



# Tow Bitts



**CELEBRATING 125 YEARS** Foss Maritime is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year with the theme, “Building on a 125-year Tradition of Innovation and Excellence.” In the photograph is the original Foss float house in Tacoma, where **Thea Foss** started the company by renting rowboats in 1889. She and her husband **Andrew** are on the balcony. A package of articles about planning for the celebration and the history of the company begins on page 10.

## FOSS LOOKS TO ALASKA FOR FUTURE GROWTH

Foss Maritime is positioning itself to grow with Alaska.

Responding to real and anticipated growth in petroleum development in Cook Inlet and on the North Slope, Foss has opened an office in Anchorage, is building three new Arctic Class tugs and has formed a

partnership with a native people who have lived on the North Slope for 10,000 years.

For nearly a century, Foss has successfully navigated Alaska’s most extreme environments.

“Alaska is woven deeply into Foss’ corporate culture of safety and

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#### Celebrating Our 125th Anniversary

An anniversary gala party in Seattle, a custom logo and a new book on the company's history are among ways Foss plans to celebrate the 125th anniversary of its founding by **Thea** and **Andrew Foss**. *Tow Bitts* kicks off the celebration with a package of photos and articles.

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Foss Maritime has well-established relationships with Greek ship operators as a result of its relationship with Navigator Ltd. The Athens based company is the exclusive representative of a network of steamship agencies and towing companies all over the world.

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The first challenge was finding the right port in China to load a huge oilrig bound for Abu Dhabi on the Arabian Gulf. Then Foss had to figure out how to navigate its big, loaded barge into a tiny harbor on a manmade island.

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#### CSR Youth Movement

At the ripe old age of just 33, **Dustin Johnson** has taken over as regional operations manager at the Foss Columbia Snake River office in Portland. Described by his boss as "an extremely accomplished young man," Johnson rose quickly through the ranks to his current position.

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#### The Transplant Brothers

Foss Deckhand **Joe Plant** gave a kidney to his brother, San Francisco Bar Pilot **Dennis Plant**, in 1993. But the organ only lasted 16 years, so older brother **Jim** stepped up in what ended up being a double kidney swap with another family.

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#### A Passion for Training

Capt. **Jim Van Wormer** says taking a yearlong break from his 29-year career at Foss to be training director at the Tongue Point Maritime Training Center was "probably the most rewarding experience of my life."

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## Writing a New Chapter In the History of Foss

By *Gary Faber*  
President, Global Services

For decades, Marine Transportation was a stalwart in the Foss Maritime suite of services, particularly in Alaska. Over the years our activities in Ocean Towing declined and the fleet dwindled.

With the acquisition of the *Lauren Foss* and the *Corbin Foss*, we made a statement that we had returned to the market in earnest. The unique attributes of high bollard pull, reduced fuel consumption and SOLAS certification make these boats formidable leaders in ocean towing.

Building on these attributes we teamed with The Glostén Associates, naval architects, to design and build another series of tugs in the best tradition of matching innovation to our customer needs. The Arctic Class tugs will define the

next generation of safe, efficient and environmentally intelligent tugs.

For our mariners these tugs

have been designed with high regard to ergonomics, noise attenuation and improvements in habitability.

We have also embarked on a long term strategy to rebuild our fleet of barges to match not only our fleet of tugs but also to fit the

long term needs of our customers.

Most times we find ourselves in some of the more remote and extreme environments in the world. That is where we thrive like no others.

We are writing a new chapter in the history of Foss

Maritime, and I for one am thrilled to be on board.

Safe travels.



Gary Faber

Most times we find ourselves in some of the more remote and extreme environments in the world. That is where we thrive like no others.

—GARY FABER



**FOSS**

### *Tow Bitts*

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# Foss Continues Progress Toward its Goal of Zero Injuries; CSR Goes Five Years with no Lost-Time Injuries

Foss solidified its safety initiatives in 2013, with continuous improvement leading to enhanced safety programs. Year-end safety statistics showed decreases in both lost-time and recordable incidents.

“There were many notable accomplishments in 2013, but probably the most significant is our Columbia Snake River operation passing the five-year mark with no lost-time injuries” said Director of Health and Safety **Al Rainsberger**. Additionally, Marine Transportation and the Pacific Northwest Harbor Services group have not had a lost-time incident in four years.

During 2013, more than 16,000 job

safety analyses were performed prior to work and more than 15,000 safety observations were conducted, with 95 percent showing no at-risk behaviors. Regional Marine Safety Committees held 24 quarterly meetings, and the shipyards held 24 monthly Safety Committee meetings.

“We are hitting our mark on many target-zero goals,” Rainsberger said. “When all of our cylinders are clicking with regard to our safety tools, we do what is expected of us—our mariners and shipyard workers go home to their families in either the same condition they were in when they arrived at work, or in even better condition.

“Our Safety Vision, is engrained in

all employees,” he continued. “It states that we will ‘work together for an incident-free workplace, where injuries are not acceptable as the cost of doing business.’”

Four tug-and-barge companies that were formerly sister companies were merged into Foss last year, and the company has been standardizing its safety programs and initiatives. The Foss safety department will be tracking the performance of these former sister companies on the monthly Leading Indicators Report and Safety Statistics report.

“All expectations are that we will continue to see improvements in our safety record,” Rainsberger said.

## EPA CHIEF TOURS PORT OF LONG BEACH, FOSS LOW-EMISSION VESSELS ON DISPLAY

**Gina McCarthy**, the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, toured the Port of Long Beach recently, viewing the Port’s environmental initiatives first-hand aboard a Foss crew boat, the *Caribe Horizon*, which was repowered with an EPA grant.

