

SEPTEMBER CURRENTS SUPPLEMENT SPECIAL

Tuggin' To Canada—Summer 2008

CAPT Keith F. Graham

Fulfillment as a maritime educator arrives in many modes. The occasional call, an email exchange, and the unannounced alumni visit during an evening office hour have all served to enhance the academic experience as well as offset the 60 mile one way trek to present as an evening adjunct. A picture postcard and note from a port call in Singapore is not only a keepsake but instant validation for a teacher.

Durable relationships have been built in the classroom and survive time, careers, and much change. After 33 years, I am now teaching cadets who are children of cadets who earlier cycled through my International Maritime Law, Admiralty, Contract Law (before it became Business Law), Environmental Law, Engineering Ethics, or who acquired the Law Option (before it evolved into the popular Law Minor.) But as much as I glean from lecturing, mentoring, and advising, ultimately it is not about me; rather it is about our graduates facing the brave new maritime world, off to succeed armed with their CMA diploma and accumulated nautical acumen.

Downstream, should those graduates call and extend the invitation to come see the real life application of their classroom learning or wish you to observe and participate in the business of going to sea, it is an uncommon opportunity...one not to be missed. So when my call was received in the Summer of 2008, it only took a momentary reflection about leaving the management of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's experimental test site in the Tracy Hills to others and purchase a plane ticket for SEA-TAC.

The caller was my friend of nearly two decades, David Joseph, Class of 1992, Business Administration with Law Minor. On his arrival at CMA, peer and faculty consensus quickly pronounced David as a sure winner in the maritime world with the reservation that he survive his own zeal for adventure. Since graduation, following his sea star has

When Cal Maritime Professor of Admiralty and International Maritime Law Keith Graham got a call from a former student inviting him to ride along on a working tugboat in the Pacific Northwest this summer, he jumped at the chance. David Joseph (Business/Law '92) had already enjoyed a widely varied career on the water and today is owner/operator of Pacific Northwest Marine Services and the deepwater ocean-going tug, THE ANNE CARLANDER. Joseph and two other Cal Maritime alumni (Pat Bender and Steve Velie) invited him to come along from Tacoma as they took a barge load of cargo from Seattle and then retrieved another barge of scrap cars in British Columbia, Canada on the return leg.



CAPT. Keith Graham with CMA Grads Steve Velie, Pat Bender and David Joseph aboard the ocean tug ANNE CARLANDER

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taken David on to towboats to Hawaii; salvage of a Klondike Gold Rush Era steamer in Alaskan waters; Hyundai, USA corporate fleet operations in the Sunbelt; ship agent in bustling Seattle; and finally to being the owner/operator of Pacific Northwest Marine Services with its deepwater tug, the ANNE CARLANDER. Counterpoise to David is Canadian-born wife, Marcy, owner of another maritime enterprise, Gig Harbor Rent-a Boat, and the recreational marina in one of Puget Sound's most scenic communities. Their young children are Dawson and Kaya, who (like so many alums of my classes) now call me "Uncle Keith".

Over the intervening years since graduation, David and I have regularly talked through the legal minefields of business initiatives and commercial undertakings, for example, the environmental regulatory complexities of transnational demolition and scrap metal recovery. At the working level, that business is significantly different (and more challenging) than we ever discussed. Now a chance arrived to experience it firsthand, or, as we lawyers say, be a "percipient witness." Helping round out the noble experiment of returning to shipboard life (for the first non-Navy underway time since someone unwisely allowed me to



steam to EXPO '86 as a member of GOLDEN BEAR's marine engineering complement) was Mate Pat Bender (Class of '93) and Master Steve Velie (Class of '93). En route to the tug, I had also run into Mark Debley (Class of '94) returning to Seattle from sailing as a mate to Pakistan.

