

FLAGSHIP

NEWS FROM THE LIBERIAN REGISTRY

Issue No. 24

November 2008

Celebrating sixty years of quality growth



Over 400 guests gathered in Athens in May to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Liberian Registry

The Liberian Registry is currently growing at almost twice the rate of the entire world fleet in deadweight terms, while maintaining its reputation for the highest levels of safety and quality. This is a phenomenal achievement for an operation which began life sixty years ago when it registered its first ship, the *World Peace*, owned by the Niarchos Group of Greece.

Today, more than 450 of the 2,900-plus vessels registered with Liberia are controlled by Greek shipping interests. Appropriately, then, it was to Greece that the registry turned in May this year to host a celebratory event to mark its 60th anniversary. Four hundred guests, including many leading shipowners and operators, gathered at the Divani Apollon Palace hotel in Athens, to hear Binyah Kesselly, Commissioner of Liberia's Bureau of Maritime Affairs, acknowledge that the Liberian

Registry's development over the past sixty years would not have been possible without the support of the Greek shipping community.

Mr Kesselly also conveyed to the audience the personal appreciation of Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for the role which the Greek maritime community has played over the past two years in helping Liberia "enhance peace and security, rehabilitate infrastructure, strengthen governance and secure freedom and prosperity for future generations of Liberians".

The Liberian Registry also held a further anniversary celebration in Germany in September. Approximately 400 guests, including many high-profile principal shipowners, gathered at Die Bank, a Hamburg restaurant owned,

appropriately, by a group of leading shipowners. Scott Bergeron, Chief Operating Officer of LISCR, told the audience, "Liberia enjoys a tremendous level of support from German shipowners, and is also a great supporter of German-flag shipping. No other flag has released a larger number of ships in support of the national drive to bolster the German fleet. A prosperous German flag is good for the entire industry".

The Liberian Registry has come a long way in sixty years, and is committed to maintaining its quality-driven growth. As Commissioner Kesselly says, "Liberia's maritime programme must be maintained as best-in-class. We will continue to work through LISCR to build on our current success, to sustain and further develop this gold-standard maritime operation based on a ship registry which protects the long-term interests of shipowners and of the Liberian nation and its global partners".



Pictured at the 60th anniversary celebrations in Hamburg are, left to right, Scott Bergeron, COO of LISCR, Frank Leonhardt of Leonhardt & Blumberg Reederei GMBH and President of the German Shipowners Association (VDR), and Binyah Kesselly, Commissioner of the Liberian Bureau of Maritime Affairs

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Dealing with the threat of piracy



Mandatory Security Level 2 remains in effect for all Liberia-flagged vessels when operating off the Somali coast or transiting the Gulf of Aden.

The Liberian Administration is continuing to work with IMO, the US Department of State and the EU, among others, in an effort to help resolve the piracy issues currently affecting shipping in the Gulf of Aden. The situation in the region is complex. Permanent solutions will require collective effort, time and patience, and Liberia is also working at diplomatic levels towards an agreement to set up an international armed force to protect this critical shipping lane.

A Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA) was established on August 22, 2008, following an IMO call for international assistance to discourage attacks on commercial vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden. Reports suggest that the MSPA Combined Task Force (CTF150) has already helped deter more than a dozen attacks in the Gulf of Aden. But several vessels have still been successfully targeted by pirates in the region, including some transiting within the MSPA.

A recent CTF150 review provides some useful information that should be considered before transiting the region:

- No vessels have been fired upon or hijacked between 1800hrs and 0400hrs local time.
- Vessels most susceptible to hijacking are those with low freeboard and transit speeds of less than 20 knots.
- Vessels with low freeboard (6 m or less) and/or low maximum speeds should consider themselves at extremely high risk of hijack by Somali pirates.

