Cotton: Texas cotton through a Texas port

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Yangming Line's M/V MING UNIVERSE is loaded at the Port Authority's Barbours Cut Container Terminal with the first shipment of cotton through the 'West Texas cotton motor-bridge.' The new concept is expected to route thousands of containers of cotton through the Port of Houston.

‘West Texas cotton motor-bridge’ initiated

An innovative and cost-effective concept has recently been made available to cotton shippers which could attract thousands of container loads of cotton over the Port of Houston wharves between now and the end of next year's cotton season.

Dubbed the 'West Texas cotton motor-bridge,' the concept will save cotton shippers $9.00 per ton, and in a price-sensitive business where a 50-cent per bale differential can swing the total cost either way, it will translate into a saving of $2.08 per bale, or $162.00 per container load over present methods of handling.

During the current wave of price hikes, Yangming Marine Transportation Corporation, principal of Solar International Shipping Agency of Houston, became the first carrier to offer Texas cotton merchants and shippers an alternative to the present movement of cotton to the Far East via West Coast ports.

According to David Liu, regional manager of Solar’s Houston branch office, the motor-bridge will export Texas cotton through a Texas port, the Port of Houston Authority’s Barbours Cut Container Terminal; provide cotton exporters a rate incentive from interior points in West Texas via Barbours Cut Terminal to the Far East; and increase tonnage through the Port of Houston, resulting in an increase in port revenues. Other port-related industries and support services will also feel the impact.

Empty containers will be moved by land from Barbours Cut Terminal by Central Freight Lines under the direction of Greater South Traffic Services, Inc., of Houston, to the Central Freight Lines yard in Lubbock, Texas for positioning to local compresses/warehouses. The containers will then be stuffed with cotton and returned to Barbours Cut Terminal for shipment by Yangming to the Far East.

The following West Texas points are presently covered by the motor-bridge: Lubbock, Big Spring, Brownfield, Lamesa, Levelland, Sweetwater, Plainview, Ralls, Slaton, Sudan, Tohoka and Tulia.

The motor-bridge was the brainchild of Port of Houston Authority Western Representative Dave Simpson, who negotiated the lower rates to assist cotton shippers who were unhappy with present rates, as well as for the benefit of Far Eastern and European carriers.

"Strictly in terms of 'regional pride', this concept will allow Texas cotton to be shipped out of a Texas port," Simpson said. "Shipments of cotton producing West Texas had previously been transported by rail to West Coast ports. The Port of Houston Authority's in-
Executives from two of the companies involved in the West Texas cotton motor-bridge concept discuss transportation operations strategies with a Central Freight Lines driver. Frank Pitts, left, national accounts manager for Greater South Traffic Services and L.O. Schroeder, center, Central Freight Lines terminal manager, talk with Central Freight Lines driver, Charles Brymer, right.

Greater South Traffic Services, Inc., which acts as a liaison between the land carrier and the sea carrier, has contracted with Central Freight Lines to provide the inland transportation portion of the concept. Frank Pitts, national accounts manager for Greater South Traffic Services, agrees with Liu that cooperation of all parties involved in the motor-bridge will be the key to its success.

"There have been previous attempts by others to source load cotton in West Texas, however, the operations were not successful for various reasons," Pitts said. "We believe with the cooperation of the cotton shippers, land transportation personnel and sea carriers, such as Yangming, we will have the opportunity to get the concept out in the forefront and prove that it will work during the remainder of this cotton season. Other shippers will hopefully recognize the success and a domino effect will result. Then it could really take off, and the concept could eventually be expanded to include any containerized cargo within the state."

"Getting this off the ground has been fun," said Pitts. "It's always interesting to take an idea, hash it over and then be able to realize the 'fruits' of your labors. Yangming, Central Freight, the Port Authority...as well as our company—are all anxious to see this work. Its success will benefit the entire industry and will be a testament to what cooperation at all levels can achieve," Pitts said.

"The first 400-bale shipment of West Texas cotton has already left Lubbock, was loaded aboard Yangming's M/V MING UNIVERSE and is presently in route to the Far East," Simpson said. "Now we're working to secure additional bookings through other carriers before the end of this cotton season."

"Yangming Lines is the first carrier to take advantage of this special rate," Liu pointed out. "We believe the concept will be a cost saver in moving cotton from West Texas to the Far East through Houston."

