

# FLAGSHIP

## NEWS FROM THE LIBERIAN REGISTRY

Issue No. 26

May 2009

### Double milestone marks CMA celebrations

**T**he Liberian Registry recently passed a major milestone in its history by registering its 3,000th vessel, the 105,400 dwt Aframax tanker *Ise Princess*, built this year for Fairsea Enterprises SA and managed and operated by Tsakos Shipping & Trading SA of Greece.

There was a delightful symmetry to the registration of the *Ise Princess*, because the first vessel registered with Liberia, in 1949, was also Greek – the *World Peace*, owned by Stavros Niarchos. Second only to the national register, Liberia is the flag of choice for Greek shipping. Today almost 600 Greek-owned ships, aggregating 38 m dwt, are registered under the flag of Liberia. And that total is still growing, with an increasing number of Greek shipowners choosing Liberia for their newbuildings and secondhand purchases.

Greece was in at the beginning of Liberia's maritime adventure and, sixty



LISCR COO Scott Bergeron (right) presents the "Ise Princess" registration certificate to Capt Theodore Vassilakis of Tsakos, at CMA

years later, is still contributing to its phenomenal growth. But it was in the United States that the entry of the 3000th vessel, and the registry's 60th anniversary, were most recently celebrated.

At a special event at the Connecticut Maritime Association (CMA) conference and exhibition in April, held to commemorate the registry's milestone anniversary, LISCR's Chief Operating Officer Scott Bergeron presented the registration certificate for the *Ise Princess* to Capt Theodore Vassilakis, as representative of Tsakos Shipping & Trading.

Scott told the CMA audience that, throughout its history, Liberia has had to fight for its survival but that, with each challenge, it has not only prevailed but grown stronger.

The CMA celebrations followed upon anniversary commemorations which have already been held in Piraeus and Hamburg as part of a year-long calendar of special events.



The Aframax tanker "Ise Princess" – a milestone registration

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## Liberia commended for SAR initiatives

**A** new regional Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) was inaugurated in Liberia's capital, Monrovia, in April, as an integral part of the plan to co-ordinate Search & Rescue (SAR) services off the coast of Africa. In addition to Liberia, the Monrovia MRCC covers four other countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Sierra Leone).

The establishment of appropriate SAR facilities off the coast of Africa is a key component in the implementation of IMO's Global SAR Plan, within the framework of which Liberia formally agreed to undertake responsibility for the co-ordination and control of SAR operations across a substantial sea area around its coast, exceeding its obligations under the SOLAS Convention so to do. The inauguration of the facility in Monrovia will help to fill a sizeable gap

in the effective coverage of a vast area of the eastern part of the Atlantic Ocean. The Monrovia MRCC was commissioned by IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E Mitropoulos, accompanied by BJ Samukai, Liberia's Minister of Defence, AB Johnson, Minister of Internal Affairs, Binyah Kesselly, Commissioner of Maritime Affairs, George Arku, Permanent Representative of Liberia to IMO, as well as officials from Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone.



*IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E Mitropoulos, and Liberia's Minister of Internal Affairs and President of the Cabinet, Ambolic B Johnson, cut the ribbon to proclaim the official opening of the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Monrovia.*

Speaking at the opening of the facility, Mr Mitropoulos paid tribute to the broad co-operation between IMO, stakeholders from the international and non-governmental sectors and, most of all, the Government of Liberia, which enabled this part of the overall scheme to be brought to a successful conclusion. He went on to commend the Government of Liberia for its ratification, earlier this year, of the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue - the SAR Convention - by which it further confirmed its strong commitment to search and rescue and to the safety of life at sea. "This," he said, "surely befits a country that not only has taken on a sizeable SAR responsibility in geographical terms, but which is also in charge of one of the world's largest shipping registries - a role it plays with a commendable sense of responsibility and commitment, with satisfactory results."

## Liberia issues report into investigation of Explorer casualty

An investigation by the Liberian Registry and the resulting Decision of the Commissioner of Maritime Affairs for the Republic of Liberia into the sinking of the passengershship *Explorer* off the South Shetland Islands in November 2007 has concluded that the primary reason for the casualty was a mistaken interpretation by the vessel's master of the nature of the ice he was entering.