In its most recent Security Advisory, the Liberian Administration also recommends that the following proactive measures be implemented before and while transiting the MSPA:

- Masters are to remain vigilant and question the intentions of all craft approaching their vessels.
- Add more security personnel and roving watches as necessary.
- Keep a constant visual and radar watch and closely monitor all targets.
- Ensure that lookouts are positioned to ensure 360° coverage
- Provide refresher training for the crew in respect of all anti-piracy measures and access control as recommended by the ship security plan.
- Brief the crew regarding special security measures taken, before arrival in the region.
- If navigational safety allows, make evasive manoeuvres and heavy wheel movements.
- Navigate the area at maximum possible speed.
- Rig all available equipment to deter pirates from coming on board.
- Remove any equipment hanging over the side that could be used as a means to board/gain access.
- Masters are advised to keep in close contact with the CSO, Coalition Authorities, and Liberian Administration.
- Ensure that ships' crews understand their anti-piracy duties, and have all the necessary security training required.

At the time of printing of this article, both the EU and NATO were assembling a naval force that will ultimately be able to escort shipping in the area. The Liberian Administration is engaged in discussions with various EU and other government representatives, and it is our understanding that the protection and escort provided by the EU naval force and NATO will be available to all vessels regardless of flag.

Finally, the Liberian Administration's setting of mandatory Security Level 2 remains in effect for all Liberia-flagged vessels when operating off the Somali coast or transiting the Gulf of Aden.

Liberia prepares for new maritime labour convention

The ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC) is designed to provide comprehensive rights and protection at work for more than a million seafarers around the world. Described as a 'bill of rights for seafarers', it consolidates more than 65 international labour standards. And it sets out seafarers' rights to decent conditions of work.

Liberia has an excellent reputation for looking after the welfare of its seafarers and was the first flag state to ratify the convention. The convention will not enter force until twelve months after ratification by at least thirty members with a total share of 33 per cent of world gross tonnage. Latest estimates suggest that it could be in force by 2011.

But Liberia is already preparing for it, in order to ensure smooth and timely implementation for owners and managers of Liberian ships. It is setting up a dedicated Labour & Welfare Division, to review legislation, and to develop new – and articulate existing – regulations, as necessary. As part of its implementation plan the Registry will soon publish the Administration's declaration of compliance and, in partnership with health, welfare and employment experts, will promulgate implementation guidance, train auditors and appoint competent Recognised Organisations. Liberia will build up a worldwide network of MLC auditors, skilled in welfare and human resource issues.

MLC compliance will be complex, involving a broad range of standard requirements and best-practice procedures. Some MLC requirements will overlap with other flag state requirements and procedures, such as ISM and annual safety inspections, and Liberia will look, as always, to harmonise procedures wherever possible in order to minimise the time, expense and inconvenience to owners, operators and crew.

Liberia believes that a properly trained, properly motivated and happy crew is a good crew, and welcomes the new convention as a means of achieving those things.



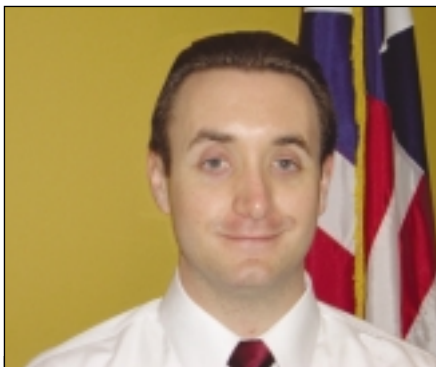
LISCR maintains recruitment drive

People are the Liberian Registry's greatest asset. As the Registry continues to grow at a breakneck pace and at a time when there is tremendous demand for talented and qualified personnel, LISCR has been busy recruiting new personnel to help provide the quality, expert service which the Registry's customers throughout the world have come to rely on.

Stuart Williams has joined LISCR as General Manager of its London office, in succession to Giles Heimann. Stuart was previously Operations Manager for UK-based Condor Ferries, for whom he also sailed as a chief officer and worked as a marine and safety superintendent. Prior to that, he served as a first officer for P&O Cruises. He says, "I am delighted to be working for the Liberian Registry, which continues to grow while maintaining its international reputation for safety and quality."

Sean Brett, meanwhile, has been appointed Marine Safety Manager, based at LISCR's Virginia headquarters. Sean is a graduate of the US Merchant Marine Academy and Tulane University Law School. He holds a Third Mates licence and has served at sea with Maersk Lines and on Military Sealift Command vessels. Sean says, "I am looking forward to using my practical seagoing experience and legal training to help LISCR maintain its reputation for regulatory excellence and customer responsiveness."