According to Liu, the motor-bridge concept will benefit all entities involved, from cotton farmers to shippers and ultimately to the consumer due to the lower rates. Yangming, which can trace its company history back almost 200 years, offers a "first-class operation...new ships and equipment," said Liu. "We have been calling at Barbours Cut Terminal since late 1983, coming to the Port of Houston Authority from the Port of Galveston." The gulf regional office is located in Houston. Solar also operates a terminal office at Barbours Cut Terminal and has agencies throughout the region.

"The first 400-bale shipment of West Texas cotton has already left Lubbock, was loaded aboard Yangming's M/V MING UNIVERSE and is presently in route to the Far East," Simpson said. "Now we're working to secure additional bookings through other carriers before the end of this cotton season."
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David Liu, the U.S. Gulf regional manager of Solar Shipping Agency, Inc., general agency for Yangming Marine Line, has spent much of his life in training for his current job. Raised in Taiwan, he graduated from the National Maritime College there with a degree in transportation and shipping management.

He continued his professional preparation in the United States, where he attended the University of Minnesota in the early 1970s. After completing the program with a master's degree in transportation and business logistics and minors in both management information systems and psychological foundations, he entered the Houston business community. And even today, his education continues.

A bookcase in his Galleria-area office is crammed with dozens of trade magazines, while copies of several daily business newspapers lay next to it on the floor. Liu said he regularly attends seminars designed to help keep him abreast of developments in the transportation industry.

The effort, he said, is worth it. It keeps him honed and ready to seize passing opportunities, something he believes in doing. "In order to offer effective and efficient service, one must keep in touch with development in the industrial sector and the international trade market. This knowledge helps us to adjust and adapt ourselves to their needs," he said.

"It is very easy to be complacent with traditional modes, and yet not meet rising challenges. We, however, take an active role in promoting business," Liu said. "We go out, we get people related to this industry together, we find alternatives and we provide service. Innovation is the key."

Yangming Line’s participation in the new West Texas cotton motor-bridge is the kind of innovative program which appeals to him, Liu said. During the current wave of price hikes, Yangming is the first carrier to offer Texas cotton shippers an alternative to sending their product to the Far East via the West Coast.

By offering a total transportation package which includes more attractive rates, cotton can be moved through the Port of Houston in a cheaper, more efficient manner. "Our concept is that we save the cost and contribute it to the shipper," Liu said. "Such cost savings will make final prices more competitive and will help the economy grow."

Generally speaking, Liu said he favors any idea which promotes free trade and free competition. "That’s what made the United States the strongest country in the world."

"The transportation industry can help to relieve America’s current difficulties in foreign trade by taking the initiative to cooperate and negotiate with all related parties to overall lower cost. This in turn will make American products competitive in the world market," he said.

With 10 years in the shipping business, Liu has the experience to support his opinions. After completing the Master of Science program at the University of Minnesota, he came to Houston where he held a variety of jobs in the industry, including positions with Maersk Lines and Norton, Lilly and Co. Norton, Lilly was Yangming’s agent in Houston before Solar established its own branch office here in 1982. When it did, Liu was invited to take over as regional manager.

An aggressive and expanding company, Yangming was established under its current name in 1972. Its story, however, dates back 200 years, to the days when the China trade was first opened up to the West. Today the line boasts 32 vessels, totalling 1,540,000 DWTs, including bulk carriers, tankers, reefers and container ships.

When not attending to Yangming’s business, Liu spends his time with his family and is active as a deacon in the Houston Chinese Church. □
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Texas Cotton Assn. convention held

More than 500 area cotton growers and shippers attended the Texas Cotton Association annual convention, held recently in Dallas.

During this meeting, the West Texas cotton motor-bridge concept was announced. The motor-bridge offers a special rate to cotton shippers who ship through the Port of Houston. The first shipment of cotton is presently on its way to the Far East via Yangming Lines.

Port of Houston management officials staffed an informational display during the convention.

Bob Hughes, H.L. Ziegler Company; Guenther Pfingsten, Paul Reinhart, Inc.; H.F. Hassett, Port City Compress.

Jean and Jimmy Coach, H. Molsen Co.

J.H. Brieger, Westwood Shipping Lines; Dave Simpson, Port of Houston Authority.


Dave Simpson, Port of Houston Authority; Frank Pitts, Greater South Traffic Services; Lee Origer, Burlington Northern Railroad.