On display, among other emissions-reducing projects, were Foss’ two hybrid tugs, the *Carolyn Dorothy*, and the *Campbell Foss*. Hybrid technology has been proven to significantly reduce emissions while improving fuel economy.

Foss has been honored for advancing hybrid tug technology that reduces greenhouse gasses, airborne particulates and pollution in all its forms. Earlier this year the EPA verified the environmental benefits of the hybrid tug retrofit system that had undergone rigorous testing in Southern California waters.

Since 2005, the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles have cut



**Gina McCarthy** of the EPA at the helm of the *Caribe Horizon*

port-related diesel emissions by roughly 80 percent with a wide-range of programs for ships, trucks, trains and watercraft.

The grants received by Foss to repower some of its tugs and crew boats with cleaner engines were made available by the EPA through the

National Clean Diesel Campaign. They are examples of the nearly 60,000 pieces of clean diesel technology the EPA has funded since 2008 when the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act was enacted.



## FOSS LOOKS TO ALASKA FOR FUTURE GROWTH

(Continued from the cover)

the environment,” said **Gary Faber**, president of the Foss Global Services Division. “We know the state and we know its waters. When we build assets specifically designed for Alaska’s oceans, seas, rivers and beaches, we do so with knowledge gained through decades of local experience.”

The mission of the new office in Anchorage, the state’s commercial center, is to oversee existing work and pursue future opportunities in the expanding oil, gas and mining sectors. Tugs and barges will be needed to support oil development projects on the Chukchi Sea and in Cook Inlet.

Also, the federal government is issuing drilling permits for the vast Point Thomson petroleum field, which is estimated to contain 8 trillion feet of natural gas, about 300 million barrels of gas condensation liquids and traditional crude oil.

The Point Thomson project languished for years because it was thought too remote to develop. In the summer of 2013, three Foss tugs hauled critical infrastructure more than 2,300 miles from Anacortes, Wash., to Point Thomson and had to

wait for ice to break up before landing the cargo in July.

In two years, Foss will mount a second, larger sealift from South Korea to the North Slope.

Accompanying the two ocean-going tugs on last summer’s sealift was the *Emmett Foss*, a brand new shallow-draft tug built at Foss Rainier Shipyard on the Columbia River. The tug was specifically designed to move modules, supplies and other cargo onto Arctic, beaches and into rivers, places inaccessible for larger tugs.

The first of the three Arctic Class tugs is currently under construction at the Rainier yard and is scheduled for delivery in December. The 130-foot-long tugs will have hulls strengthened to withstand ice floes, low-emission Caterpillar engines, elimination of ballast tanks that might transport invasive species, and other environmentally focused design elements.

Some of the employees Foss will add to support its work in the Arctic may be native Iñupiat, whose corporation is the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC). ASRC owns nearly 5 million acres on the



The first of three Arctic Class tugs takes shape at Foss Rainier Shipyard. Delivery is scheduled for late this year. The vessels will be 132 feet long and will have ice strengthened hulls. Jerome Ruhoff

North Slope, much of it with oil and gas resources.

The strategic alliance with the native corporation has both business and cultural components. Foss will train Iñupiat youth for maritime industry jobs, as it has with Makah tribal members in Washington.

“We strive to partner with companies that believe in responsible development and will protect our resources through safety and environmental stewardship,” said **Jeff Kinneveauk**, president and CEO of ASRC Energy Services, Inc. “And in that regard, Foss is a maritime industry leader. They are also a good partner because they share, respect and understand our Iñupiat cultural values.”

## FOSS AND ARCTIC NATIVE CORPORATION FORM JOINT VENTURE

Foss Maritime and ASRC Energy Services Response Operations, LLC, a leading offshore spill response operator in Alaska, have formed a joint venture to pursue marine services opportunities throughout Alaska.

The joint venture, called AES-Foss Marine, LLC, will be headquartered in Anchorage. The venture will build upon the strengths of each company to provide marine services throughout the state.

ASRC Energy Services Response Operations, LLC, (ARO) provides a variety of offshore oil spill response equipment supported by highly trained response personnel. ARO is

an indirect subsidiary of Alaska’s largest native corporation, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC).

**Gary Faber**, president Global Services of Foss Maritime, said, “The business success of ASRC speaks for itself. And like ASRC, safety and environmental stewardship are at the core of Foss’ corporate values.”

One of the attractions for both partners is the prospect of a program to train Iñupiat people for jobs in a growing north coast maritime industry. Foss has been part of similar partnerships with other native groups.

ASRC has been one of the state’s leading corporations for nearly two

decades with revenues in excess of \$2.6 billion and has five distinct businesses in several sectors that include energy and oilfield services.

The corporation holds title to nearly five million acres of land on the North Slope that have either known resources or are highly prospective for oil, gas, coal and base metal sulfides.

As stewards of this land, ASRC has stated a commitment to developing these resources and bringing them to market in a manner that respects Iñupiat subsistence values, while ensuring proper care of wildlife and the environment.

# Navigator Ltd.: Representing Foss in the Greek Shipping Community

## THE COMPANY

Navigator Ltd. was established in 1991 and is the exclusive representative of a network of leading steamship agencies and towing companies all over the world, including Foss Maritime on the U.S. West Coast. Navigator provides Greek ship operators with vessel assist services in any port. The company is also active in the fields of fuel analysis, total fuel management and bunker quantity surveys.

