in 1,978 hours in 2000, nearly one week more on the job than they did a decade earlier.

"In contrast, hours of workers in Canada, France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom have declined. ILO economist Jeff Johnson, who spearheaded the study, said that the only two countries where people worked more are

South Korea and the Czech Republic."

River mariners work 28 days on and 14 days off. That's 28 days x 12 hours per day = 336 hours. With this rotation, you would work 8 months per year with 4 months off. Therefore, 8 months x 336 hours per month = 2,688 hours worked per year **MINIMUM**. Now let's compare this number to the average U.S. worker of 1,978 hours. That's 2,688 minus 1,978 or **710 hours above the average U.S. worker**. In U.S. worker terms (40 hours per week) that means you worked **ONLY** an average of 710 divided by 40 or **17.75 weeks MORE than John Q. Public**. Isn't it nice to know that maybe you even exceed workers in South Korea or the Czech Republic? Do you feel like you are living in a third world country? You are working, and probably being paid, as if you did!

If you look at a 28 days on and 28 day off rotation then the numbers are as follows. You would work 6 months x 336 hours per = 2,016 hours. That's only 2016 minus 1978 = 38 hours, a little less than 1 week more per year than John Q. Public.

Now, this question arises: How many of you work the 28 days on with 28 days off **WITHOUT TRIPPING?** Any tripping adds to your workload and pushes the numbers even **HIGHER**. Also, how many of you work **NO MORE** than 12 hours per day? Very few we bet. Therefore, you know that you are over-worked. Don't you think that goes along with being **UNDERPAID** based upon your standard of living and of those for the average U.S. citizen?

THE CAPTAIN'S CREED

By: John Paul Jones

The Captain should be the soul of tact, patience, justice, firmness and charity. No meritorious act of a subordinate should escape his attention or be left to pass without its reward, if even the reward be only one word of approval. Conversely, he should not be blind to a single fault in any subordinate though, at the same time, he should be quick and unflinching to distinguish error from malice, thoughtlessness from incompetency, and well-meant shortcoming from heedless and stupid blunders. *[Sent in by GCMA member John LoCicero]*

SUPREME COURT DECISION

Continued from page 2

in NVIC 6-01 for mariners who are expected to fight fires. *[Refer to OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910.155 and 29 CFR 1910.38 that also require employee emergency plans and fire prevention plans.]*

- Provide suitable firefighting equipment to extinguish fires on towing vessels. TSAC is currently looking into this problem.
- Conduct regular inspections for safe drinking water. At present, mariners health is not protected.⁽¹⁾ *[Refer to Food and Drug Administration regulations at 42 CFR Part 72.]*
- Provide sanitary food service conditions.⁽¹⁾ This includes providing trained, healthy cooks and nutritious meals for towing vessel crews when vessel is or may be in service for over 12 hours in any 24-hour period and where food must be handled, stored and cooked on board. *[Consult OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910.141(g) and Food and Drug Administration Regulations at 42 CFR Part 1250.]*

- Inspect and approve the means used to gain safe access to and from towing vessels and barges.⁽¹⁾ *[Refer to 29 CFR 1910.37 and 1910.165(d) and 1910.25 and 1910.26.]*
- Inspect all tugs, towboats and barges for safe footing, guards for manhole covers, safety color code for marking physical hazards, and using non-skid paint on walking surfaces.⁽¹⁾ *[Refer to OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910.144.]*
- Require formal training of towing vessel engineers in main engines, pumps, hydraulic and pneumatic systems, generating equipment, electrical safety, proper use of hand and power tools etc including thorough training in pollution prevention while taking on bunkers.⁽¹⁾ *[Refer to OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910.169, .211, .212, .215, .241, .243, .244, .253, .254, .255, .302, .307, .331, .335, and .440 relative to recordkeeping.]*
- Provide rescue boat training for crew members using skiffs and outboard motors.
- Provide adequate medical training, the availability of timely medical advice by radio to crew members serving on a towing vessel, and pro-

viding the vessel with a well maintained and well stocked inventory of items in a first aid kit.⁽¹⁾ *[Refer to OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910.151.]*

- Require training in Lockout Tagout procedures.⁽¹⁾ *[Refer to OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910.147.]*
- Provide mariners with protection against cold air and water while working on deck with USCG approved exposure suits that also protect against hypothermia if a person falls overboard.

We do not claim that the general OSHA regulations cited above are all well-suited to use aboard vessels, only that they provide a starting point.

The Gulf Coast Mariners Association is working to improve mariner health and welfare. We work with the Coast Guard as members of the public at Towing Safety Advisory Committee meetings and in working groups. If OSHA becomes more deeply involved in the maritime industry in the role of protecting our mariners on uninspected towing vessels, we will offer them our support and expertise and work closely with them. We do not plan to sit back and wait another 30 years!