Roby Smith, W.B. Dunavant Co.; Neal Gillen, American Cotton Shippers Association.

Buddy Slevin, Independent Cotton Shippers.

H.F. Hassett, Port City Compress; Sara Taylor, Allenberg Cotton Company.
Operation Raleigh makes way to Houston

What the Jules Verne character, Phileas Fogg, did in just 80 days, Captain Mike Kichenside and his exploration ship the SIR WALTER RALEIGH, will try to accomplish at a more leisurely pace.

But for the 4,000 young men and women involved in Operation Raleigh, the slower trek around the world still promises adventure.

The four-year, non-profit program is geared to challenge their abilities and to develop their leadership potential.

Selected for their stamina and willingness to contribute something to the global community, each of the 17-to-24-year-old "venturers" will spend three months as a member of one of 40 worldwide scientific and community service expeditions.

The SIR WALTER RALEIGH, replete with scientific labs and sophisticated computer equipment, is the flagship and support vessel for the ambitious undertaking which began in England in November under the patronage of Prince Charles.

After completing the first phase of the project in the Caribbean and the Grand Bahamas, the ship and five of the first 250 venturers stopped at the Port of Houston in March as part of a promotional and recruiting tour of the United States before continuing on to Central America.

Sponsors of the program expect youth from 27 countries, including 1,500 U.S. citizens, to participate before Operation Raleigh concludes in 1988.

At least one American, a young Texan, already has.

Looking tanned and fit after her three-month stint, 23-year-old Rosemary Burton greeted visitors aboard the SIR WALTER RALEIGH as it lay in its berth. "It was wonderful and challenging," the petite, energetic Houston native said of her stay in the tropics, "a real opportunity for anyone who wants to learn about leadership and people."

During her 90-day odyssey, Burton worked with others to build a playground for orphans in the Grand Bahamas, studied entomology, and collected soil samples inside a dead volcano.

Impressed with the experience, she decided to ship over for another six weeks in Costa Rica. Venturers there are now building a bridge and studying the effects of soil erosion on the Pacific Coast's coral reefs.

But Burton wasn't the only recycled venturer aboard. John Pearn, a 22-year-old Briton, wasn't quite ready to quit either.

"I started out in the Bahamas on January 16," the Liverpool native said. "When I finished my three months, I stayed on, not as a venturer, but as a member of the ship's crew."

Pearn, who was trained in England as a professional seaman before joining the expedition, is now the RALEY'S third mate.

Nautical expertise, however, is not required of participants. "A lot of them don't have much sea experience," Pearn said. "A few were a bit over-awed by the voyage. Some knew what to expect," he said, "while some didn't."

Kevin Connolly, a 17-year-old Londoner, was apparently among those who did. He described his adventures as rewarding, but not surprising. "It's turned out to be quite a job," he said, "very much what I expected."

The soft-spoken teenager said he was attracted to Operation Raleigh because of its community service aspect. "I did a lot of work with the Boy's Club at home," he said. "When I heard about this, I decided to try it and see how far I could come." Connolly said he plans to return to London in April.

But at least one member of the ship's company expects to stay aboard until (See Operation Raleigh, page 41)
To mark the SIR WALTER RALEIGH’S maiden voyage to the Port of Houston in March, officials presented the vessel’s captain with a commemorative plaque. Pictured here (left to right), are Port Commissioner Howard Middleton, Captain Mike Kichenside and Port of Houston Authority Executive Director Richard P. Leach.

A young venturer does chores aboard the SES SIR WALTER RALEIGH during its visit to the Port of Houston. English-speaking youths from all over the world will spend three months in a foreign country conducting scientific research or community service as part of the project.

At a ceremony to welcome the SIR WALTER RALEIGH to Houston, the program’s Director, Colonel John Blashford-Snell, M.B.E., presented a commemorative to Port Authority Director Richard Leach.

Operation Raleigh flagship, converted fishing vessel

If ships could talk, the SIR WALTER RALEIGH might have a story or two to tell. Before it became the official flagship of Operation Raleigh, the old stern trawler caught fish, launched submarines and did seismic work in the North Sea. Now, she’s been brought out of retirement to sail around the world.

When the city of Hull, England, donated the use of the vessel to Operation Raleigh, her name was the SWANELLIS and she’d been mothballed for three years. After receiving a good cleaning, some refitting and a new name, the ship was steered out of the harbor at Hull by Prince Charles, the founder of Operation Raleigh. Then she was on her way to circumnavigate the globe.