The Liberian-registered *Explorer* was on an eighteen-day round-trip from Argentina to Antarctica when it sank on November 23, 2007, 25 miles south-east of Penguin Island in the Bransfield Strait. All 54 crew and 100 passengers abandoned the ship without loss of life or major injury and were rescued by the Norwegian vessel *Nordnorge*. On the evening of the previous day, the vessel had entered an ice field described by the master as 'first-year ice'. At around midnight it hit a 'wall of ice', sustaining damage to a section of its hull, which

led to rapid flooding. Despite the best efforts of the crew, it was not possible to contain the flooding in the compartment which had sustained the initial damage, and the vessel sank.

An investigation conducted by the Liberian Registry, in co-operation with the Chilean Navy, has now concluded that the decision by the master to enter the ice field, based on his knowledge and information available at the time, was the primary reason for the casualty. The report of the investigation says the master should have altered course to open water and not have entered the ice field during darkness. Highlighting the heroic efforts which resulted in the survival and rescue of all passengers and the entire crew, the report states, "The master and crew should be recognised for the actions taken to ensure the survival of the passengers under the difficult conditions and circumstances that they had to deal with.

The master's decision to have the passengers abandon the vessel, as well as the engine crew's efforts to restore and maintain power so that the passengers could be successfully put into lifeboats, in all likelihood saved lives."

The Liberian Administration is to undertake another review to determine whether some of the IMO guidelines, circulars and resolutions – such as those relating to vessels operating in Antarctic and Arctic waters, minimum safe manning, float-free or quick-release VDR installation – should be made mandatory.

● The Liberian Administration has a mandate to promote safety of life and property at sea, and the prevention of marine pollution. This is achieved in part by conducting investigations of marine casualties involving vessels in the registry, for remedial purposes, in accordance with Republic of Liberia Maritime Law and Regulations.



## JSA and LISCR confer on MLC compliance

**T**he Liberian Registry continues to help and advise shipowners with their compliance planning in the lead-up to implementation of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention (MLC).

In March of this year, a delegation from the Japan Shipowners Association, comprising Capt Takashi Aihara (Manager, Marine Division) and Mr Schuichiro Yosida (General Manager, Labour Affairs Group, Marine Division) met with LISCR's labour experts at the registry's head office in Virginia.

A variety of subjects were discussed, to mutual advantage, covering the Liberian registry's approach to MLC implementation, which it is estimated could take place in 2011.

The JSA delegation was pleased to note that, unlike other open registers, Liberia has both a shipowners' council and a seaman's union, which means that it is eminently well-placed to meet the requirements of tripartite dispute resolution without the involvement of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF).

Moreover, Liberia is prepared to authorise all members of the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) to conduct ILO surveys upon confirmation that each of the class societies has developed the necessary internal competence.

Other subjects under discussion included work and rest hour requirements under the new convention, where it was agreed that the registry would leave open to individual shipowners the option of adopting either maximum working hours or minimum rest hours as the basis for their calculations.

Liberia is committed to working closely with all owners who have ships under its registry to ensure speedy and effective compliance with MLC.

## LISCR holds anti-piracy workshop in Piraeus

In co-operation with Maritime & Underwater Security Consultants (MUSC), LISCR held an exclusive one-day anti-piracy seminar and workshop at the Theoxenia Hotel in Piraeus in May.

Unlike other seminars on the subject, this fully subscribed event was structured to provide practical advice to shipowners on the topical and vexing subject of piracy, and how best to deal with it. Delegates were provided with an update on the threat of piracy, and a consideration of crew, media and other issues. Other areas

covered included threat mitigation and survivability techniques, together with a review of the insurance implications of piracy.

At the end of the seminar, delegates undertook an exercise in which they were able to experience, at 'first hand', the stress, uncertainty and confusion that is so often present during the early stages of an attack, and to undergo a series of realistic scenarios dealing with a variety of situations ranging from hostage negotiation services, through vessel rescue and recovery, to repatriation of released crew.