CONTROLLING SECOND-HAND SMOKE

Towboat Captain Ray Ashford is spearheading the GCMA efforts to control second-hand smoke. Ray says, "I have nothing against smokers...it's just the smoke I can't handle." He provides some solid evidence based on the Surgeon General's report that shows the dangers of smoking as well as the dangers from second-hand smoke.

The recent Supreme Court decision (in

GCMA Report #R-300) points out that mariners serving on uninspected vessels have not received the workplace protections that Congress mandated for most other workers under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. We believe that either OSHA or the Coast Guard will have to see that the mariner's workplace provides mandated protections! The accommodation spaces on any towing vessel serve as an office, as sleeping quar-

ters, and a work area. We opine that the unhealthy shortcomings found on many vessels will become a matter of concern sooner rather than later. If anything is unhealthy, it has to be smoking...and this is borne out by our newsletter article.

Captain Ashford, who is allergic to smoke, points out that mariners are a major group of workers that are left behind and that many vessels have not designated smoking and non-smoking areas. He points out that air handlers in the pilot-

Continued on page 12

DESIGNATED EXAMINERS FOR TOWING VESSELS

The new towing officer licensing regulations have been in effect since May 21, 2001. They have not created much stir to date. So far, the most notable result has been to change the title of the license from Operator of Uninspected Towing Vessels (OUTV) to Master of Towing Vessels. By itself, this is not a big deal!

But, wait! For license candidates who never served on a towing vessel before May 21, 2001, the story is different. It will also be different for individuals reentering the industry after license suspension. Each re-entrant as well as each new "Apprentice Mate Pilot" or "Steersman" must be "assessed" (i.e., evaluated) by a "Designated Examiner" to be certain that he can perform the job of a "towing vessel officer" in the manner the Coast Guard now expects him to perform. This assessment will have to be prepared in writing on a Towing Officer Assessment Record (TOAR) form.

The Coast Guard defines a designated examiner as "...a person who has been trained or instructed in techniques of training or assessment and is otherwise qualified to evaluate whether a candidate for a license, document, or endorsement has achieved the level of competence required." [*The definition comes from NVIC 4-01 available at the Coast Guard's web site on the internet.*]

How do I qualify as a Designated Examiner? NVIC 4-01 states that:

- (1) You must satisfy the requirements in NVIC 6-97: or.
- (2) You must meet the following criteria:
 - (a) Hold a license equal or superior to the one for which you are assessing performance.
 - (b) Possess recent experience in the task you are assessing.
 - (c) Meet one of the following criteria:
 1. Have received formal instruction in techniques of observation

and assessment.

2. Have experience conducting assessments of competence such as assessing junior mates or pilots as part of a program run by a company for training apprentice mates (steersman), or as part of a safety management system.

(3) Requests for approval as a designated examiner are submitted to the National Maritime Center and must include a description of the mariner's qualification specific to the tasks to be assessed. [*NVIC 6-97 is also available on the Internet*]

WHAT IS A TOAR?

All of this looks pretty formal, and it is and it is supposed to be. After all, the Coast Guard Regional Exam Center (REC) will "evaluate" each candidate's Towing Officer Assessment Record (TOAR) to ensure that the person is properly assessed and really knows how to handle a towing vessel. For new mariners and for many "old hands," this may be a whole new world comparable in many ways to changes facing offshore mariners who serve on vessels over 200 gross tons who must prepare for STCW.

The TOAR is essentially a check-off list that tells not only which items a Designated Examiner must evaluate but also how they must be evaluated... "performance evaluation criteria" if you like to use big words...and most of us don't!

Readers of the GCMA News will have a unique experience to look at the brand-new TOARs in their draft form. There are four different TOARs check lists. The TOAR form that a Designated Examiner will use to evaluate an Apprentice Mate Pilot, a Steersman, or a person reentering the field after his license is restored depends upon what route that person will operate on. There are separate TOARs for each route, specifically:

- Near Coastal & Ocean [Request Form #R-287A]
- Inland & Great Lakes [Request Form #R-287B]
- Western Rivers [Request Form #R-287C]
- Limited (local areas) [Request Form #R-287D]

While there are certain common points about all TOARs, each of the four TOARs is different. If you either plan to become a Designated Examiner

or must be "assessed" with a TOAR in the future, we encourage you to ask us for a copy of the form that you want (as listed above) so we can mail it to you and you can examine it.

The TOAR was designed by a subcommittee of the Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC), a federal advisory committee that works with the Coast Guard on towing industry matters. Before TSAC presents the final draft of these TOARs to the Coast Guard for their acceptance this Fall, they would like to have your opinion as a towing vessel officer as to whether you will have a problem using the TOAR as a check list or if can give helpful suggestions based on your experience. If you think that something needs to be changed, TSAC will want to know about it before the TOAR is finally etched in stone. Remember, over 800 comments that mariners gave the Coast Guard resulted in many changes to licensing rules they originally proposed in the mid-1990s.

