

# Houston Maritime Arbitrators Association Newsletter

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Spring 2003

## HMAA AT CMA

The Texans have invaded Connecticut. The Houston Maritime Arbitrators Association got the word out that there is an effective alternative to other Maritime Arbitration Societies. The HMAA proposed a respectable number of talented arbitrators, faster response and an overall lower cost for those seeking arbitration in the southern regions. George Chandler, Peter Ferrell, Steve Stapleton, George McCarthy, Mickey Watzak, Robert J. Ryniker and Tom Donovan promoted the HMAA through their diligent manning of the co-sponsored booth at the recent Connecticut Maritime Association, Shipping 2003 Conference in Stamford, CT March 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup>.

Sponsored by HMAA; Hill Rivkins & Hayden; Bell, Ryniker, Letourneau & Nork; and Cormac Maritime LLC, the booth served as an excellent forum by which to demonstrate the viability of the HMAA. From the onset the booth was unofficially deemed the place of refuge for any Southerner who happened to find themselves in this Northern territory with at least a couple of gentlemen stopping by for no other apparent reason that to point out that they were wearing their cowboy boots.

The CMA Shipping 2003 conference was well attended, considering world event distractions and general state of the economy with a few of the attendees that we spoke with, seeking cost-saving alternatives to present methods.

A number of those who visited the HMAA booth in particular indicated they were previously unaware that such a Houston-based Arbitration Association existed and welcomed knowing an alternative existed.

Of note, several members of other arbitration groups made it a point to hover by the HMAA booth in an apparent show of dismay that we had come North to make our existence known. If nothing else was accomplished, I believe we have pretty much guaranteed that these other groups may now feel they need to have a booth at the CMA next year.

The mission of the HMAA booth was to spread the word that HMAA is a viable entity with plenty to offer and to this end we are pleased to report, mission accomplished.



## MARKETING H.M.A.A.

by Capt. Ed Knutsen, President, HMAA

The HMAA booth at Connecticut Maritime Association in March this year was another big step toward getting HMAA Marketing going in high gear. All members are invited to submit their thoughts regarding how best to further expand our marketing efforts to the writer, or directly to our Vice President - Marketing, George E. McCarthy at [GEMcCarthy@cormacco.com](mailto:GEMcCarthy@cormacco.com). One member has suggested occasional lunch meetings for the purpose of inviting executives having potential interest in HMAA to learn more

about our Organization. Another suggestion has been received suggesting a mailing to energy/shipping company executives with RSVP to a HMAA-sponsored cocktail evening to learn more about HMAA. Many thanks, in advance, for your input on this most important matter.

## **HMAA Relaunches its Website**

The website for the Houston Maritime Arbitrators Association was revised and relaunched to coincide with the Connecticut Maritime Association Shipping Conference of 2003. Sporting a revised layout and nautical theme, HMAA added new features, which include down loadable forms and documents. Other links send web-surfers to the Arbitrators Register, HMAA Rules, and Member List.

HMAA contracted with Mickey Watzak of Lantern Consulting Company to update the site with a new design and more user-friendly screens. The overall architecture allows site visitors easy access to important HMAA news and information. The membership application form, the register, HMAA officers, and member list have been updated so they can be viewed online or downloaded and printed neatly from an Adobe® file.

Charterers who are thinking about using Houston Maritime Arbitrators and HMAA Rules in their arbitration clauses can now easily access the rules online and read about the benefits of HMAA's procedures. The site explains how part of the HMAA Mission is to promote fair, speedy, and cost-effective arbitration's. If your company has questions about using HMAA for arbitration, check out the Contact us link, where you can find the email address and phone numbers for more information.

If you are interested in viewing the site, visit [www.HMAATexas.org](http://www.HMAATexas.org) and enter by clicking on the lighthouse. Check the site frequently for updates about upcoming training and events that HMAA attended, and don't forget to read up on the historic Bolivar Lighthouse.

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## **Deadline for Nominations**

By George Chandler

Nominations for the two HMAA Director positions are being sought. Please submit your nominations to the Nominating Committee before Noon on Friday, May 30th. You send them to me, and I will forward them to the Nominating Committee, or you can send it directly to them at:

Heather Campbell:  
*Heather.Campbell@atofina.com*

Ed Knutsen:  
*Ed.Knutsen@thecypressgroup.org*

Mickey Watzak:  
*mwatzak@lanternconsulting.com*

Elections will be conducted at the annual meeting on July 15<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your interest.

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## **LAW COMMITTEE**

The HMAA has formed a law committee to keep members abreast of recent Court decisions pertaining to maritime arbitration.

Their first report is forthcoming.

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

The annual meeting of the HMAA will be held on July 15,2003 at the Houston City Club - further details to follow.