Originally constructed in Bremmerhaven, West Germany, in 1965, it probably never occurred to the ship’s builders that one day the future king of England would stand at her helm.

“She was a workboat, a fishing vessel,” said her new master, Captain Mike Kichenside.

Even so, she was an unusual one. “You don’t find many that size,” Kichenside said. Actually, the 1,900-ton ship was a fish factory. “The catch was gutted and cleaned on board, topped and tailed, boxed and quick-frozen and stored for however long the ship was at sea,” he said.

Sometimes the ship was out for months, which explains its oversized fuel tanks. “She carries enough fuel to take her all the way around the world,” the captain said. Which means the fill-up in Houston in March will last through 1988.

When her fishing days ended, the ship entered a cleaner line of work. She became a submersible support vessel. “She carried a couple of small subs,” Kichenside explained, “for inspecting oil pipelines in the North Sea.”

Her refitting for the oil industry makes her particularly useful on some of Operation Raleigh’s scientific expeditions. “They added a lot of laboratories, extra accommodations, additional lifeboats and other equipment we can adapt to our own use,” Kichenside said. “The labs on board will be used for marine biology experiments and by scientists on shore who will need proper labs to work in.”

More equipment and computers have since been donated by private firms.

Now equipped and ready, the SIR WALTER RALEIGH will play host to more than 4,000 young venturers and will visit 30 different countries before Operation Raleigh ends in 1988.

After that, she’ll slip back into her berth in Hull, bringing with her some of her most memorable tales.
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A delegation of business representatives from the People’s Republic of China visited Houston recently on a business fact-finding mission, designed in cooperation with the Houston-based China Center for Technology and Development. The China Center, founded in concert with key equity partners throughout China, was established to get Western technology into China quickly, efficiently and at a profit to Western firms, as well as to help bring Chinese products into Western markets in the same manner. The delegation included representatives from the China Association of Science, a broadcasting equipment factory, an auto factory, an iron and steel company, the Industrial Textile Institute, a laser technique development center, a lathe plant, and other companies. The delegation was the guest of the Port of Houston Authority for lunch aboard the M/V SAM HOUSTON and also toured Barbours Cut Container Terminal and the Port of Houston Industrial District.
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Gateway Tugs initiates barge feeder service from Brownsville to Houston

Gateway Tugs, Inc., recently initiated regular ship container barge feeder services from the Port of Brownsville to the Port of Houston’s Barbours Cut Terminal.

Two barges will be available, each equipped to carry 45 40-foot containers and 45 20-foot containers, for a maximum of 180 per trip, to facilitate container movement between the two ports of call. The barge feeder service will also benefit labor entities and shipping related businesses in both Houston and the Brownsville/Matamoras areas.

"It’s important to mention how Mexico will benefit," said Parker. "Industry in Mexico is keenly interested in water transportation. This service will allow Mexican shippers to move their cargoes north through the Port of Brownsville and then to Houston to interconnect with vessels loading here. Shipping communities in both areas will benefit from the business generated by the service."

The Port of Brownsville, as well as the ports of Corpus Christi and Freeport, where Gateway also hopes to incorporate service, does not operate a container facility.

The service will initially load only at Barbours Cut, but will expand to the main harbor of the port in the future if the interest warrants, said Parker.

Parker brings 33 years experience in the stevedoring field in the Brownsville area to the company. His partner, Captain Don Foust, executive vice president and a 21-year ocean-going sea captain, will be responsible for day-to-day operations, maintenance of the boats and barges and will also skipper the tugs.

Honoring the initiation of its regular ship container barge feeder service, Gateway Tugs was presented an appreciation plaque by the Port of Houston Authority. Shown at the presentation are, from left: Dave Simpson, Western representative, Port of Houston Authority; Frank Parker, Gateway Tugs president; James Beaman, director of trade development for the Port of Brownsville Authority; and John Horan, manager of Barbours Cut Container Terminal.

Gateway Tugs’ PORPOISE, is available to transport container barges round trip from the Port of Brownsville to the Port of Houston.
In 1790, the United States was a small country with a big problem. Sea-going smugglers were openly violating the fledgling nation's customs laws, depriving it of revenues from tariffs.