## MANAGEMENT

**Danae Bezantakou** is the managing director of Navigator, Ltd., and is the daughter of Capt. **Dimitris Bezantakou**, founder and president. She holds a bachelor of science in international hospitality and tourism management from the University of Surrey. She is an advisory board member of the Hellenic Startup Association, and a member of the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA), Propeller Club, SETE (Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises), Piraeus Marine Club, American Hellenic Chamber, British Hellenic Chamber, and the Shipping Hall of Fame.

## HISTORY WITH FOSS

Navigator began representing Foss in 1995, and since then Foss has secured a significant majority of Greek shipping companies' calls on the U.S. West Coast. Navigator officials say Foss is one of the "most important members of its "family" of towing companies and steamship agencies.

## THE NAVIGATOR SHIPPING FORUM

Since 2001, the Navigator Shipping Forum has been an annual meeting point for shipowners, members of the Greek government, foreign



Above: Photographed at the Navigator Shipping Forum were, from left, **Katerina Kourtidi**, Navigator Operations Department, **Mary Margariti**, operations manager, **Lois Skevofylax** Operations Department, and **Danae Bezantakou**, managing director. At right: Capt. **Dimitris Bezantakou** is founder and president of Navigator Ltd. With him are his daughters, **Olga**, left, who is a law student and **Danae**, managing director of the company.



ambassadors, shipping specialists and entrepreneurs in the world maritime industry. The forum aims to review, examine and discuss critical issues faced by the maritime community with insights of experienced speakers and shipping specialists. Foss Commercial Director **Jeff Horst** attended the most recent forum, last November in Athens.

Horst said the Foss commercial team makes an annual pilgrimage to Greece to visit important legacy customers as well as new, emerging companies, "that consistently find their roots in the rich Greek ship-owning tradition." The Navigator team, he said helps make the itinerary "most productive."

“These past 19 years of Foss cooperation with Navigator, the shipping market's booms and glooms were faced, the fierce competition was overcome, and the right path for future challenges was created.”

**DANAE BEZANTAKOU**  
managing director, Navigator Ltd.

# Up to the Challenge: Problem-Solving Talents Come in Handy in Planning Voyages from China to Abu Dhabi

By Marlin Schoonmaker

Senior Project Manager

Foss was asked in February of 2013 if it could deliver a large prototype drill rig built in China by Sichuan Honghua Petroleum Equipment Co. Ltd from a port in China directly to a shallow draft harbor on a manmade island in the Arabian Gulf about 50 miles off shore from Abu Dhabi.

The delivery was for the UZ750 Project, a joint venture of ADNOC, ExxonMobil and Japan Oil Development Company. The delivering vessel had to draw less than five meters and carry all the parts of an 11,022 cubic meter oil rig to a harbor not designed to receive such a large barge and with a berth designed for a smaller regional barge.

Foss was familiar with the island, having done an island harbor congestion study in 2012 for Zadco and its UZ750 project logistics team. Foss asked The Glosten Associates, a Seattle naval architecture firm, to prepare a harbor entry and berthing simulation of the barge *Mariner* under tow of three local tugs.

The *Mariner* is normally coupled with the Foss tug *Strong* as an articulated tug-barge (ATB). The *Strong Mariner* combination was uniquely fit both to conduct a safe ocean voyage at decent speed through the pirate zone off India's west coast and then to separate in Abu Dhabi so the shallow draft *Mariner* could directly deliver the drill rig cargo to the island. Foss had the vessel, mariners and cargo operational knowledge to deliver a valuable service.

**Rob Wagoner**, Foss director of cargo operations, went to Guanghan in Szechuan Province, China, three times in 2013 to measure the cargo. Honghua's facility was an impressive assembly line of large drill rigs but the Abu Dhabi National Drilling Company's (NDC) ND66 rig was



Aerial photos shows barge *Mariner* in its berth at South Island.

larger and more complex than what had been shipped before.

Wagoner worked with Honghua, NDC's and ZADCO's representatives in Guanghan to define the packing list and to do a preliminary stow plan. This initial stow plan was redone about ten times by Wagoner and **Jay Schram** of Foss up to five days before loading began in August 2013. By then the cargo cubic volume had grown 34 percent.

The next task for Foss was to find a suitable load port in China. Foss agent, WSS-China, searched for options but surprisingly there were very few ports where the *Mariner's* bow ramp could be deployed to an L shaped dock. Foss selected Zhanjiang. Both Honghua and Foss had to overcome the port's lack of project cargo experience with long negotiations for resources. When loading started there were long hours put in by both Honghua and Foss crews.

In Abu Dhabi, Foss had to pay close attention to the regulatory requirements for its marine and

supercargo crew and to select a Zadco and UAE approved tug company.

Foss worked with agency Barwil Abu Dhabi Ruwais Ltd, the legal entity of WSS-UAE to carefully obtain UAE Mission Visas and Critical Infrastructure & Coastal Protections Authority Passes.

Foss Capt. **Jim Daley**, Director of Operations, wrote a detailed tow plan for the voyage from China to Abu Dhabi and qualified the towing tugs.

Foss contracted with the National Marine Dredging Company to use its experienced crews and well outfitted tugs as they had built the islands and knew the shallow water of the field channels and island harbors.

It would be the first time anyone had brought as large a vessel as the *Mariner* into the newly built island harbor. Daley worked out a detailed harbor and docking procedure and rode the barge as the on-site docking master. What had not been done before was smoothly and safely accomplished in a professional



Local tugs brought the *Mariner* into the harbor.

manner with good planning and management.