Also in Virginia, **Elizabeth Bogart** has been appointed Evaluator & Manager,



Sean Brett,
Marine Safety Manager, Virginia



Stuart Williams,
General Manager of LISCR's
London Office

Seafarers Certification, **Joby Thomas**, and **Tanneh Blackett** have joined the Maritime Operations Department, and **Masoud Saebi** has been recruited by the Accounting Department. In New York, meanwhile, **Jason Shanbaum** and **Rudolf Vleck** have been appointed Vessel Registration Co-ordinators.

In Germany, **Matthias Rentsch** has joined LISCR's Hamburg office as Maritime Operations Manager. Matthias holds a master mariners certificate and sailed on various types of vessels before he worked for the Sea Academy of German shipowner Beluga. He joined LISCR Hamburg earlier this year in the role of Regional Operations

Manager. His department deals with plan approvals, audits, technical and manning inquiries for German and north European clients.

Also in Hamburg, **Christine Stopka** has been appointed Registration Co-ordinator. Christine supports our German clients with all registration-related matters. She had previously worked as an assistant for German KG-arranger Salomon & Partner. Legal intern **Afra Gyekye** has also been recruited for the Hamburg office.

In Greece, meanwhile, George Kakaliouras has been appointed Operations Manager in LISCR's Piraeus office, while **Lea Frei** has joined the Zurich office as Administrator.



Matthias Rentsch, Marine
Operations Manager, Hamburg

Liberia continues to break fleet records

LIBERIA is continuing to break all-time records in terms of fleet size. The registry currently stands at 2,919 ships aggregating 87m gross tons.

This year, to date, the net growth of the registry is 252 vessels aggregating 5m gross tons. Last year, the Liberian fleet grew by almost twelve per cent in deadweight terms, almost twice the rate of growth recorded by the entire world fleet.

Despite the uncertainty caused by the current economic crisis, there is cautious optimism for further growth.

Through 2011, over 700 additional newbuildings are expected to be registered in Liberia, which will bring

down still further the already comparatively low average age of the Liberian-flag fleet.

Other flags may talk a lot about their growth, but Liberia is outpacing its closest rivals by nearly three to one in terms of both ship numbers and tonnage figures.

Liberia surpassed its all-time tonnage record at the close of last year, and has recorded more than a fifty per cent increase in the number of vessels over the past five years. And although this astounding growth brings its own challenges, Liberia is committed to meeting them head-on in the interests of the owners and operators whose ships fly its flag.



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On the register

David Arroyo's business card says he is Special Projects & Client Services Manager for LISCR. What that actually means is that he is the first point of contact for anybody who has an enquiry relating to seafarer certification and documentation. David will deal with the initial inquiry, which may involve anything from a documentary query to a vessel arrest, pass it along to the relevant department, and then make sure that the matter is expedited. Mostly he is dealing with manning agents, ship agents and shipowners by telephone or email, but he may also be in touch with seafarers direct.



Shipping is not exactly the industry in which David had planned to make his career. He studied radio, television and film at Howard University in Washington DC, and thereafter had a variety of different jobs before the birth of his daughter, ten years ago, made him realise that it was time to get a 'real job'.

Before joining LISCR, David was working as a patient support specialist at a medical establishment in Washington DC, and was keen to accept a new challenge when he joined the Registry in October 2005. He says he was initially surprised at the sheer size of the shipping industry, at the huge volumes of cargo continually moving around the world, and at the difficulties which have to be met and resolved every day of the year. He likes helping LISCR's clients solve their problems, and he is immensely proud of the job that the certification department does.

What David likes most about working at LISCR is the teamwork. He says, "It is wonderful to be part of such a great team. Everybody is prepared to offer help and back-up when needed. We all help each other. It is a very happy working environment. Sometimes it can be stressful, but our team ethic can cope with whatever the day throws at us."

David and his wife have a ten-year-old daughter and a seventeen-year-old son who are, respectively, a cheerleader and a football player. Watching them takes up a lot of David's leisure time, and any time left over he likes to spend relaxing with his family, watching movies, or catching a San Francisco 49ers game on TV. His main focus for the immediate future is to continue enjoying life at LISCR and at home, and to see his children do well.

