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- ◆ The July 2002 edition of *Marine Log* had a good Q&A with Richard Hobbie, President of WQIS. As you may know, WQIS is the leading insurer of marine vessels in the U.S. While the gist of the Q&A session revolves around pollution insurance and policy coverage, one of the questions asks about the decline in the number of spills occurring since the passage of OPA '90. Mr. Hobbie cites the fact that in 1989, WQIS insured about 8,000 vessels and recorded over 500 claims. Today, WQIS insures some 38,000 vessels, and has about 210 claims annually. ***Editor's Note: This statistic, and its ramifications to our profession in terms of response opportunities, is all the more reason we need to focus our efforts on the homeland security arena.***
- ◆ Late last month, an Alaska State Superior Court jury found that ExxonMobil had fully reimbursed six municipal governments for expenses related to the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill of 1989, and threw out their claim for \$30 million in damages. The trial in the case lasted almost a month, but jurors deliberated for just a few hours before returning their findings. As you know, Exxon claims it spent over \$2 billion cleaning up the spill, and in 1991 reached a \$1.025 billion settlement to address civil and criminal charges filed by the state and federal governments. (Source: *Lloyd's List*)
- ◆ The Australian Maritime Safety Authority ("AMSA") and Queensland Department of Transport are conducting an oil spill exercise in the Timor Sea on August 6th and 7th as part of the National Oil Spill Plan. The spill scenario will relate to a shipping accident and oil spill in the Timor Sea. The AMSA is also updating the National Chemical Spill Plan, which will likely be issued by the end of the year.
- ◆ The International Association of Emergency Managers will host its 50th Annual Conference & Exhibition, entitled "Defending the Homeland . . . Comprehensive Emergency Management", October 12-16, 2002 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Ohio. For more information on the event, contact the IAEM at 1-703-538-1795, facsimile 1-703-241-5603, e-mail iaem@aol.com. You can also visit their web site at www.iaem.com.
- ◆ Last month, the Harwich Haven Authority (UK) put into service a new oil spill recovery vessel. Named the "Haven Hornbill", the vessel is equipped with equipment capable of skimming oil from the surface of the water on either or both sides of the vessel. In addition, doors in the hull

sides open to enable contaminated surface water to be directed into oil separator compartments by skimming booms. Dedicated internal tanks have a total capacity of about 19,500 gallons. The vessel has a large clear working deck, towing winch, and hydraulic crane as well. (Source: *Lloyd's List*)

- ◆ The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Homeland Security Act of 2002 by a vote of 318 in favor, 110 opposed, and five not voting. Among other things, the bill requires that the Secretary of the new Department ensure that the functions of the agencies and subdivisions within the Department that are not related directly to homeland security are not diminished or neglected except by a specific Act of Congress. (Source: *Maritime Items*)

- ◆ The U.S. Department of Justice recently announced that Norwegian Cruise Lines (“NCL”) signed a plea agreement acknowledging a felony violation of the Act to Prevent Pollution From Ships. They will pay \$1 million in criminal fines and make community service payments of \$500,000 to designated environmental projects in southern Florida. The company turned itself in after learning that an engineer on one of its vessels was circumventing the oily water separator and making false entries in the Oil Record Book. The self-reporting and cooperation with the government’s investigation on the part of NCL was reflected in the reduced penalty. (Source: *Maritime Items*)
- ◆ The Senate Committee on Homeland Affairs recently released its version of Homeland Security legislation entitled the “National Homeland Security and Combating Terrorism Act of 2002”. Under the bill, the Directorate of Border and Transportation Security within the new Department of Homeland Security would consist of the U.S. Customs Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Transportation Security Administration. The bill also requires that the Customs Service and the Coast Guard are to remain distinct entities. (Source: *Maritime Items*)
- ◆ The inappropriate use of company computers and more specifically, access to the Internet through company resources can expose employers to computer viruses as well as lawsuits. Many people download bootleg copyrighted entertainment (music and movies), and often do it at work because of the high-speed Internet connection. Unfortunately, these actions can put employers at risk – the consulting firm Integrated Information Systems recently paid the Recording Industry Association of America \$1 million to settle a lawsuit over downloaded music files. With the increasing number of web sites that allow file sharing and/or transfer, the problems associated with downloading files is likely to grow. Not to worry, though – Internet filtering software is available that restricts downloads. (Source: *USA Today*)
- ◆ Non-profit groups funded by federal grants will attempt to recruit some 37,000 volunteers to support homeland security missions in their communities. Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge recently announced \$10.3 million in USA Freedom Corps Grants to 43 groups in 26 states and the District of Columbia. (Source: *Lloyd’s List*) ***The recruiting has started, as is evidenced by the sudden rush of commercials promoting the Freedom Corps . . .***
- ◆ SpillCon 2002, the Asia Pacific region’s premier oil spill conference, will take place September 16-19, 2002, in Manly, Sydney, Australia. For more information, visit the conference web site at www.spillcon.com, call +61 3 9417 0888, or fax +61 3 9417 0899.
- ◆ ***Work/Life/Health: Here’s a story that gives some food for thought:*** One day, a young boy and his dad visited a dog breeder to look at a new litter of puppies. Five of the puppies were all huddled together, and a sixth was alone in a corner of the pen. The breeder told the boy that the lone puppy had been born with a bad leg, and would be crippled for life. As such, the breeder continued, the puppy would never be able to run and play with the boy, and that the boy would be much happier with one of the other puppies. After a short conversation with his father, the boy told the breeder he wanted the lone puppy. When asked why, the boy raised his pant-leg, exposing the brace underneath, and said, “I want that one because I understand what he’s going through.” ***Make a difference.***
- ◆ ***Quote of the Week:*** “Knowledge may give weight, but accomplishments give luster, and many more people see than weigh.” – Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, *Letters to His Son* [May 8, 1750]