



To ITA Members



22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011

## NEW YEAR MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear ITA Members,

As the year draws to a close I hope this correspondence finds you all in good spirits and the forthcoming year fulfils all your desires.

An update is timely, given we are now half way through our second year as an association.

As it was last year; this year has been extraordinarily busy behind the scenes of the ITA. Your management team (the ITA Executive and in particular your General Manager Steve Sandy) have been working hard to build membership and to fine-tune the 'workings' of the ITA, particularly the website. We have had our challenges along the way but this is to be expected and is a common thread for any new organisation, let alone one that covers the globe, numerous cultures and is run by volunteers.

Someone once said to me, 'every mighty journey starts with one step and it is determination, commitment and tenacity that drives those who arrive at the destination'. We as a group must remain focused.

Now the ITA is up and running it is time to enact our constitution to ensure the ITA is by tugmasters for tugmasters. It is **your** association and it is important the further development and direction of the ITA is not controlled by a few, albeit well meaning, individuals.....myself included.

With this in mind we had a part changing of the guard, being the founding executives, at the last AGM in Antwerp. Once again I reiterate our sincere gratitude to the 'originals' that stood down to make way for the new executive members. Their contribution to our industry and foresight of a bigger vision for tugmasters has been acknowledged and rewarded with ITA Fellowships but it is also respectful and appropriate to acknowledge their contribution in this reflection of the year that has been.

The next AGM is at ITS Barcelona Spain in May 2012, only 6 months to the day from now! Where does the year go!!

At the AGM we will be requiring another third of the original executive to step down and if they so chose stand for re-election along with anyone one else who is nominated. The membership can then vote for whom they wish to represent them. At the AGM it has been decided either the Chairman or President (Andy or I) will step down and not stand for re-election. The reason for this is that at the commencement of the ITA we both worked for different companies but now we are both SeaWays and we feel that having two senior officeholders so closely linked is not appropriate or conducive to positive perception.

As previously touched on there are elements of industry who do not want a successful tugmasters' association and are actively working behind the scenes to inhibit our development and broader acceptance. As we all know this is a small industry so we have a reasonably good idea who are firing the bullets and indeed sometimes rockets!

Frankly I don't take too much issue with this. In most cases they are individuals who have not had a strong grounding in the towage industry having parachuted in from other sectors or professions. On the other hand it is a good thing to be challenged and indeed tested both for worth and intent. We are a traditional industry of predominantly hardened alpha males and if we are who we say we are and we are doing what we say we are going to do then we can withstand the challenge, or if you like, the test and if we do these people, if fair and balanced, will ultimately be converted to supporters of ITA.

This is more the reason we must be true to our stated goals and ambitions of professionalism, safety and development of tug mariners whilst forming strong ties with industry so as to work together for the common good.

Friends be assured, for every knocker the ITA has we have a dozen supporters. As time evolves the knockers will be less and those remaining judged as mean spirited, lacking in foresight and driving their own self-interested agenda.

One of the things that seems to be making some nervous is the move towards formal endorsements for tugmasters. It is important to acknowledge that while the ITA is supportive of this we are not the initiators or indeed the drivers of this concept. The USA has had a form of this for some time now through the USCG. The UK MCA syllabus was conceptualised and developed by the British Tugowners Association and the UK Workboat Association, with little direct involvement from tugmasters and none from the ITA.

It is my opinion that ultimately it will be driven into the towage industry by Oil & Gas Majors, Port Authorities and P&I clubs. When this happens towage companies will have to be compliant whether they are in agreement or not. Towage companies who have wisdom and foresight can already see the benefits and are supportive.

If a defined standard in the form of a formal endorsement to operate is mandatory, as it is with the likes of DP & High Speed Vessel endorsements, then the cost of this is a prerequisite to operate, as it is for a specific type of tug, crewing, QA system etc.

These are common costs all towage companies competing for business via a tender or licencing have so there is no commercial advantage of one over the other. Hence the cost is built into the tug day/job rate and passed on to the client, who stipulated these requirements in the first place. If (when) formal towage endorsements are mandatory this will apply to training costs as well; consequently the cost of training tugmasters to an appropriate and agreed standard will be passed on to the client who is happy to pay, as they know they have a safer and more effective service provider in their ports or at their facilities. Everyone is a winner!

It would appear we have overcome the concern originally expressed by some that the ITA is only a cover name for an international union. I am still flabbergasted that anyone could review the list of the original executives and come to the conclusion that this group of proven and respected industry professionals would be in anyway apart of an organisation with alternate endeavours.