Disgusted with the bootleggers, Secretary of State Alexander Hamilton came up with a solution. Ten cutter-style sailing ships were built. Manned by a special force known as the Revenue Marines, the vessels were used to ferret out smugglers and seize contraband.

Today, the service's patrol ships are still known as cutters, but the Revenue Marines are called something else: the U.S. Coast Guard.

In the nearly two centuries since its inception, the Coast Guard has changed more than its name. While smuggling is still one of its major concerns, the modern service's regulatory role now extends far beyond the policing of the nation's territorial waters.

The Coast Guard of today enforces water pollution laws, controls shipping lanes, licenses seamen, inspects vessels and performs a variety of other duties which affect shipping and port operations.

Divided into three separate commands, nearly 200 men and women are assigned to the Houston Ship Channel area alone.

At the Coast Guard's Port Safety Station on Clinton Drive, Captain Joel Sipes commands ten officers and 87 enlisted personnel. Sipes, a 26-year career officer, is the Captain of the Port. As such, he is responsible for port safety and security, marine environmental protection, search and rescue operations, boating safety, and disaster control from the Turning Basin to Redfish Reef.

The U.S. Coast Guard, nearly two hundred years old, plays an important role in the operation of a port. Three commands serve the Port of Houston.

The job includes verification of documents required aboard ships under federal and international law and the monitoring of oil transfers to and from vessels.

Violations of the Marine Pollution Convention—a treaty which requires all vessels to have pollution inspection certificates—is a typical problem uncovered by his boarding parties, the captain said.

But other violations are not so routine. Last year, Coast Guardsmen discovered a ship loading hazardous wastes. "We suspect their intention was to dump it at sea," Sipes said. A week before that, Sipes said he had to order a propane ship to leave port because of its unsafe condition.

Such preventative measures usually keep the port safe, he said. But when they fail, he's also responsible for minimizing the damage.

A good example involved the RIO NUEQUEN, a ship carrying a container of aluminum phosphide, a volatile fumigant. The container exploded in the ship's hold, unleashing a poisonous gas. The Coast Guard took charge of securing the site and the ensuing cleanup.

The RIO NUEQUEN incident was the only serious ship channel accident in the two years he's been here, Sipes said. "There are a lot of dangerous cargoes shipped through here," he said. "But despite that, the port has a tremendous safety record."

Safety is what the Coast Guard presence on the ship channel is all about, Sipes said. "It's our major function, be it on a vessel or in a facility or in the channel. We check all facilities on the
waterfront, most of the ships, and we check the channel daily for navigational hazards."

Oil spills are another concern of the Coast Guard. "We have minor oil pollution cases almost daily," Sipes said. In addition to supervising clean-up activities, trained personnel often investigate the spills and affix responsibility for them. "In many instances, they look like mystery spills at first blush," Sipes said. "But we take samples from the water and samples from vessels and send them to the lab to see if we can match them," the captain explained. "Frequently we can."

Other duties of coast guardsmen under Sipes' command include assisting U.S. Customs officers with drug investigations. In the interest of national security, they also keep an eye on four or five communist-flag merchant ships which call at the port each week.

It's a varied and complex job, Sipes said. But he appears to take it all in stride. "I feel like I'm doing what I've spent most of my career learning to do," he said.

Another Coast Guard officer with years of training invested in his occupation is Captain Peter J. Cronk, commander of the Marine Inspection Office in Houston.

Cronk, a 27-year veteran, is responsible for inspecting and documenting vessels, barges, facilities and equipment. "We inspect for standards of construction, operation, and maintenance of commercial vessels sailing under the U.S. flag," Cronk explained. The office also inspects foreign vessels which carry hazardous materials to ensure they meet standards of safety and seaworthiness.

The inspections differ from those carried out by the Captain of the Port, Cronk explained. "We certify that the vessel is in satisfactory condition for use in the service its employed in," he said, "while the Captain of the Port verifies that the vessel's operation during the course of its business is done in compliance with U.S. law.

The Marine Inspection Department is also responsible for the investigation of marine casualties and accidents. "If we find that misconduct by licensed personnel caused the accident, we take remedial action to determine if they should continue to hold a license," Cronk said. "If the action was due to mechanical failure, we find out what it was, so it can be remedied.

"For example, in some casualties, we've found that a weakness in the design of some steering systems could cause a ship to either run aground or collide with another ship," Cronk said. "The ESSO BRUSSELS and the SEAWITCH collision in 1973 is probably one of the more famous cases," Cronk said. "As a result of it, we have new regulations and inspection procedures to safeguard against such accidents."