When you receive the TOAR form requested, look it over carefully. Make any written pertinent comment you wish on a separate piece of paper (hopefully objective, professional comments avoiding profanity) and return your comments to GCMA. We will forward your reply to the Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) and represent valid mariner concerns at the next TSAC meeting. Please include any questions you may want answered in writing and tell us what job you perform in the towing industry. This will be your only opportunity to comment on this important TOAR draft document before it is goes into use, probably within the next year.

SMOKING — *Continued from page 11*

house and crew accommodations simply recirculate heated and cooled air and all crewmembers, smokers and non-smokers alike are forced to breathe second-hand smoke. He has worked on boats that "are constantly burning around the clock."

Captain Ashford is *not out to ban smoking*, only to do as the Coast Guard does on its own ves-

sels, namely prohibit it indoors but allow it on the weather decks. He has been on the phone to OSHA field offices. Even more important, Captain Ashford has lined up an attorney who may be prepared to take on a class action lawsuit on behalf of mariners. Whether this is a "puff" or a "promise" we do not yet know. However, to turn it from a "puff" into a "promise", we need to collect the names of other mariners who would be interested in pursuing such a course of action if it

turns out to be feasible. If you are interested in supporting Captain Ashford, please put your name and address and a check mark on the "CLIP THE COUPON" page.

GCMA's Role

Since this is a matter that is important to the health and welfare of every crew member, it is worthy of our support. We reiterate that Captain Ashford is not seeking to "prohibit" smoking, only to control where it takes place.



DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE ANY GCMA SPECIAL REPORTS?

Please fill out the form, clip the coupon on the dotted lines, enclose it in an envelope, add the proper postage and send it to the GCMA at: P.O. Box 3589, Houma, LA 70361-3589.

We send the GCMA News to over 6,000 mariners. We encourage those readers who have not yet joined to become a part of our Association and to help our drive to improve the working conditions in the marine industry. Our members already know we are a good source of information. We offer the following reports free to our members. However, we request a donation in an amount of your choosing from non-members for the following reports to cover our expenses and help us reach other mariners.

These reports are our major issues:

- #R-276. Towing Vessel Inspection Standards. (10 pages)
- #R-279. Review and Set Safe Manning Standards for Offshore Supply Vessels and Uninspected Towing Vessels. (7 pages)
- #R-291 Establishing Logbook Standards for Lower-Level Mariners. (8 pages).
- #R-293 Towing Vessel Bridge Allision and Related Background Issues. (12 pages).
- #R-294 45 Musts for Effective Watchkeeping. (3 pages).
- #R-292 Enforcement of Existing Accident and Injury Reporting Requirements. (4 pages).
- #R-300 Supreme Court of the United States: Chao, Secretary of Labor v. Mallard Bay Drilling, Inc. (12 pages)

Other reports:

- R-204. Relinquishing Control of Your Vessel. USCG vs. Michael James Barrios. Commandant Decision on Appeal (appeal). (2 pages).
- R-208. GCMA Resolution on Lifesaving Equipment for Offshore Supply Vessels (OSV) and Uninspected Towing Vessels. (2 pages).
- R-235. Cold Water Protection for Inland Deck Crews. (4 pgs).
- R-236. Relinquishing Control of a Towing Vessel to an Unlicensed Crew Member. (2 pages).

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

I AM/ I AM NOT A GCMA Member

I AM A GCMA MEMBER I UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE REPORTS WILL BE SENT TO ME FREE OF CHARGE

I AM NOT A GCMA MEMBER ENCLOSED IS MY CONTRIBUTION OF \$_____ TO HELP OFFSET THE MAILING COSTS

GCMA MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Please fill out the survey, clip the coupon on the dotted lines, enclose it in an envelope, add the proper postage and send it to the GCMA at: P.O. Box 3589, Houma, LA 70361-3589.

If you are a member of the GCMA, please fill out this survey and mail it back to the GCMA. Your responses will help us serve you better.

Scheduling 2002 GCMA Meetings

Depending upon the response from our readers as shown by the returns mailed or faxed back to us, we will consider holding a membership meeting in one or more of these areas. Please put a check mark next to the area where you would like us to hold a GCMA membership meeting. (As you know, currently our monthly membership meetings are held in Raceland, Louisiana (near Houma). We will notify you if there are enough responses:

- Lafayette, New Iberia, LA area.
- New Orleans, LA area.
- Beaumont, Port Arthur, TX area.
- Biloxi, Gulfport MS area.
- Mobile, AL area.
- Memphis, TN area.

What subjects do you want us to discuss at our monthly membership meetings? _____

Joining a GCMA Committee

I would like to get more involved with the GCMA. I would like to join and participate in the work of one of the GCMA's committees:

- Growth and Activity (responsible for membership recruitment and the annual fundraiser, crawfish boil, among other projects)
- Mutual Aid and Protection (takes up cases of individual mariners and tries to provide assistance)
- Licensing, Training and Education (considers issues before the USCG and other regulatory bodies and advocates for the interests of mariners)

Controlling Second-hand Smoke.

I want to support Captain Ray Ashford and will sign up on his project.

My name, address and phone number appear below.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