## Auditors pass with flying colours

Surveyors and auditors are the eyes and ears of the Liberian Registry and, as part of its ongoing commitment to training and education, LISCR recently held a residential course for auditors in the historic UK city of Winchester.

Attendees from South America, Europe, Africa, India and South-East Asia assembled under the guidance of Stuart Williams, from LISCR UK, Al Romero, from Virginia, and Mick Caulken from Regs4Ships, who is a specialist in ISM and ISPS audits

and teaching. David Muir (Vice-President Seafarers) from Virginia, and George Kakaliouras from LISCR's Greek office were also in attendance.

After much hard work and revision, all those who took the final exam passed and have now been authorised to conduct ISM, ISPS and harmonised audits on behalf of Liberia. Training was also given in basic accident investigation so that the inspectors could collect the initial information following an incident.

## Brad Berman inducted as ABS member



LISCR President Brad Berman was inducted as a member of the American Bureau of Shipping at the India House in New York on March 10, 2009. Pictured, left to right, are Jim

Graf, ABS Director Business Planning & Analysis, John Gallagher, VP ABS North American Region, Brad Berman, and Dave Wamsley, Eastern District Manager ABS Americas.





# Contacts

## HEADQUARTERS

### Virginia, USA

Tel: +1 703 790 3434

Fax: +1 703 790 5655

Yoram Cohen, CEO

ycohen@liscr.com

Scott Bergeron, Chief Operating Officer

sbergeron@liscr.com

### New York, USA

Tel: +1 212 697 3434

Fax: +1 212 697 5655

Brad Berman, President

bberman@liscr.com

Greg Maj, General Manager

gmaj@liscr.com

### Hamburg, Germany

Tel: +49 40 35 00 4660

Fax: +49 40 35 00 4670

Jörg Molzahn, Managing Director

info@liscr.de

### Hong Kong

Tel: +852 28101068

Fax: +852 28100023

William Wu, Executive VP

liscrfe@liscr.com.hk

### London, UK

Tel: +44 207 799 3434

Fax: +44 207 799 3456

Stuart Williams, General Manager

info@liscr.co.uk

### Monrovia, Liberia

Tel: +231 77000400

Fax: +231 77000422

Joseph Keller, General Manager & Executive Vice-President

### Piraeus, Greece

Tel: +30 210 452 9670

Fax: +30 210 452 9673

Michalis Pantazopoulos, General Manager

liscr@otenet.gr

### Tokyo, Japan

Tel: +81 3 5419 7001

Fax: +81 3 5419 7002

Shigeki Fukuda, Managing Director

info@liscr.jp

### Zurich, Switzerland

Tel: +41 44 250 8650

Fax: +41 44 250 8655

Peter Kidman, General Manager

info@liscr.ch

### Editorial consultants

Merlin Corporate Communications

## On the register

**N**ancy Lau is a happy woman. "I have been working for LISCRC Hong Kong for almost ten years and I love my job because it provides me with a stable and harmonious working environment," she says.

Nancy is obviously also a calm woman, because LISCRC's Hong Kong office can be a very busy place.

But Nancy is used to hustle and bustle, she was born and brought up in Hong Kong and she also has two sons and a husband to take care of. "By day I am the secretary here in the office," smiles Nancy. "But when I leave here I am mum and wife and a family woman. I like to think of myself as just a little woman and not aggressive at all."

Maybe she gets rid of any aggression at the gym where Nancy loves to work out. At LISCRC Nancy is kept busy helping with ship registration, running the office and providing secretarial support. When she is not at work she likes to listen to music, work out at the gym and care for her family.

"My two sons Keith and Hubert are at high school," she says. "When they are on vacation we go swimming and hiking and travel, I love that. When they are not on vacation then housework keeps me busy."

Nancy joined the registry after working for Nestle and then Mtel, so she is well accustomed to an international environment.

"This is a good place to work because we are busy, we are a growing company and there is always something to do. It is also nice to see that our clients like us and bring us more business," she says. "Harmony is important to me, at work and at home, and we have that here. We get along with each other and with our clients, so it's possible to work hard and also enjoy it."

