

UPDATE

Schoeller Holdings | Austral Asia Line | COLUMBIA

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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

The crew onboard is the most important part for any vessel's safe and smooth operation and hence the key for the success of our companies.

In this issue Norman Schmiedl, Human Resource Manager Seagoing Personnel at Columbia Shipmanagement in Hamburg, explains some of the efforts we take to recruit and train our seafarers around the world. His heartfelt rationale is short and straightforward: "Without our seagoing personnel this office would not exist".

Seafarers entering Hamburg harbour are greeted with a unique interpretation of this appreciation. One of the Columbia office buildings shows a huge banner saying: "We welcome our crew". Office hours permitting, all staff members will stand waving at the windows.

Yours sincerely

Demetris Chrysostomou

Marketing Director . COLUMBIA Shipmanagement

IN THIS ISSUE

2

AAL introduces
a passenger service

TCM achieves ISO 50001
certification

AMVER award for CSM Germany

3

The highest standard of
seafarers

4

Introducing the
Maria Tsakos TCM Academy
Cadet and junior
officer training

AAL expands Pacific Service

Austral Asia Line is expanding its pendulum general cargo and project cargo liner service connecting North Asia with the Pacific North West/ Canada into the US West coast. This service, known as the AAL Pacific Service, will now include Long Beach, CA.

Three owned 31,000 DWAT multi-purpose heavy lift A-Class vessels, with a combined lifting capacity of 700ts, will operate the service on a monthly frequency calling the ports of Nansha (CN), Shanghai (CN), Dalian (CN), Tianjin (CN), Busan (KR), Kobe/Osaka (JP), Yokohama (JP) – Long Beach (US), Everett (US), Vancouver (US) and Vancouver (CA).

AAL introduces a passenger service

Passengers seeking an alternative and more unique mode of travel compared with traditional cruise liner services can now sail onboard one of Austral Asia Line's modern heavy lift vessels.

The two 31,000 deadweight A-Class vessels "AAL Newcastle" and "AAL Hong Kong" are currently employed on the Australia East Coast and New Zealand service and cover the following ports: Brisbane, Newcastle, Melbourne, Lyttelton, Wellington, Tauranga, Tianjin, Qingdao, Shanghai, Inchon, Pusan and Khaosung. The liner service covers the full rotation in approximately 93 days. Passengers can complete a full round voyage or select their embarkation and disembarkation ports (subject to visa and local regulations).



"The route offers a variety of countries and cultures, and the nature of our operations (project and break bulk cargoes) allows sufficient time in port for our passengers to explore" says Christophe Grammare, Managing Director of AAL.

TCM achieves ISO 50001 certification

Lloyd's Register has awarded Tsakos Columbia Shipmanagement S.A. (TCM) with ISO 50001 certification attesting TCM's commitment to continuously improve the energy efficiency of its fleet.

TCM is an Athens based shipmanagement company founded by The Tsakos Group of Companies and Schoeller Holdings in 2010. The joint venture is a testament to their close working relationship that started more than ten years ago.

The ISO 50001 standard is a voluntary international energy management system that specifies the requirements for establishing, implementing maintaining and improving an energy management system. It offers companies a systematic approach to continually improve energy performance, including energy efficiency, use and consumption.



AMVER award for CSM Germany

Fourteen German shipping companies including Columbia Shipmanagement received the US Coast Guard's prestigious AMVER Award for outstanding achievements in the area of rescue operations at sea. The awards were presented during a reception at the US Consulate General in Hamburg on 10 September.

With AMVER rescue coordinators can identify participating ships in the area of distress and divert the best-suited ship or ships to respond.



"In presenting the AMVER Award, the US Coast Guard honours the outstanding achievements and exemplary commitment by German ship owners in worldwide rescues at sea" said Benjamin Strong, director of the Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue (AMVER) System.

The highest standard of seafarers



Next to freight planes ships are the most expensive mobile assets in world trade, with new builds costing up to or sometimes even more than a hundred million US-Dollars. Add the cargo value and you arrive at staggering sums. World trade without ships would not be possible and often they are operating in severe weather conditions. Now, whom would you entrust such assets as captains, officers, engineers and crewmembers? Seafarers you know personally who have been interviewed and briefed or even better whose professional career you have supervised for many years – or somebody you only know from his CV, some tests and an interview?

“We are committed to providing excellent services. As regards crew management this objective can only be achieved by employing well trained and committed seafarers. Accordingly, our crews are continuously trained to ensure safe operations. We are very proud of our extensive cadet program and follow the careers of most of our officers from the first time they work on ships” says Norman Schmiedl, Human Resource Manager Seagoing Personnel at Columbia Shipmanagement in Hamburg.

