



Atlantic Pilotage Authority



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THE DISPATCH

New Pilot Boats – Update

As mentioned in the last issue of “The Dispatch”, the Authority is presently building two modern, ice strengthened pilot boats for specific use in Placentia Bay, NL. Both these vessels, now registered as the “Avalon Pilot” and “Atlantic Pilot” respectively, are powered by 2 x 910 hp Caterpillar engines, providing cruising speeds of approximately 20 knots.

State-of-the art navigational equipment is provided through the use of multi-functional integrated monitors positioned appropriately for simultaneous use by both the launchmaster and onboard pilot. The layout within the wheelhouse allows ample room for movement and has been designed to accommodate seating for five persons. Whether sitting or standing, expansive windows allow for excellent vertical and all round visibility. Below the wheelhouse is a relatively large “mess” room, complete with fridge, sink and microwave. Adjacent to this, is a “head” equipped with full-sized shower unit. Seating is provided around the mess room table and a small berth is located within the port bulkhead.

Although some electrical panels are to be located within the wheelhouse, the majority of them are to be found within an electrical room, located between the engine room and mess room. In an effort to reduce fatigue and provide comfort, each vessel is equipped with five ergonomically designed seats. Furthermore, in order to minimize noise level, the sound tolerance is to be no more than 70 decibels. This has been brought about by effective sound proofing and a specially mounted “suspended” wheel-



Christening of the Avalon Pilot, June 1, 2007, in Halifax.

house. In snow and ice conditions, clear access to the two forward pilot embarkation stations is provided by the use of heated decks and handrails.

These are Camarc designed pilot vessels, with much of the interior design and layout being accomplished by Lengkeek Vessel Engineering (LVE). The actual construction is being undertaken by A.F. Theriault, a boat building company located in Meteghan, NS. Each vessel is being built to Lloyd’s Standards, with the actual monitoring (project management) of these vessels being undertaken by LVE.

The Authority was honoured to have the first vessel, “Avalon Pilot”, christened on June 1, 2007, by Ms. Heather Skanes, wife of Mr. Paul Adams, President of Newfoundland Transshipment Limited (NTL). The NTL terminal



Avalon Pilot at sea trials

is located in Placentia Bay, NL, and is specifically designed for the storage and transshipment of Hibernia oil.

The “Avalon Pilot” is anticipated to be operational within Placentia Bay by late June, with the second vessel, “Atlantic Pilot”, operational by late October 2007.

Teamwork!

If you ask either Captain Gary O'Donnell or Captain Marty Murrin about the day they pulled off the largest tandem lift in history, they'll likely just chuckle. They'll brush it off as another day's work. But moving a combined weight of 54,000 tonnes of oilrigs, and weeks of planning, prove the job to have been a little bit more than that.

The process of the tandem lift actually began more than two weeks before Captain Murrin and Captain O'Donnell even stepped up to their respective assignments. Two oilrigs, each towering over 600 feet, lay waiting in Halifax Harbour for their voyage to the North Sea. It had been decided that they'd make the journey together on one vessel. On January 9th, the *"Blue Marlin"*, a ship specifically designed to transport oilrigs and smaller vessels, anchored in the Bedford Basin to wait for suitable weather to move the two oilrigs onto its deck. Unfortunately for the ship and its owner, Dockwise Shipping, Halifax was in for a windy January. Such weather was of concern, as positioning such high oilrigs requires a specific window of opportunity.

Nonetheless, the load-out crew and the Halifax pilots met two days after the *"Blue Marlin's"* arrival to discuss how to move the rigs. The tandem lift required close cooperation between Eastern Canada Towing and Atlantic Towing, since neither company had enough resources to do the job alone.

In the meeting they decided, among other parameters, that this needed to be a daylight-only operation and the winds could not be in excess of 15 knots for the *Galaxy II* (the first oil rig to be loaded) and 12 knots to load the *Rowan Gorilla VI* (to be loaded second). The *Rowan Gorilla VI* was only allowed 12 knots because there would be much less room to work with on the deck of the *"Blue Marlin"*.

After the meeting concluded, everyone waited. The winds did not diminish and typically the Halifax winter weather persisted. One week passed. Two weeks passed. The estimated rate to keep the *"Blue Marlin"* anchored without working was \$50,000 per day. There was pressure to get the ball rolling.