Your Chairman Andy will expand on the meeting we had with the senior management of the Nautical Institute in November. For me; I was very impressed with their professionalism and genuine commitment to the maritime industry and particularly its mariners. By forming closer bonds we can learn a lot from them on how to run a successful and professional organisation and how to avoid pitfalls along the journey.

I personally believe it is time we also look to forming the always planned for but yet to be actioned Offshore Towage division of the ITA. This will take time to fully conceptualise and debate. I would like to see it on the agenda for the 2012 AGM as an item to discuss and vote on whether this is the right thing to pursue and if so is the timing right?

Of course items such as the abovementioned also increase workloads of our volunteer management team. All key players have very full and demanding careers and, speaking from personal experience, even with the very best of intent finding time for ITA business is challenging. At the forefront of this is our General Manager Steve Sandy. Frankly without Steve there would not be an ITA. His efforts on all of our behalves have been and remain outstanding. But, though he may argue it, he is alas only human.....though at times I wonder!

To assist Steve and to build in some redundancy (just in case) we have recruited Rob Hinton to shadow Steve as his deputy.

As important, we are once again bringing youth into the organisational structure of the ITA, which is very important for the future of both the ITA and the towage industry. The demographics of officers in the towage industry is getting older each year and the influx of youth at entry level is not what it needs to be. Young people of today's world have different social needs and lots of options, particularly for the brighter ones. At the same time industry has undergone significant changes resulting in the adventure, rewards, challenges and gloss have all but gone, leaving a bloody hard job in a tough environment and loads of paperwork to comfort you into the lonely nights. A career at sea is not what it used to be and the youth coming through see this quite clearly and change course to other life paths they perceive more advantageous and less demanding.

The big item within ITA at present is moving to free membership. I will leave this for Steve to expand on but will say it has my full support. ITA as a registered association is not allowed by UK law to make a profit and as clearly stated in our constitution we have no intent of doing so. Our financial needs must be met but they are not overly great and we seem to be able to manage via sponsorship.

What we do need are members, both so we can fulfil our goals of impacting positively in the areas of safety and professional operations and to have a voice representing tugmasters at industry's planning table. If we say to the powers to be "we are from the ITA representing the tugmasters of the world" and they say "via your membership how many is that" and we say "500", frankly it won't cut the mustard! If we say "5000", we will be invited to sit at the table and will be listened to. So membership numbers is the name of the game.

I ask you all to assist in building the membership numbers and a successful association. To this end:

- Visit the ITA Website and read the articles and 'papers' posted there by industry experts,
- There will be a lot more technical information being posted over the coming months,
- Contribute and share your knowledge by posting 'papers' and technical information yourself,
- We need you to be active on the forum.....have a say, ask questions, rattle some cages,
- Tell your colleagues about the ITA and actively encourage them to join. I will be asking Steve to post the ITA Flyer on the website in such a way that it is able to be downloaded, so that you can print it off and hand it out to others and pin it up on notice boards.
- Feedback ideas, suggestions and constructive criticism to the executive,
- Post incident & accident reports on the website.....in such a way that does not identify individuals or companies but so we can all learn from the experience,
- Consider standing as an executive member. As per our constitution a third of the ITA executive must resign each year.

Team, you are the founding members of the ITA.....the foundation on which we will grow and fulfil our agreed and admirable goals. As such you will have the satisfaction and kudos of being able to say in years to come you were an inaugural member of the ITA.

I also thought I would enquire from each of you:

- how you view our combined efforts,
- your personal efforts,
- what we have done right,
- what we could have done better,
- ideas you may have for the ITA,
- the way forward from here,
- things the executive could do to assist you being more engaged and,
- what commitment can we expect from you in the future.

I ask that you take the time to respond frankly to each item via the ITA forum.

We are due to undertake the **ITA Lucky Draw** with the **prize** a trip to the **Barcelona ITS Conference** in May 2012. It is our intent to have the draw take place in late January 2012 and as was the case last year to be eligible an ITA (full) member must have visited and communicated on the forum 4 times in the previous year. This is a fantastic prize worth around **US\$5,000**. As last year's winner Robert Underhill will testify a wonderful experience, not only to attend what is without question the **premium towage industry event** of the year but also to be present at our AGM and to meet fellow ITA members and towage people.

As always our thoughts and best wishes go out to the families of those who are no longer with us. Sadly there have been more fatalities, injuries and tugs lost this year. Hopefully our combined efforts will lessen this trend or stop it entirely.

I thank you for becoming a member of the ITA team and wish every one of you a Safe, Abounding & Happy New Year.

*Capt. Arie Nygh*

ITA President

[arie.nygh@tugmasters.org](mailto:arie.nygh@tugmasters.org)