Procedures onboard and ashore are analysed in detail, documented, discussed, refined and finally put down in writing – taking into consideration statutory requirements, relevant regulations from organisations like IMO, MARPOL, SOLAS, STCW etc. and – last but not least – clients’ requests. Currently the training library comprises more than 500 manuals, videos and computer based trainings that are continuously updated to reflect developments in technology and changes in regulations.

In 2013 Columbia recruiting offices provided or sponsored training courses covering 38 subjects that were

attended by nearly 17,000 seafarers. They completed in addition almost 28,000 computer based training modules both ashore and onboard.

By the end of this year all seafarers will be able to log-in to Columbia’s new crew portal. They will gain access to training course material as well as updates of the Quality Management System from any computer with an Internet connection.

Loyalty and trust

“Over the years we have employed a pool of 40,000 seafarers. Between 13,000 and 14,000 of them are active” Schmiedl explains. “Whenever we are entrusted the full management of a new ship, we will arrange for our crew to join for the takeover. We like to work with our people, they ensure that our QA systems are being implemented and followed onboard as we don’t want to compromise on quality.”

The crewing departments in charge – either in Hamburg, Singapore or Limassol – have a vast experience in selecting the best available seafarers meeting the client’s requirements in terms of experience, nationalities and pay levels.

“Most of our seafarers can decide after their contracts whether or not they would like to return to a vessel managed by CSM. So we have to think very carefully what kind of working environment we have to offer to make them want to come back. We’re very proud that our retention rates are well above 80 %,” says Schmiedl. Loyalty and mutual trust don’t come out of the blue, but have to be cultivated properly to develop and grow over the years.

Introducing the Maria Tsakos TCM Academy



Captain Panagiotis N. Tsakos, founder of The Tsakos Group in 1970, is very outspoken when it comes to the human factor in shipping: "Competent crew is the most important resource the company has". Accordingly Tsakos Columbia Shipmanagement allocates significant resources in effectively managing the competence of its seagoing and shore personnel. The latest step being the opening of its own maritime training centre in 2013: the Maria Tsakos TCM Academy.

Fully equipped with the latest range of Kongsberg simulators the training centre occupies some 500 square meters on the fifth floor of the Tsakos headquarters in Athens.

"It is our duty to provide the best training facilities to our seafarers and shore personnel and to continuously

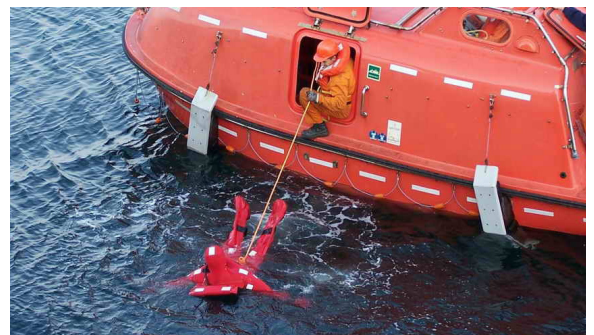
develop and improve their competence in order to ensure operational excellence, both in terms of safety as well as efficiency and performance towards our clients. The reason we invested in simulators was the opportunity for our crew to operate and react in a virtual, yet fully realistic, environment where mistakes become lessons learnt, without risking damage to the environment, equipment and people" explains Captain Panagiotis N. Tsakos.

Earlier this year the Maria Tsakos TCM Academy has been accredited as an Approved Training Provider by Lloyd's Register as well as certified to the BS EN ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System Standard by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance. The academy has obtained approval for two courses: Operational use of electronic chart display and information system (ECDIS) and Oil Record Book. The certified Quality Management System against ISO 9001 is applicable to the "Provision of Training Services to Shipping Company Personnel and Seafarers".

The Lloyd's Register Approved Training Provider Scheme provides third party assessment and certification of the ability to provide training to a recognised standard and deliver courses, which meet their stated objectives. It provides a benchmark for the marine industry when selecting courses for staff development and training.

Cadet and junior officer training

Building a ship these days takes between 11 and 12 months, but raising a captain takes 12 to 15 years" says Norman Schmiedl, Human Resource Manager Seagoing Personnel at CSM. "That's why our cadet and junior officer training plays an important role in our planning for the future". In 2013 CSM recruited 195 cadets who have joined the Columbia managed fleet. This has resulted in 48 junior officers – trainees that were promoted to the officer rank. Some of them learned their lessons onboard "AAL Brisbane" and "AAL Kembla".



Both vessels can accommodate up to eight cadets and a training officer. Their own dedicated classroom is fully equipped with the training library, computer based training programmes, videos, a desktop full mission bridge simulator, DVDs, TV and individual training PCs. All training officers are experienced Master Mariners.

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