



# Tow Bitts



*With Mount Rainier as a backdrop, the Nicole Foss was dressed in her christening regalia on June 6 in Tacoma.*

## THIRD ARCTIC CLASS TUG CHRISTENED IN TACOMA CEREMONY

The *Nicole Foss*, the third of three Arctic Class ocean-going tugs built at Foss Rainier Shipyard, was christened June 6 in a festive ceremony at the Foss Waterway Seaport in Tacoma.

**Nicole Engle**, for whom the tug is named, broke the traditional bottle of champagne over the bow of the

132-foot tug, officially making it the newest member of the Foss fleet. Engle is one of three sisters who are the principal shareholders of Foss parent company Saltchuk.

“One of our values is to reinvest in our companies,” Engle told the crowd  
*(Continued on pages 4-5)*

INSIDE



**A New Tug in the Fleet**

The *Nicole Foss* joined the Foss ocean fleet amid much fanfare at a christening ceremony at the Foss Waterway Seaport in Tacoma. The tug is the third of a group of three Arctic Class tugs built at Foss Rainier Shipyard.

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**Foss Maritime Center: State of the Art**

Foss is operating a new, high-tech customer service center in Portland, featuring jumbo video screens depicting the world's oceans and showing the locations of Foss tugs and vessels of sister companies TOTE and Tropical Shipping.

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**Fireboat on Trial**

The second of two fireboats being built at Foss Shipyard in Seattle for the Port of Long Beach departed for southern California recently after undergoing sea trials on Puget Sound. Photo essay.

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**The Look Aft**

Seattle has a long and rich history of serving as a port for passenger ships, and while most modern cruise ships do not require tug assistance in docking, Foss is well positioned to provide help when they need it. Foss historian **Mike Skalley** writes about passenger ships in Seattle, past and present.

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Fleet Expansion Lines up With Mission to Provide Service Without Equal

By *John Parrott*  
President and CEO



John Parrott

What we've accomplished in the five years since beginning construction of our Arctic Class Tugs at Foss Rainier Shipyard is nothing short of amazing.

Named for the three sisters who are our principal shareholders, the powerful, 132-foot ocean-going tugs were planned to accommodate the growth of our operations in remote areas of the world, often in harsh and inhospitable climates.

And that business has grown, indeed.

The first of the three tugs, the *Michele Foss*, was christened in April of 2015 and went right to work, towing a bargeload of oil field equipment from Korea to Point Thomson on Alaska's North Slope. Last year, the *Michele* undertook a 9,000-mile voyage, towing a drilling rig to the Siberian Arctic, and she is back in Russia this summer.

In addition to these carefully planned trips, the *Michele* executed an emergency rescue of a bulk carrier in the Gulf of Alaska last March. The tug was underway from Pier 90 in Seattle

less than 24 hours after getting the call for help. (See story on page 14.)

Then came the *Denise Foss*, christened a year ago, which immediately went to work towing a drill rig from

Vancouver to the North Slope and is joining the *Michele* and another Foss tug in the Russian Arctic this summer.

Early this month, we christened the third of the Arctic Class tugs, the *Nicole Foss*, which undoubtedly will follow in the wakes of her sisters to handle the tough jobs for which Foss has become known. You will find much coverage of the *Nicole Foss* christening elsewhere in this issue of *Tow Bitts*.

And that's not all of our new-construction activity.

At Conrad Shipyard in Louisiana, we are currently building four new "Kapena Class," (Hawaiian for captain class) tugs, for our Honolulu based subsidiary, Young Brothers.

All of these new-builds are in line with our mission to provide service without equal for our customers.

Needless to say, there's much afoot!

Named for the three sisters who are our principal shareholders, the powerful, 132-foot ocean-going tugs were planned to accommodate the growth of our operations in remote areas of the world, often in harsh and inhospitable climates.



# Experience in Companies with Strong Safety Cultures Should Bode well for new Foss Vice President

As a midshipman in the engineering program at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in the early 1990s, **Grant Johnson** was aware of the technological prowess of Foss Maritime. The company had been the first in the country to introduce tractor tugs, “and the engineer in me found that interesting,” Johnson said.