Finally, the weather forecast for January 24th showed a promising outlook. When Captain Murrin found out he was working as the second pilot on the first move of this job, he wasn't worried about the lifts.

"When I got called to do the job, I just reviewed all my emails and notes and then went down to the pilot office early to look at the drawings and get all the names of who I was going to be working with," he said nonchalantly. "By the time I actually got to the job, I was pretty well prepared because of all the information that had been gathered the days and weeks before."

With each oilrig being so large, there needed to be two pilots to control everything, and since there were two oilrigs, the job was done in two segments. Captain Murrin and the lead pilot, Captain Andrew Rae, did the first segment, which was the transportation of the *Galaxy II*.

The first lift started around 5am on the morning of the 24th and Captain Murrin said it





went relatively smoothly. Using the word lift is a bit misleading, because there wasn't actually any lifting of the oilrig. The "Blue Marlin" is a heavy-lift ship and her hull is fitted with a maze of tanks. When the time for transporting the Galaxy II arrived, the "Blue Marlin's" crew opened up her tanks and filled them with salt-water, literally sinking the entire ship to allow 7.5 meters of water clearance above the main deck. The tugboats, combined with guy wires, pulled the Galaxy II across the water and over the "Blue Marlin". The ship's crew then pumped the salt water out of the "Blue Marlin's" tanks, allowing the ship's deck to come in contact with the Galaxy II's underside so the crew could secure it properly.

Despite the fact that everyone had agreed on 15 knots of wind for the first move, Captain Murrin said 15 knots made it difficult to keep the rig moving smoothly across the water. The legs of the oil rig rise about 600 feet in the air, turning the oilrigs into wind catchers.

"Just a little bit of wind can have a great effect on them and you just have to be so careful," said Captain Murrin. "They're also relatively light, and we had big tugs, so you had to be careful how hard you pulled with the tugs because if you pulled too much, it's hard to stop the motion again."

The factor that made up for the wind was that the Galaxy II was the only rig on the ship, so Captain Murrin and Captain Rae had the entire



Captain Marty Murrin



Captain Gary O'Donnell

deck of the "Blue Marlin" to work with. The moving of the second oilrig, the Rowan Gorilla VI, was another story.

The Galaxy II's move finished at about 9am, with the rig roughly secured on the deck of the "Blue Marlin". Then it was Captain O'Donnell's and Captain George Hillchie's turn to pilot the second rig onto the ship. They started moving the Rowan Gorilla VI through the water to load, but just as they were getting underway, the winds picked up. Captain O'Donnell said they tried their best to keep the rig in position, but the wind was just too strong. They decided to stand down and wait to see if the winds lightened.

"At that point everybody started to think, you know, this is not going to happen because the forecast said the winds would not diminish for at least two to three days," said Captain O'Donnell. He added that some people were afraid the ship would have to transport one rig to the North Sea and then return to pick up the second rig. But then Captain O'Donnell thought of something.

"The wind dies down after the sun goes down and we often get better wind conditions," he said to the rig superintendent, so he suggested that they put the second rig back at the dock and give it a shot later that day, around supper-time. Everyone agreed, despite the fact that the job would have to be done in the dark.

Not literally, of course. Captain Murrin ended up doing the second attempt of the Rowan Gorilla VI with Captain O'Donnell and he said the lighting equipment set up on the "Blue Marlin" was the equivalent of a stadium lit up for a game.

"It was unique because you're usually docking ships with just a little bit of light from the shore, from the cranes or the lampposts. But in this job, there were lots of lights so it really lit up the night."

Around 6pm, the pilots and the crew loading the second oilrig started getting wind readings from all across the harbour at ten-minute intervals. They finally got the wind steady at just below 10 knots and everyone agreed that it was the only time they'd get a second chance. With a tug boat stationed at each point of the triangular oilrig, and one set up for assistance, along with guy wires pulling the rig in from the ship, the crew began to move the Rowan Gorilla VI across the water for the second and final time.

"Sometimes, there are three different people on the radio giving commands, and there are four different tugs with people responding back, so it becomes a bit of a maze," said Captain O'Donnell, talking about how the movement of the rig worked. "You have to remember the last thing you said and sometimes you have to wait until there's a lull so you can say, 'Stop what you're doing', and do something else."