With several days of underway wear in a borrowed backpack (my Navy sea bag is perfectly intact... somewhere), my CMA faculty jacket, and an AMIX Heavy Lift ball cap, David and I proceeded from the Joseph household in Gig Harbor and stopped (en route to Safeway) to pick up Pat and meet Cadet Phil Kling, the CMA Summer Intern working for PNWMS (whose stateroom I would soon co-opt on the tug).

The Safeway experience was reminiscent of the old Supermarket Sweep TV show as everyone got to pick out what they wanted to eat during our voyage. The capstone event was a frenzy of ordering Chinese food in cartons from the steam table at the deli. With grub for the galley in the bed of the pickup, we headed toward the Tacoma waterfront, over a new bridge span, and on to Schnitzer Steel, where the ANNE CARLANDER has dedicated pier space. We carried our belongings and groceries up and down ramps of lattice grate deck plates to the ship, tossing them over the stern to Steve Velie and the relief master, Jerry Bell. And so began my brief international odyssey in the tug and barge trade, riding a fully fuel-laden tug, trim and low in the water.

A quick tour of the bridge with its array of navigational devices and computer screens never contemplated on Navy surface ships of the 70's, was followed by a visit to the engineering spaces wearing headphones. Hand signals were the primary means of communication, and, as my students well know, I am deaf enough already, so Pat and I did not overstay in the engine room. Pulling away from the Schnitzer dock one early evening in late July, the tug left Tacoma for Seattle, passing a parade of vessels from an abandoned vintage aluminum car ferry to a state-of-the-art European car carrier. With Seattle preparing for the annual SEAFEST weekend, we also passed the Argentine Re-

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public tall ship, GLORIA, at anchor, its furled white sails radiating the setting sun's light down the masts and across the yards.

By mid-evening the tug was passing into the port of Seattle's inner waterways under fixed bridges; railroad bridges; and lift bridges, with several sets of eyes watching clearance between each one and the extension of the tug's aerials. Finally ahead at a well-lighted dock was our barge, still being loaded by forklifts with 33 containers of recycled building products. With an assist tug standing by, two of our crew were deposited on the barge with the towline bridle. The lights from the shore facilities made for quick work. We were winched up and on our way before 11 PM, re-tracing our intricate track through the Seattle waterfront infrastructure, only this time with a barge and boxes.

I took a long look at Seattle's sparkling metropolitan skyline, the always elegant Space Needle most prominent. Then we headed north out of Puget Sound into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Six hours on/ Six hours off. Two on at all times and although I was fundamentally superfluous aboard, I tried to seakeep each duty cook and take the rotational watch on the bridge.

Passage through the San Juan Islands was as unique, mysterious, and wondrous as reputed, except they were now admired from the weather deck of our passing workboat, ready to "tuck in" should the weather degrade while transiting. Relief Master Jerry Bell's tenure on the tug was almost co-extensive with its service life. During the mid-watch we shared tales of the San Juans as sailors do around the globe, but I was much more the magnet for learning than the imparter of relevant sea laws. I mentally incorporated several pertinent anecdotes into my future lecture material.

Pat and I talked history, our educational first loves, and I listened closely to sailing stories from West Africa where he was a ship master for several years. Steve offered up much knowledge of the local littoral frontiers and integrated instruction in new (to me) navigational equipment. Discussion with David ranged widely: the future of green energy, shipbreaking, trade relations with Asia, maritime commercial business practices, etc., etc. ...the dialogue between businessman and academician; the entrepreneur and the public employee. Of course, all conversations were heavily sprinkled with reminiscences of Academy life, campus exploits of legendary "midshipmen" (no "cadets" in the 90's), and retrospectives on CMA's professoriat (both famous and infamous). We traded updates on students and classmates, all in all enjoying the passing of our time on the bridge, in the galley, on the stern, at the winch, with the ANNE CARLANDER as our underway platform for sea stories and maritime industry news.