From entry into the channel to all-fast took no more than three hours. With the bow ramp down, Wagoner's supercargo team and Jim Daley's crew on the *Mariner* went to work in early October and discharged the entire rig in less than five days at South Island in 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

With the safe and successful delivery of the first rig, Foss was awarded a second rig delivery. The *Strong Mariner* returned to China for the second rig load out in mid-November. Foss selected Shanghai because WSS-China had located a large and stable enough transfer barge to support the *Mariner's* bow ramp.

What took 13 days to load in Zhanjiang took less than four days in Shanghai. Foss had found an effective load out solution for its customer Honghua, Abu Dhabi's NDC and Zadco for future rig moves.

Foss crews worked through the Christmas holidays in delightful 80 degree Fahrenheit weather to



Cargo comes off the *Mariner* through its clamshell bow.

discharge the second rig at the North Island in less than two days.

Daley had the *Mariner* in and out of the North Island harbor in three days. UZ750 Logistics, NDC and Honghua's drill rig assembly team were all pleased with the Foss direct delivery service. Foss will continue to search for ways to serve the requirements for the UZ750 project in its other phases in the next two years.



# SAFETY CORNER | Why Safety Matters

By Al Rainsberger  
*Director of Health and Safety*

Each operating region at Foss has a Regional Safety Committee. Here are some of the tasks at hand that the Committees cover:

- Promote a commitment to Safety by being a visible and approachable body to listen to other employees' safety concerns and suggestions.
- Communicate employee safety concerns and suggestions to management to help correct safety hazards at the earliest stage.
- Take what they hear or learn from the Safety Committee meetings back into the fleet—They talk to their fellow crew members about safety.

- Communicate Foss safety policies and goals to other employees.
- Motivate other crew members to follow sound safety practices & policies.
- Work safely themselves—Set a good example for others.
- Help set and meet safety goals for the region.
- Inspect workplaces to identify hazards and safety concerns.
- Develop recommendations, plans or best work practices for controlling or eliminating hazards.
- Implement ways to make the boats, barges and the support facilities safer.
- Exchange information and expertise about safety and health issues.
- Keep up-to-date on new hazards

and protective measures, safety and health laws, and safety issues.

- Participate in and make suggestions for safety training.
- Review and discuss incidents, near misses and lessons learned to increase hazard awareness.

How can you link up with your Regional Safety Committee?

You can join the committee and participate in the quarterly meetings.

You can submit a Vessel Safety Report form on Form 109 located on the Marine Operations Disk.



Al Rainsberger



## UP THE HYLEBOS

*The tugs Wedell Foss, foreground, and Andrew Foss headed up Tacoma's Hylebos Waterway recently with a bargeload of crushed autos headed for Schnitzer Steel Recycling. At right is the infamous former Washington State Ferry Kalakala, which was retired from service in 1967. The Kalakala was subsequently used as a seafood processing plant in Alaska before being towed back to Puget Sound in 1998 for a renovation that has never been completed.*



# New CSR Manager Loves Challenges and Constantly Changing Environment on Waterfront

Of his working life on the water, **Dustin Johnson** says, “I’ve never known anything else.”

Now 33 years old, Johnson is the son of longtime Foss Capt. **Mike Johnson** who is now a Columbia River pilot. The younger Johnson worked as a deckhand on Alaska fishing boats as a teenager. Then, after graduating from high school, he joined Shaver Transportation as a tug deckhand on the river.

Using his accumulated sea time and studying at a mariners training school and at a community college, Johnson became a captain in 2001 and was hired by Foss as a full-time captain in 2006. He recently was named regional operations manager for the Foss Columbia-Snake River area.

“I love the challenges that working on the water brings and the constantly changing environment that presents itself day in and day out,” he said. “And I still get to work out there if we’re short handed and will help train our up-and-coming mariners.”

His new job also presents “exciting challenges,” he said, and he looks forward to “making the necessary adjustments to ensure the growth and success of our river operations.”

Foss Senior Vice President for Operations **Scott Merritt** described Johnson as “an extremely



**Dustin Johnson** is the new operations manager for Foss in Portland.

accomplished young man who brings experience, intelligence and a world-class ethic to the job.” Merritt added, “He is an excellent example of the extremely talented young men and women Foss has been able to attract to our management team. I feel very comfortable about the future of the company.”

Johnson lives across the river from Portland, in Washington with his wife and daughter. He enjoys camping and other outdoor activities with his family, likes to hunt, and has a passion for coaching high school track.

He still holds La Center High School records in the 100-, 200- and 400-meter dashes, and coaches sprinting and block-starting at

the school.

“I’m a volunteer and commit as much time as I can to the team,” he said. “I have a big investment in the kids, and they count on me to be there when I can.”

As for his job, Johnson said his appointment has brought a boost in morale for his team, which sees him as “one of their own.”

And the recent addition of two tractor tugs to the CSR fleet amounts to a vote of confidence by Foss management.

“It helps me and our crew members recognize that they are committed to the river and to our customers,” he said. “It’s exciting and refreshing.”

## INDIRECT MANEUVER

*The hybrid-powered tug Carolyn Dorothy performed an indirect maneuver, directing thrust sideways, while leading the containership MSC Candice up the Long Beach Channel recently. The Panamanian-flagged ship, operated by Foss customer Mediterranean Shipping Company, is 1,106 feet long and was built in 2007 in South Korea.*



# Anniversary Gala in Seattle, Foss History Book Will Highlight Company's 125-Year Celebration

When Norwegian immigrant **Thea Foss** started renting rowboats from her floating home in Tacoma in 1889, she hardly could have imagined that her small business venture would become one of the world's leading tug-barge operators.