The Marine Inspection Office is also responsible for the documentation of all vessels which are owned by residents of Texas and New Mexico. The Coast Guard's admeasurement section, which determines the net and gross tonnages of ships, is housed in the same office.

Another important function of the Marine Inspection Office is the testing and documentation of professional seamen and the issuance of federal pilots' licenses.

Licensing and inspection duties are complex and time consuming, Cronk said, but are necessary for the continued safe operation of vessels at the Port of Houston and elsewhere.
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Leaders discuss mechanics of port operations at HCC seminar

Prominent members of the maritime community gathered in March to conduct a seminar on the mechanics of port operations.

The six-hour course was arranged by the Houston Community College system and was part of a series assembled by the school’s Commercial Transportation and Distribution Department.

Topics discussed at the March meeting at the Houston International Seamen’s Center included the role and responsibility of transportation carriers, export packers, custom brokers, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and port authorities.

Also discussed were the duties of importers and exporters, terminal operators, foreign freight forwarders and truckers, and the operation of foreign trade zones within U.S. ports.

The first panel of speakers was introduced by George Krohn from the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration.

James D. Pugh, managing director of the Port Authority of Houston, was the first speaker. Pugh explained the history of the development of American ports from private enterprises to quasi-governmental entities.

Jack Henderson, manager of West Gulf operations for Lykes Bros. Steamship Co., followed Pugh. He remarked on the role of ocean carriers, while Lynn Tarkenton of Sea-Land Service Inc. discussed the rise in containerized shipping.

Diana L. Bynum, owner of CHB Company, shed light on the duties and obligations of customhouse brokers. Gary Fidelman, vice president in charge of sales and logistics for Jetero International Services, Inc., discussed the dynamics of the freight forwarding business.

George Altvater of Baltic Marine in Houston, delivered the noon address. Altvater, the former executive director of the port authorities in both Houston and Baton Rouge, talked about where the shipping business has been and where it’s going in the future.

Other speakers included Richard Atkinson, general superintendent of Port Stevedoring; George Ribar, president of Export Packers Association; Berry M. Gerhardt, general manager of the Houston Foreign Trade Zone; Paul Gonzales with the U.S. Customs Service; and U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Kathy Hamblett.

In addition to Krohn, other moderators included Walter T. Pancoe, retired executive of the T/M DuPont Co.; and Lester Dray of the Commercial Transportation and Distribution Department of the Houston Community College System.

The college will offer another seminar on May 16. The one-day event, entitled “International Business Interfaces,” will cover marketing, transportation and finance.

HCCS also offers regular classes useful to those already involved in or interested in learning about the transportation field. Coursework is offered in nine areas, including rail rates and classifications, materials handling and warehousing, air transportation, transportation and traffic management, and logistics.

For additional information on seminars/classes, contact: Sales, Marketing & Management Division, 4310 Dunlavy St., Suite 231, Houston, TX 77006. Or write to P.O. Box 7849, Houston, TX 77270, telephone (713) 868-0773.
Some names carry a lot of weight.

When you've got cargo to move, there's only one name you need to remember. **Cooper/T. Smith STEVEDORING**
Mission to feed the hungry

Wheelchair-bound captain to pilot ship

A
ter a freak accident left his legs paralyzed, 45-year-old Tom Keegan wondered if he’d ever do anything useful again.

Then the former sea captain met San Antonio oilman Tom Suarek. After that, there was no doubt about it.

Suarek, a millionaire who made his fortune wildcatting in South Texas, wanted to share some of his good luck. His plan was to buy a small boat and use it to ship wheat to starving children in Haiti.

He had the money for the ship, and a Christian organization in Colorado supplied three tons of grain, but he still needed a captain. That’s when Keegan called.

“Our getting together was pure happenstance,” Keegan said. “I was in bed, pitying myself and building model airplanes on my chest. Then I saw an ad in a trade magazine and called Tom.”

Suarek was advertising to sell a ship he’d taken in trade for an oil well, but had turned out to be impractical for its intended use.

“It was a good price, so I inquired about it for a friend of mine,” Keegan said. As the two men talked, they discovered they had something in common. “I told him that if I wasn’t in a wheelchair, I’d like to feed people in Ethiopia. He said, ‘I’m buying another ship and I’m going to feed people in Haiti, can you envision that?’ I said I could, and that’s how it happened.”