Later, when he was with BP in both Houston and Alaska, Johnson worked with Foss customer Alaska Tanker Co., and that experience also helped boost his respect for Foss.

“So when the opportunity came to join the Foss HQSE team, I jumped at it,” he declared.

Today, Johnson is the new Foss vice president for HSQE, which stands for health, safety, quality and environment. He assumed the position on May 1.

“I’ve been fortunate to work in and around operations with strong safety cultures, and that helped me develop an appreciation for safe operations,” he said. “I believe that all the jobs we do we can do safely. It’s a matter of identifying the risks and mitigating them.”

After graduating from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, N.Y., in 1993, Johnson served 20 years in the Navy reserves, rising from the rank of ensign to commander. In 2003, he was called to active duty as military liaison to Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta in the George W. Bush administration.

Early in his commercial maritime career, he went to sea as a marine engineer before coming ashore to attend graduate school.

Johnson got an MBA from Rice University in Houston and joined BP in 2001, supporting business and operations activities in Alaska including the Prudhoe Bay, Northstar, and Endicott oilfields. He subsequently rose through BP, holding



**Grant Johnson**

a number of positions including regional coordinator for the Americas and lead marine regulatory advisor, overseeing compliance for BP’s activities in the Gulf of Mexico.

He held various leadership positions on BP’s incident command staff during the *Deepwater Horizon* drilling rig blowout and explosion in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 and notes, “I was on the first plane out.”

He left BP in late 2010 and continued to work in the oil business, primarily managing marine assets and marine bases for Houston-based Technip USA, which specializes in subsea construction. Most recently, he managed the Marine Well Containment Company contract for Technip.

The Marine Well Containment Company was established by the petroleum industry following the *Deepwater Horizon* incident to maintain a well-containment system for deployment in the event of a future well-control event in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

Johnson has actively led and participated in various industry committees and working groups including serving as vice-chairman of the Coast Guard’s National Offshore

Safety Advisory Committee and co-chairman of the Offshore Operators Committee’s Marine Transportation and Security Committee.

Johnson was spending his first weeks at Foss visiting the company’s operating locations and vessels and looking for a home for himself, his wife **Tracy** and their children, ages 8 and 12.

“I see Foss as an organization that values safety, and I want to build on that,” he said. “I think the safest place for people should be their place of work. We ask people to work safer on the job than they might otherwise on their own.”

At Foss, Johnson has been looking for what he calls “the biggest wins,” areas where the company can make the biggest safety improvements.

On the plane from Houston to Seattle to start his new job, Johnson saw the movie about the *Deepwater Horizon* incident for the first time. His reaction:

“The people who made the movie felt the need to place blame on individuals for the incident,” Johnson said. “The truth is that these types of events usually happen as a result of a series of errors and system failures of complex systems.”

THIRD ARCTIC CLASS TUG CHRISTENED IN TACOMA CEREMONY *(Continued from the cover)*



With hardhats for her and her sisters **Michele Seaver** and **Denise Tabbutt** on the podium, **Nicole Engle** spoke to the gathering in Tacoma.

gathered for the christening. “Seeing this promise become a reality with the three Arctic tugs is truly amazing.”

**John Parrott**, Foss president and CEO chronicled the accomplishment of the Nicole’s sister tugs, the *Michele Foss* and *Denise Foss*, including multiple trips to the U.S. and Russian Arctic and said the new tug would be “following in their wake.”

He also noted that Saltchuk is also building four ocean going tugs for Hawaiian subsidiary Young Brothers, which delivers freight from Honolulu throughout the islands.

“There’s much afoot!” Parrott declared.

Chief Operating Officer **Scott Merritt**, while noting that he hadn’t been around for every one of the 123 christenings since the founding



**Nicole Engle** takes a turn in the captain’s chair in the pilothouse of the tug. With her, from left, are Capt. **Greg Johnson**, master of the tug, husband **Tim Engle** and daughter **Emma Engle**.

of Foss, said, “The vessels seem to get better and better.”