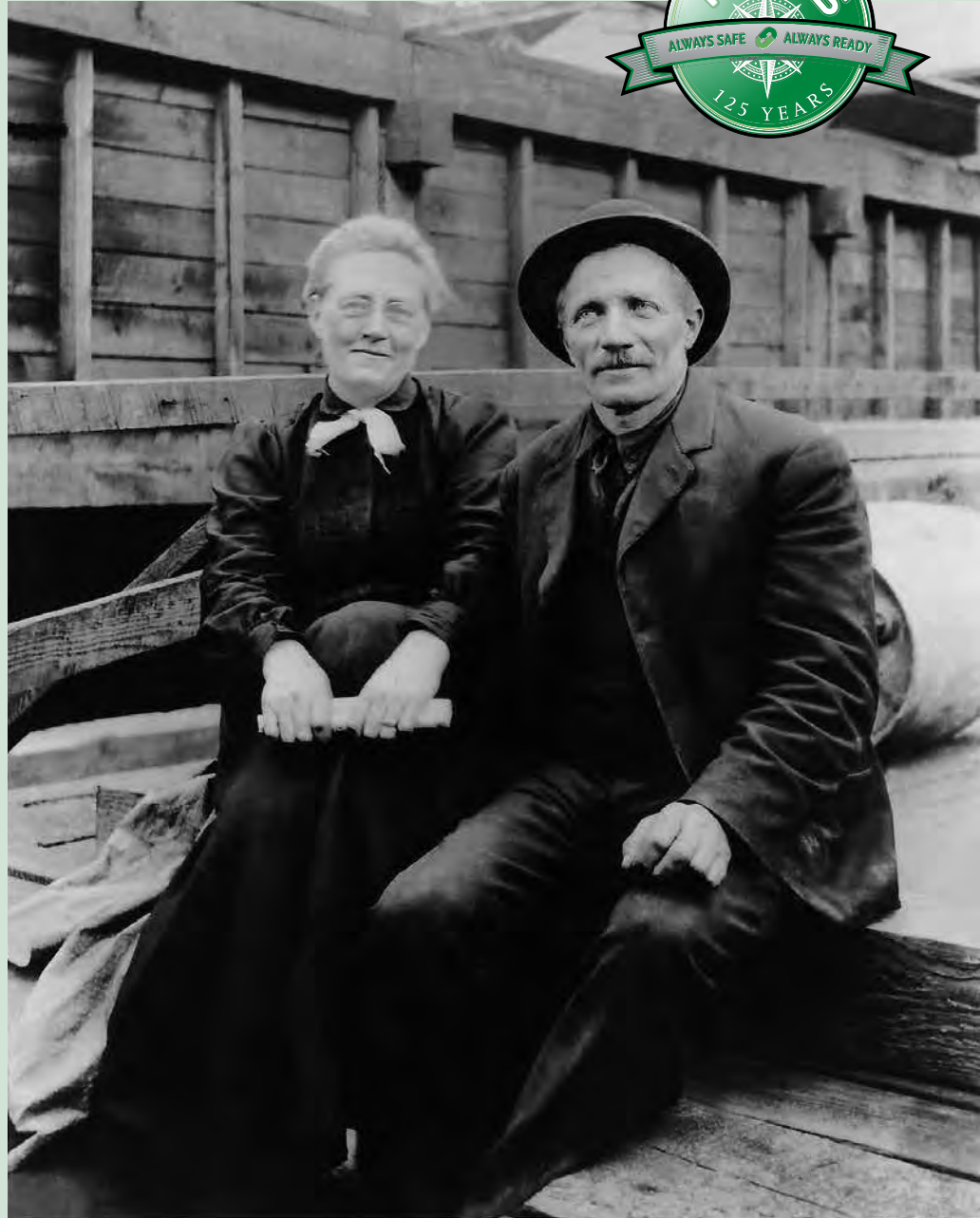
From its humble roots, Foss Maritime has grown into a marine transportation and harbor services company that moves cargo all over the world and has domestic operations on all three U.S. coasts as well as Alaska and Hawaii. The company also operates two shipyards.

That growth, which has accelerated over the last few years, has been built on a reputation for innovation and service to customers while Foss has consistently strived to live up to its motto — “Always Safe, Always Ready.”

“We have great and strong traditions here at Foss, and the hard work and creative thinking of our employees has propelled us to where we are today,” said **Paul Stevens**, President and CEO. “And the future looks just as bright to us. We are looking forward to the next 125 years with both enthusiasm and excitement.”

A committee of Foss employees led by Human Resources Director **Lisa Sulock** has put together a plan for a yearlong anniversary celebration, highlighted by a “125th Anniversary Gala, to be held in Seattle. Plans for the party are still being developed. The celebration also will include:

- Anniversary events at all Foss locations.
- Use of a special anniversary logo on company communications and promotional materials, including *Tow Bitts*, web sites and the company calendar
- A complete update and redesign of the book on the company's history: “Foss Maritime, a Living Legend.” The book was first produced by Foss historian **Mike Skalley** and former



**Thea Foss**, 1858-1927, and **Andrew Foss**, 1855-1937.

*Tow Bitts* editor **Bruce Johnson** to observe the company's 100th anniversary and was updated 10 years later.

• Articles in each of the year's six issues of *Tow Bitts* highlighting the company's decades of growth. The first of those articles appears on page 11 of this issue of *Tow Bitts*.

“Our theme is to pay tribute to our

past while looking to and preparing for a great future for our company,” Sulock said. “We have a very rich history at Foss, which gives us a great foundation to move forward.”

As the year progresses, Sulock said, the company will be reaching out to customers, vendors and friends to join in the anniversary celebration.