Suarek purchased a 26-year-old, 150-foot fishing boat, rechristened it the SONSHIP II, and got Keegan a special standup wheelchair for the bridge. Then he sent him to Pascagoula, Mississippi, to bring the boat back.

Once at sea, things got a little bit rough. “There was a weather warning and my chair would roll from one side of the wheelhouse to the other,” Keegan said. “I finally had to tie it down to the ladder.”

The SONSHIP II’s arrival at the New Terminal Warehouse, where the wheat was stored free of charge, caused quite a stir. Jurgen Schroder, the firm’s president, said he was impressed with what he saw.

“It’s remarkable,” he said. “These people did this all on their own without government help, without anybody’s help for that matter.”

Schroder credited Keegan with much of the operation’s success. “He’s the key to the whole thing,” he said. “He’s very strong, very alive, and a good sea captain. That he’s able to do this from a wheelchair is truly remarkable.”

The expedition to Haiti is expected to take 10 days at sea, Keegan said, and another week in port to unload. “It’ll take a while to get the grain off because they don’t have any modern facilities there,” he explained. “They’ll have to take it out of the hold on their backs.”

If there’s a lesson to be learned from the trip, it’s to be grateful for what you have, Keegan said. Since becoming involved in the project, he said he thinks less about his own problems.

“I sometimes get a little upset about our lack of regard for our own good fortune,” he said. “If a Haitian gets a bag of meal and a plastic water jug, he’s tickled to death to have it; in the United States, we gripe if the carwash water isn’t the right temperature.”

If the initial trip goes well, Suarek said he’ll buy another ship and continue to send grain.

That’s fine with Keegan, who said he’ll stick with the program as long as it can. “Part of the fun of it is that people don’t really think I can do it,” Keegan said. “To me it’s a tickle to show them that I can. It almost makes it fun to be crippled.” Then added, “almost.”

Even so, it beats the alternative, he said. “Before, I was laying in bed, waiting to die. Now, I’ve got responsibilities. It gives me a reason to live.”
Transoceanic, building strength through diversity has been a solid commitment for almost forty years.

To meet the ever-changing needs of the international marketplace, we have consistently expanded our range of services and updated others.

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Building strength through diversity: a Transoceanic commitment to better serving the needs of an ever-changing world.

International Freight Forwarders Air-Ocean
International Freight Contractors
Customhouse Brokers
Subsidiaries: International Export Packers of Louisiana, Inc.
Projects Equipment Company
U.S. Offices: Houston, Miami, San Francisco,
New Orleans, Baltimore
Consortium offices located throughout Western Europe and the Asiatic regions
CA-OPTIMIZER to improve computer operations

The Commission has approved the purchase of a set of computer software programs, CA-OPTIMIZER, which is designed to improve the productivity of computer programmers and to reduce the amount of computer time expended by automatically optimizing COBOL programs. The management information services department has tested the programs and analyzed the results and expects the programs to be extremely cost and time effective. The contract for purchase of the software was awarded to Computer Associates International for $13,125.

Shiploader operational

During the first three weeks of operation, three vessels have already benefited from the increased throughput due to the new traveling shiploader, which began operation April 1, at the Port Authority's Bulk Materials Handling Plant. PHA officials are very pleased with the efficiency and timeliness of the shiploader, which is averaging 1,800 tons per hour, an improvement over the old shiploader, which was rated at 1,000 tons per hour.

Another bulk facility improvement, the onshore dust suppression system, went into service in mid-April.

Product Engineering, Inc. has been awarded a contract and change order for a total of $69,000 for rail car shakers with improved corrosion protection. The shakers will be covered with an overhead structure to keep out moisture. They have been ordered and are expected to be delivered in mid-July.

Wharf 32 and Barbours Cut Terminal Wharf 4 to get amenities buildings

Amenities buildings for both Wharf 32 at the Turning Basin and Wharf 4 at Barbours Cut Terminal are set for October completions. Howe Constructors, Inc. was awarded the contract for both buildings. The contract for Wharf 32 is for $151,600 and $208,600 for Wharf 4.

Contract awarded for Crane #7 repair

Users of Barbours Cut Container Terminal can expect Wharf Crane #7 to be back in service in September. Brown & Root has been awarded a $104,000 contract for its repair. Two tracks on the crane will be replaced, also bearings in other tracks will be re-worked. The contract specifications also call for straightening cable reels and replacing ladders and safety cages. Completion was pushed to September due to delivery of parts.