In Canada, we entered the ship channel heading up the Fraser River in British Columbia and dropped off our barge of containers. It was familiar territory to the crew. The trip from Tacoma to there and back can be accomplished in as little as 48 hours. We pressed on to locate our load for the return trip: a 60' x 300' barge, the STRAITS COLD DECKER, loaded with crushed cars and scrap, tied up between two buoys and another barge. What followed reminded me of a commercial airline pilot's description of transcontinental flying: four minutes of terror followed by hours of boredom followed by four minutes of terror.

After hours of steaming at 9 knots from Seattle and a quick release of the container barge, lashing up the car barge commenced in the darkness of late evening, with steady precipitation on slick narrow steel passageways, and with protruding car body parts as the thick steel cable towlines were looped over the bollards only to be

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winched up so the entire enterprise could be smartly pulled away from the adjoining barge -- restrained from running aground by a sad configuration of poles, boards, and pipes jerry-rigged from shore. I observed the crew ply their trade, moving between tug and barge, fishing separated lines out of the dark waters with boathooks, maneuvering the tug just inches at a time down the channel side of the barge like a tightrope walker -- careful but confident, and heaving lines apparently effortlessly. Hard tasks, but executed with textbook seamanship skills and inherent nautical savoir faire.



The STRAITS COLD DECKER was stacked with crushed cars configured like a crib, built up into a wall all along the outside of the barge with loose scrap metal loaded inside. No doubt each of the vehicles had a pedigree once; now they were flattened to the point no lines need hold them fast to the barge and their original makes were unascertainable due to extreme deformation. Only the occasional interesting paint color elicited momentary human attachment to the otherwise wrecked steel shapes. By day, the barge would look like a distant diffuse sea-going

junk heap. But by night, especially with the tow line still winched up towering over the tug's stern, it looked like a floating bad B horror movie set. It loomed ominously in the night (and probably in a dream or two while aboard) as if it might ride up, overtake the tug, and keep on going in its quest for more metal. Something roughly the size of a football field was too big to fit into one film frame, even in its narrow dimension. I could only take a photograph of half the bow before we ran out the towline. Eventually, the venture was moving into the channel and we were heading to our homeport of Tacoma.

Did I mention I slept like a dead man aboard (sinister car barge dreams notwithstanding)? After a hiatus of many years, it was the deep, restorative sleep that comes when the throb of a marine engine is one space away...perhaps a variant of the mechanical ticking of a windup alarm clock mimicking the heartbeat of its mother to content the new puppy. Needless to say, it works every time for me. I slept two hours into one "watch" and thankfully everyone was kind enough to let me do so. Of course, in my haste climbing the ladder to the bridge I noisily banged my 6'5" head into a ship fixture...an allusion by another name. Again, everyone in the house was kind enough to let me do so without comment.

Canadian waters had been instructive. Several fishermen ran gillnets from right off the beach into the shipping channel. The helm missed them all, whether they displayed the requisite lights or not. Porpoises, killer whales, and seals all appeared as a reward for scanning the waters ahead. There were whale pods feeding, moving as one large discrete group followed by a smaller group. Going up the Fraser River, bald eagles sat in riparian treetops awaiting the next salmon catch. (Fortunately the wheelhouse had two sets of binoculars to also accommodate our navigation needs.) And, as has been my experience in the maritime world, everyone had a whale story to share, because anyone who has ever observed one in nature perceives their manifest intelligence.

Early in our voyage, the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) Code caught up with me in the

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post 9-11 world. Although teaching ISPS in my International Maritime Law class, I had given no thought to bringing along a passport and/or birth certificate to Canada. The documentation issue arose after we got underway and was not worth the risk to try and solve it with a retired Navy Captain's ID in my wallet. I offered to stay aboard for port calls in Canada, not appreciating that it was the US Dept. of Homeland Security that would come calling once the tug returned to Tacoma. A cell phone call to California at a clear spot in the San Juans retrieved my 28 year expired passport and a certified copy of my Stanislaus County, CA birth certificate...both of which were overnighted to Marcy who would be there to meet the tug (along with DHS) when it returned. The many pre 9-11 trips to Canada and Mexico without a passport were an artifact of our national experience.