## The Early Years of Foss

# It all Began with the Purchase of One Used Rowboat

*(Editor's Note — This is the first in a series of Tow Bitts articles about the history of Foss Maritime to commemorate the company's 125th Anniversary.)*

The story of Foss Maritime began in the summer of 1889 — nearly 125 years ago, with the purchase of a used rowboat for five dollars in small coins.

The company was launched with a single rental rowboat by **Thea Foss**, a Norwegian immigrant who recognized an opportunity to supplement the earnings of her carpenter husband, **Andrew**.

**Andrew Foss**, whose carpentry skills were developed while serving aboard sailing ships flying the flag of his native Norway, was having a tough time making enough money in the family's newly adopted home of Tacoma.

The family's living expenses were modest because Andrew had built a one-room floating house with beach-combed cedar logs for the float and mill slabs and salvaged lumber for the structure. And the float house was equipped with second-hand hardware, stove, beds, table and benches.

But Andrew's income was sporadic and cash was short for the couple and their three small children.

Thea bought the rowboat from a neighbor who was leaving town and offered it for \$10. But he let her have it for \$5 when that was all she could scrape up for the purchase. She immediately spruced up the boat with green and white paint — still the Foss colors — and sold it for a profit.

She then bought another rowboat, fixed it up and sold it, too, for a profit. And then there was another rowboat purchase and sale and yet another. Before Long, Thea had parlayed her original investment into a fleet of rowboats she could afford to keep and rent.

Located on the west side of what is now the Thea Foss Waterway, the float



**Thea and Andrew Foss**, front, with their three sons, from left, **Wedell, Arthur and Henry**, circa the early 1920s.

house became a center for recreational rowing activity, day and night. Thea — demonstrating her talent for marketing — painted a sign on the roof advertising that the fledgling enterprise was “Always Ready” to rent rowboats. That sign was the root of Foss Maritime’s “Always Ready, Always Safe” motto, an important component of the company’s brand today.

Andrew built additional rowboats, and after a year the business was flourishing. But Thea soon concluded that the family should be doing more than renting rowboats to fishermen, wildfowl hunters and people headed for shoreline picnics. So when a Tacoma man decided to sell his two-horsepower, naphtha-powered launch, she didn’t hesitate to buy it.

Already, sons **Arthur and Wedell** had been rowing fresh meat and produce from shore to the sailing ships anchored in the harbor, and rowing deck officers and crewmen to shore. More launches followed, and the two brothers and other Foss personnel manned a growing water-taxi service that also began meeting inbound ships on Puget Sound.

Andrew and Thea had four children, but only Arthur, Wedell and their younger brother **Henry** became involved in the business. Their sister **Lillian** died of tuberculosis in 1914.

Andrew built a larger float house nearby, and it was not uncommon for Thea to entertain 20 to 30 people there at Sunday potluck dinners. The new boathouse was not only a center of business activity, it became one of Tacoma’s important social centers, with “Mother Foss,” as Thea was affectionately known, presiding.

To keep up with the rapid increase in demand for launch service, Andrew, with assistance from his brothers **Iver and Peter Foss**, started building launches as well as rowboats, and in 1904, the name of the firm was changed from Foss Boat House Company to Foss Launch Company.

The launch fleet buildup provided Andrew with the means to develop a more complete shipyard that later was further developed to build tugboats.

*In the next issue of Tow Bitts: Foss makes a transition to Tacoma’s top tug company.*

# Renaming a Tacoma Waterway for Thea Foss Turned out to be an Education in Bureaucracy



Today, the Thea Foss Waterway is home to a combination of condominium developments, museums, restaurants, marinas and a promenade.

Reid Middleton, Inc.

## By Doug Andreassen

The year was 1988, one year before Washington State celebrated the centennial of its statehood and, coincidentally, one year before the 100th anniversary of the founding of Foss Maritime in Tacoma by **Thea** and **Andrew Foss**.

Members of the Tacoma chapter of the Sons of Norway decided to honor Thea and Andrew by initiating efforts to rename the City Waterway, where Foss Maritime was founded, to the Thea Foss Waterway.

Little did we know of the efforts that would be required to re-name this waterway when we started the process. We were fortunate that Tacoma had a rich history of Norwegian culture to set the stage for our initiative.

We began by contacting the descendents of Andrew and Thea Foss to receive permission from the family. Many spirited discussions ensued regarding family history and

stories of the early days of the company.

We soon learned that Thea was the main force behind efforts to establish the company and its success. Each family member spoke of her in glowing terms and research turned up abundant facts on her efforts.

When Thea Foss passed away in June of 1927, a day before her 70th birthday, it was the largest funeral procession that the city had ever seen.

What began as a trip to City Hall to find out the requirements for the name change became an education in bureaucracy. We eventually would have to receive approval from the local geographic names commission, city manager, city council, Puyallup Tribal Council, State of Washington Board of Geographic Names and finally the Army Corp of Engineers, due to the fact it was a navigable waterway. The Corps approval required a trip to Washington, D.C.

Although we carefully prepared the necessary presentations, we were challenged at nearly every turn. We solicited the help of pre-eminent Northwest historian **Murray Morgan** of Tacoma to help us with our case and he opened doors for us that we could not have opened on our own.

We were rewarded for our efforts in the later part of 1989 when all governmental approvals had been granted.

Today the waterway thrives with a combination of housing, restaurants, museum's, marinas and a promenade to enjoy these 125 years of industrial and historical reverence to Thea and Andrew Foss.

*(Editor's Note: The author is the sales manager at Northwest Publishing Center, which prints Tow Bitts, and is past president of the Sons of Norway, Tacoma Lodge)*



# Two Plant Brothers Gave their Kidneys So Third Could Live Normal Life

Call them the Transplant Brothers.