He congratulated the Rainier Shipyard team, not only for their success in building the *Nicole Foss*, but for building the other two Arctic Class Tugs, 10 Dolphin Class harbor tugs, two shallow-draft tugs, two service vessels for Foss in Southern California and several new-build projects for third-party customers, including a 20-car ferry for the state of Washington.

“I want to take a moment to thank all of the employees of Foss Rainier Shipyard for their hard work and great



Foss President and CEO **John Parrott** presents a painting of the new tug to sponsor **Nicole Engle**.

products delivered,” Merritt said, while tipping his hat to vendors and others at Foss who contributed to the Arctic Class project.

Nicole Engle serves in a variety of capacities with her family businesses as well as volunteering for a number of non-profit organizations. She attended Marymount College and completed a family business program at Harvard Business School. Before joining her family’s businesses, she owned and operated a boutique chocolate and espresso shop in the Greenlake neighborhood of Seattle.

Her husband is **Tim Engle**, Saltchuk president.

## Nicole by the numbers

<b>Length Overall</b>	132 Feet
<b>Breadth</b>	41 Feet
<b>Max. Draft</b>	18 Feet
<b>Max. Height</b>	60 Feet above Waterline
<b>Bollard Pull</b>	More than 221,000 Pounds
<b>Propellers</b>	2, 126-inch Diameter, Fixed Blades
<b>Rated Horsepower</b>	7,268 Horsepower