One late afternoon, a Canadian Coast Guard YTB passed heading south toward US waters towing a small barge bearing the US Navy designation "IX-_____" From my Lawrence Livermore National Lab experience, I knew the "IX" designation meant "experimental". The Canadian tug was flying a small US flag surmounting an equally small Canadian flag while in Canadian waters, the exact opposite configuration I would have expected and, more importantly, taught was appropriate under international law. Eventually I contented myself with the facts observed that the YTB was perhaps engaged in a joint operations exercise with US defense forces. One day later, the Canadian YTB was re-sighted joining up with two US Coast Guard vessels at the entrance to Puget Sound.

Returning from Canada, there was increased vessel traffic as ferries and small cruise ships began crossing our track. From a formation of other shielding surface craft (public and commercial), it also appeared as if a nuclear submarine might have been coming from sea...headed to Bangor or Bremerton. From my Navy JAG career, I recalled well known admiralty claims about the near cosmic attraction between submarines operating in ship channels and fishing nets. I hoped there was no corollary for subs and submerged tow lines as our barge of crushed cars rode out well behind us.

The last afternoon we steamed by Vashon Island and soon sighted Seattle again. Cell phone service was fully restored and family and friends were alerted to our impending return to the Tacoma waterfront. An assist tug arrived and ended up being our vehicle for passing off the STRAITS COLD DECKER. As we left it in our wake, I wondered again about each automobile's life story, the fate of their owners, and the likelihood the scrap metal components would find future deployment in Asia as building material in some port city high rise.



Our segment of the steel's lifecycle concluded, it was time to head for our berth and find our land legs. David would have to go back to sea in less than two days and I would be heading back home to keep preparing for Fall Semester classes in Admiralty and Maritime Environmental Law. Our CMA-linked crew shook hands all around with my benediction that, "It was all good"...and it was. Thanks for taking the professor in tow to witness the accomplishment of what began in the classroom but was most masterfully executed on the water.

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Whenever we can, we're happy to photograph events for inclusion in *CURRENTS*. Please give us as much advance notice as you can, including information about the event, date and location.

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Cal Maritime Calendar of Events

Sept. 6	<i>Summertime at the Maritime Concert: Dr. Loco's Rockin' Jalapeno Band/Raymond Victor Band</i>
Sept. 12	<i>Cal Maritime Foundation Benefit Golf Tournament—Hiddenbrooke</i>
Sept. 24	<i>Cal Maritime Health and Wellness Fair—Quadrangle 11-2 (See Page 12)</i>
Sept. 25	<i>Fourth Thursdays for CMA Alumni (visit www.csum.edu/alumni for locations) 5:30 p.m.</i>
Oct. 4	<i>Summertime at the Maritime Concert: Charlie Musselwhite</i>
Oct. 10-12	<i>Cal Maritime 2008 Homecoming and Day on the Bay—Class Reunion Dinners Oct. 11th on campus</i>
Oct. 12	<i>Day on the Bay</i>
Oct. 19-21	<i>IAMU 9th International General Assembly Hosted by Cal Maritime—Sir Francis Drake Hotel, San Francisco. For more information visit: www.csum.edu/IAMU2008.htm</i>
Oct. 24	<i>Fourth Thursdays for CMA Alumni (visit www.csum.edu/alumni for locations) 5:30 p.m.</i>
Nov. 11	<i>Veterans' Day Holiday</i>
Nov. 26-28	<i>Thanksgiving Holiday (Faculty Work Day 26th)</i>
Dec. 22—Jan. 1	<i>Winter Recess—Faculty/Staff</i>

2009

March 28	<i>Gala Fundraiser—Marines Memorial, San Francisco</i>
May 2	<i>Commencement—Class of 2009</i>