**Dennis Plant**, a San Francisco Bar pilot, his brother **Joe**, a Foss deckhand on San Francisco Bay, and their brother **Jim**, in the construction business, have participated in three kidney swaps in the last 20 years that saved Dennis's life.

As a young man, Dennis had contracted lupus, which affects the body's immune system, and about 20 years later, in 1993, he experienced kidney failure.

"He asked me if I could give him a kidney," Joe recalled. "He said if I gave him a kidney he'd get me a job on a tug in Alaska, and that was how I started in the industry."

So Dennis and Joe (now a 15-year veteran of Foss who works on the tug *Marshall Foss*) went through the transplant surgery at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Medical Center. Dennis's new kidney worked until 2009.

With Dennis back on dialysis, their older brother Jim was willing to step up, but his kidney wasn't a match for Dennis. So Dennis and Jim were entered in a national database for transplant candidates and would-be donors.

In an extraordinary coincidence,



The Plant brothers are, from left, **Joe**, **Dennis** and **Jim**.

The Mountain Democrat (Placerville, Calif.)

Jim turned out to be a match for a kidney disease sufferer in Fresno, Calif., and the Fresno man's sister was a match for Dennis.

"They did the two transplant operations at the same time at UCSF," Joe said, noting that the surgery was much less invasive and the anti-rejection drugs more effective than when he'd given his kidney 16 years earlier.

Today, Dennis is healthy and piloting. Joe was back to work six weeks after the first

operation, and Jim also had a smooth recovery.

Joe, who is married and enjoys umpiring his 14-year-old daughter's softball games, says he's never had the slightest regret about helping out his brother.

"He always took care of me—got me into the industry," Joe said. "He would have done it for me, so it was my turn to go to bat. And I have an extra one, so what the heck!"

## HONOLULU ASSIST

*With the profile of Diamond Head in the background, the Foss tug Mikioi assisted the University of Hawaii research vessel Kilo Moana into Honolulu harbor recently. Also assisting the vessel, a catamaran, was the tug Piilani. Both are Dolphin-class tugs built at Foss Rainier Shipyards in Oregon. Formerly called Hawaiian Tug & Barge, the Foss Honolulu operation officially became part of Foss Maritime at a ceremony on Dec. 11.*





**ALASKA FERRY WORK NEARING COMPLETION** *In the photo above, the Foss 300 floating derrick lifts a 12,000-pound, stainless-steel jet drive just removed from the high-speed Alaska ferry Fairweather at Foss Seattle Shipyard. In the photo below, George Poor, chief engineer on the ferry, displays one of the four new engines being installed in the catamaran at the shipyard. The 16-cylinder MTU M73L diesel engines are rated at 4,828 horsepower and weigh about 15 tons each. The 220-foot-long ferry's operating speed is 32 knots.*





**FIREBOAT UPDATE** Fabrication of the superstructure of a new fireboat for the Port of Long Beach continued in early January at Foss Shipyard in Seattle. The aluminum module was covered in a tent to protect it from the elements. At right, **Jason Gadwa**, left, and **Alex Kirchner** of Seattle-based Eltech Electric assembled a control console in the pilothouse. Foss has a contract to build two of the 108-foot boats, with the first scheduled for delivery in May.





## PUSHER TUG PROPULSION

The Manson Construction pusher tug *Gladys M* was in the Foss Seattle Shipyard for about five weeks beginning Dec. 10, having the propeller shafts and bearings realigned and other routine maintenance work. In the photo above at left, machinists **Brian Anderson**, left, and **Dustin Reddell** install one of the tug's rudders. In the photo at right, welder **Sheldon Murray** installs a rope guard on one of the shafts. The 72-foot-long *Gladys M* is a shallow-draft tug normally assigned to support Manson construction projects on rivers in Alaska.

## STOCKTON TO UMATILLA

The first two of three "hydrocrackers" were loaded aboard the barge *Sitka* in late November in Stockton as the Foss tug *Point Vicente* stood by. After loading, the tug *Liberty* towed the barge to Astoria, where it handed the job off to the tug *P.J. Brix* for the rest of the trip upriver to the Port of Wilma, Wash. From Wilma, the cargo was to be hauled over the road to the Calumet Refinery in Great Falls, Mont. Foss' customer on the job was heavy-lift contractor Mammoet.





# Passion For Training Served Van Wormer Well During Year as Director at School in Astoria

A 13-month break in his 29-year career at Foss turned out to be a “win-win” for Capt. **Jim Van Wormer** and the company.

Now back at Foss as director of operations in Alaska, Van Wormer spent his time away as director of training at the Tongue Point Maritime Training Center, a Job Corps program in Astoria, Ore., that enables young people to earn deck and engine room credentials.

“I’ve always had a passion for training,” Van Wormer said. “And it was probably the most rewarding experience of my life. I know that I launched a lot of young people into their careers, including some at Foss.”

Tongue Point has 60 students who spend 18 to 24 months there depending on their personal progress. The school also has seven instructors and three training vessels, the largest being the *Ironwood*, a 180-foot former Coast Guard buoy tender.

Van Wormer got wind of the opportunity at Tongue Point in 2012 while he was trying to recruit cadets to assist with petroleum support activities of Foss and its parent company in Cook Inlet. During discussions with officials of the Inland Boatmen’s Union, which manages Tongue Point, he was told that the previous director was retiring.

“They needed some new blood down there,” he said. “I took a 50 percent pay cut, but they offered me government housing. I figured we could make it work for a little while, at least.”