Paving improvements set

During their April meeting, Commissioners approved advertising for bids for paving improvements, totaling $233,000 to the access roads to the Port Authority's Manchester Wharves. Bids have also been let for an additional 25-foot wide strip of paving and back-up area to Wharf 4 at Barbours Cut Container Terminal. When completed, the $25,000 in improvements will provide additional parking at the terminal.
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The National Shipping Company of Saudi Arabia offers you everything you’re looking for in a shipping line: experienced international personnel to expedite your order, roll on/roll off capabilities to accommodate cargo up to 23 feet high by 40 feet wide, and ships that sail directly from U.S. ports to Yanbu, Jeddah, Dammam, Jubail and other Saudi ports.

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Grosjean promoted to harbor sales director

Don Grosjean has been promoted to director of harbor sales for Suderman & Young Towing Co., Inc., a Houston-based tugboat firm with operations all along the Texas Gulf Coast.

Grosjean, who specializes in the marketing of services, has been in harbor sales for Suderman & Young since 1979. His 25 years of experience in the marketing field also includes positions as vice president of marketing for a computer services firm in Dallas and national marketing manager for an office equipment company in Cleveland and Houston.

He was raised in Houston and attended the University of Houston and the University of Tulsa before starting his career.

Kerr Steamship announces Gulf division appointments

Kerr Steamship Company, Inc. recently announced appointments in its Gulf division.

Jacques Livaudais will fill the newly created position of line manager-U.S. Gulf for United Arab Shipping Co. He will be based in Houston. Eb Hoerling, formerly district manager of Kerr-Memphis office, has been named district sales manager, Houston. Dennis Grady, formerly a sales representative in Kerr-Chicago, has been appointed district sales manager, Memphis. Richard D. Cook has been promoted to the position of operations manager, West Gulf, and will be based in Houston.

H.L. Ziegler, Inc. relocates office

H.L. Ziegler, Inc. of Freeport, Texas, has announced the recent relocation of its office to the First National Bank Building, 122 West Way, Suite 404, Lake Jackson, Texas 77566. The new mailing address is P.O. Box 160 and new phone numbers are 409/297-8178, 9716 and 9720.

Central Dispatch, Inc. names general manager

William (Bill) Morris, has recently been appointed general manager of operations for Central Dispatch, Inc., customhouse brokers and international freight forwarders. He will be responsible for both airport and port operations.

Morris is a licensed customhouse broker. A native of Port Arthur, he began his career with Central Dispatch in 1976. He served as manager of both the Lake Charles, Louisiana and Savannah, Georgia offices before returning to Houston to head up the customhouse brokerage and freight forwarding department.

N.A.S.A. announces new office locations

New office locations for North American Shipping Agencies, Inc. (N.A.S.A.) were incorrectly listed in the March Magazine. N.A.S.A., headquartered in Houston, is located at 2180 North Loop West, Suite 190, 77018, and the telephone number is 956-9100. The newly-opened office in New Orleans is located at 2640 Canal Street, 70119. (504) 822-3814, telex: 5184346.

Wilcrest Engineering Corp. appoints management staff

Howell L. (Sonny) Pearson has been named vice president of engineering. He formerly was senior project manager at Brown and Root and general manager of the Houston division of Crest Engineering. R. Michael Gray has been named manager of marketing and sales. He formerly was manager of offshore sales for Ensor Engineering Co.

Wilcrest Engineering Corporation provides engineering, project management and construction management services on a worldwide basis to the oil and gas production and transportation industry. The offices are located at 13201 Northwest Freeway, Houston, Texas 77040-6096, telephone (713) 939-1188, TWX: 910-881-4816.

Providence Maritime relocates offices

Providence Maritime Corporation, independent ship operators and contract carriers, has relocated to larger quarters in West Houston, announced Direk Bueschen, company president.

Providence Maritime is primarily involved as a carrier in the ocean transportation of project, bulk and specialized cargoes to worldwide destinations. The firm has particular expertise in handling shipments to remote areas and ports lacking modern facilities.

The new address for Providence Maritime is 11767 Katy Freeway, Suite 570, Houston, Texas 77079. The phone number is (713) 556-0600, telex: 166741.
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