Despite only having between 20- and 40-cm of room to work with next to the first oilrig, Captain O'Donnell said everyone worked well together and the second oilrig arrived safely on the deck of the "Blue Marlin" just after midnight.

"It's not too often we work as a team, but this really was teamwork in the making," said Captain O'Donnell. Both Captain O'Donnell and Captain Murrin say they are proud of the job successfully accomplished with many players from different organizations, all working together as an effective team.

Written by Holly Gordon, daughter of Nancy Gordon

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Arrival

The Atlantic Pilotage Authority is pleased to announce the appointment of Tom Calkin as Chair of the Board of Directors, effective December 11, 2006. Mr. Calkin has an engineering background and has much experience in management, impressive academic credentials and a proven track record in various business interests. Mr. Calkin is also Chair of the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission. Welcome aboard, Tom!



Arrival

The Atlantic Pilotage Authority is pleased to announce the appointment of Captain Ian Swan as Pilot Representative on the Board of Directors, effective April 26, 2007. Captain Swan has served as a Marine Pilot for the Halifax Compulsory Pilotage Area since 2001, and his marine career has included being Master of container vessels and tankers and icebreakers in arctic waters. Captain Swan's appointment is unique as he will serve on the Board of Directors for a four-year term. Congratulations Ian and welcome to the Board!



Arrival

We welcome Nalani Perry, our new Administrative Assistant to the Director of Operations. Nalani started with us mid-January, and is quickly becoming a tremendous asset to the office. She is also the Minutes Recorder on the Occupational Health and Safety Committee and in her spare time she takes university courses, is a member of the Halifax Concert Band and plays football. Welcome aboard, Nalani!



Arrival

We welcome John Griffin, our new Operations Manager, who started with us on March 5, 2007. John is in charge of Centralized Dispatch and will be assuming other responsibilities and roles to assist the Director of Operations. John's background includes 22 years of operational marine experience with the Department of National Defence in various positions, at sea and ashore, as well as an MBA from Saint Mary's University. Welcome aboard John!



Departure

Sadly, we said good bye to our Executive Assistant and *Dispatch* editor, Jacqueline (Jackie) MacPherson, the beginning of February. She and her husband, Bruce, decided to move back to Calgary to be closer to their family. Jackie has taken a position as Executive Assistant with Ernst & Young. Congratulations Jackie but we miss you!



Departure

On April 25, we said good bye to Board Member, Captain Terence Pittman, Pilot Representative from Sydney, Cape Breton, having served on the Atlantic Pilotage Authority Board of Directors for three years and a pilot for close to 30 years. Captain Pittman was a former District Chair, and while a director, he chaired the Pilotage Risk Management Methodology (PRMM) committee and was a member of the Audit and Regulation and Governance committees. Enjoy your retirement, Terry!



Congratulations

Diane Dooley, our Accounts Payable Administrative Assistant, became Diane Cooper on June 5, 2006. She and her husband, Darrell, just celebrated their first wedding anniversary. Congratulations and we wish you many blissful years together!



Congratulations

Brian Bradley, our Management Accountant, received his Masters of Business Administration on May 31, 2007, from Laurentian University. Congratulations Brian!



Awards

On December 7, 2006, the Authority held its 10th Annual Awards Banquet. Those honoured were Gerald Tanner, Dispatcher, who retired last March; and Anthony McGuinness, our Chief Executive Officer, who celebrated his tenth year with the Authority. Congratulations Gerry and Tony!



(left to right) Gerard Fitzpatrick, Vice-Chair, Gerry Tanner and Anthony McGuinness

The Saint John Port Authority celebrated its annual Port Days June 11-12, 2007. Each year they honour an organization that makes an outstanding contribution to the Port of Saint John. This year, our Saint John Marine Pilots received the Port Award of the Year at the luncheon on June 12.



(left to right) Captain Bruce Harrigan, District Chair; Captain Ian Biggs; Captain Pat Quinn; Captain Don Duffy; Captain Stephen Johnson and Captain Jim May. Missiung is Captain Randy Spencer.

Send us your news for inclusion in the next issue of *The Dispatch*. Deadline for submission is October 31, 2007. We also welcome your feedback. Please email the editor at elockhart@atlanticpilotage.com