Capt. **Jim Van Wormer**, at the helm of the *Ironwood*.

When he arrived, Van Wormer found a school that was in need of some new management. So he put to work skills developed at Foss, including four years as marine transportation operations manager, and ran the school “like a business.”

He established morning meetings with all hands, “to make sure we were all on the same page and marching to the same drummer.” At each of those meetings he would pass along a safety or work-ethic related message, while focusing on professionalism.

There also were weekly meetings with the instructors to give them marching orders while establishing goals and requirements. Van Wormer also had an open-door policy, under which students were welcome in

his office to discuss problems they couldn’t resolve at a lower level.

“It didn’t take long to make some huge changes,” he said. “Within a month we had things clicking well.”

After a little over a year at the school, having developed positive momentum and with a qualified successor (a retired Coast Guard captain) ready to take over, Van Wormer decided to take an offer to return to Foss in the Anchorage office.

“During the time I was there I continually promoted Foss and had Foss people come down and talk to the students, and a lot of the students are now employed at Foss,” he said. “But I’m excited to be back in Alaska. This is where I belong, and we have a lot on the horizon here.”

The Tongue Point Maritime Training Center operates three training vessels, including the former Coast Guard buoy tender *Ironwood*.



# Chris Mack Jr. Leading Ocean Operations, Credits Foss Veterans With Helping Him Move Up

There never was much doubt about the career path **Chris Mack Jr.** would take when he grew up.

After all, his father, **Chris Sr.**, was and still is a chief engineer with Foss Maritime. His step grandfather on his father's side was an engineer on cargo ships, and his grandfather on his mother Lori's side worked in the fishing industry.

"I just grew up with it—it was always part of the discussion around the family dinner table, and the seagoing life was always a part of our lives," the young Mack said recently.

So only a month after graduating from California Maritime in 2005, he was on a tug headed for the Arctic as an able-bodied seaman with the Foss Red Dog fleet. After working his way up to mate, he came ashore in 2011 to fill in as port captain for Marine Transportation.

And today, at the age of 32, Mack has been promoted to general manager, operations, for the Foss Marine Transportation Division. His focus will be supporting Foss activities in petroleum development in Alaska, a key growth area for the company.

"It seems like that's the direction we're going," he said, pointing to



A month after graduating from California Maritime Academy, **Chris Mack Jr.** was on a Foss tug headed for the Arctic.

construction of the Arctic Class tugs, the opening of an office in Anchorage and the establishment of a joint venture with a North Slope native corporation.

Mack credits the many veteran seafarers and managers at Foss for sharing their experience and knowledge with him and helping him move up, noting that he's been a "sponge" ever since arriving at Foss, and "every day has been a learning experience."

And he says he's developed a passion for his job.

"It makes it a lot easier, when work really isn't work," he said. "I'm really excited about what I'm involved with."

Mack was married recently, and he and his wife have a baby daughter, **Reese**. The couple enjoys snowboarding, recreational boating and other outdoor activities, and Mack said, "being with family" is his first priority outside of work.

## SELF-RIGHTING PILOT BOAT

*The Foss 300 floating derrick recently launched the pilot boat Astoria for Kvichak Marine Industries on the Lake Washington Ship Canal in Seattle. The new boat, which will be deployed by the Columbia Bar Pilots, is 75 feet long, 21 feet in beam and weighs about 110,000 pounds. Like a nearly identical boat delivered to the pilots a few years ago, the boat is watertight and will right itself if it rolls over. It is jet-powered and has a top speed of nearly 30 knots.*



## HUGE CRANE HEADS TO HUDSON

*The Lauren Foss towed the giant floating crane dubbed “Left Coast Lifter” out of San Francisco Bay, above, in late December with the Iver Foss trailing. Alcatraz Island is in the background. The two tugs and their tow were beginning a 5,700-nautical-mile voyage to New Jersey, where the crane will be used to build the new Tappan Zee Bridge over the Hudson River north of New York City. In the photo below, the Lauren leads the crane into the Miraflores Locks on the Panama Canal. The crane, used to build the new San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, is capable of muscling more than 1,900 tons and sports twin 328-foot booms. Foss’ customer on the job is American Bridge Fluor Barge, LLC, and Tappan Zee Constructors, LLC, which now own the crane.*



## PEOPLE NEWS

### NEW EMPLOYEES

#### Lonnie Mattoon

Mgr, Engineering Alaska

#### Steve Gorniak

Operations Project Manager

#### Steve Black

Port Engineer, Harbor Services

#### Henry Palmer

Assistant Port Captain,  
Marine Transportation

#### Jeffrey Rodgers

Port Captain, Alaska

#### Trina Murphy

Training Coordinator

#### Hans Kruck

Mgr, Machinery Portland

### PROMOTIONS

#### Giles Ogden

Estimator New Construction  
to Quality Assurance Manager

#### Don Harris

Superintendent Ship Repair  
to Production Manager

### RETIREMENTS

#### Dianne Farrier

Payroll Clerk II

#### Marshall Russell

Security Guard

#### Bill Levandusky

Crane Operator



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## FROM TACOMA TO VALDEZ

*With Mount Rainier providing a backdrop, the Lauren Foss in late November prepared to depart from Tacoma's Commencement Bay for Valdez, Alaska, with a barge load of cargo for a ConocoPhillips oil development project on the North Slope. The cargo included girders, beams, guardrails and other components for four vehicle bridges that will support the project. Capt. **Jim Van Wormer**, Foss director of Alaska operations, said about 20 welders and other workers spent about two weeks loading the barge at the Port of Tacoma.*