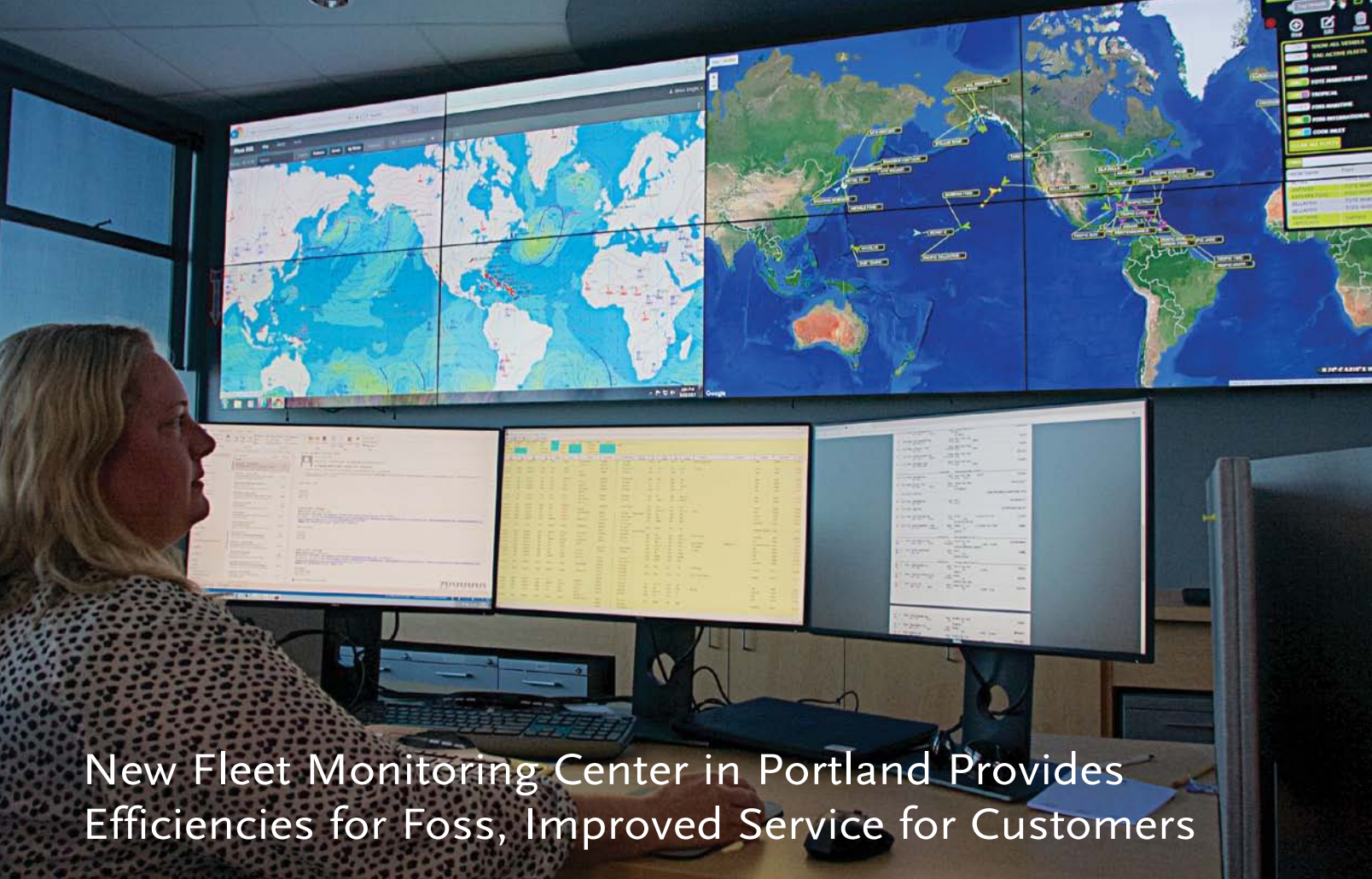




Above, Crewmembers posed at the rail of the new tug with **Nicole Engle** and her family. From left are Cook **Roger Felton**, Able Seaman **Antonio Solomon**, Chief Mate **Alan Heaven**, Cadet **Jordan Eng**, Oiler **Kevin Hergert**, Chief Engineer **Shawn Barbetta**, Able Seaman **Barrett Fox**, Engle, her daughter **Emma**, Capt. **Greg Johnson** and Engle's husband, **Tim Engle**. Below, glass and champagne fly as **Nicole Engle** christens her namesake tug.

Emily Reiter





## New Fleet Monitoring Center in Portland Provides Efficiencies for Foss, Improved Service for Customers

Watch stander **Heidi Beckett** uses her mouse to locate Foss tugs as well as the ships of TOTE and Tropical Shipping on the large screen at right. The display uses a program called “ShipTrax,” which is based on the AIS (Automatic Identification System) for tracking vessels. The big screen on the left, driven by a program provided by Applied Weather Technology, enables watch standers to monitor worldwide weather conditions.

Where is the *Michele Foss*?

**Heidi Beckett**, one of four customer service representatives standing watch at the new Foss Fleet Monitoring Center in Portland, types the tug’s name into her keyboard and clicks her mouse a couple of times.

Almost instantly, a symbol representing the Arctic-Class tug appears on one of the center’s big video screens, showing that the *Michele* was between Ulsan, South Korea and Sakhalin Island, Russia, where it is one of three Foss tugs participating in an oil field sealift this season. Another mouse click shows the tug’s course and speed.

And where in the world is the rest of the Foss fleet? And that of sister companies TOTE and Tropical Shipping in the Puget Sound-Alaska and Caribbean trades? Those tugs and the sister company vessels, too, can be

tracked in real time and can be alerted to the latest weather forecasts and hazards.

Welcome to the high-tech, 2017 version of what used to be called “dispatch,” whose functions were spread among local operations at individual Foss ports, but now have been consolidated in Portland and expanded to include fleet monitoring and support for the sister companies.

The Fleet Monitoring Center (FMC) is housed in a building that Foss acquired on the Willamette River with the purchase of tug-barge company Brix Maritime in 1993. The Columbia-Snake River (CSR) Division has occupied the building ever since, but has only used part of the building in recent years.

“The discussion began in 2015 to consolidate Foss dispatch operations here,” said **Chris Wolf**, Foss director



Gathered outside the newly remodeled building that houses the FMC and the offices of the Foss Columbia-Snake River Division are, from left, Customer Service Representatives **Heidi Beckett**, **Brian Knight** and **Mary Davis**, and Director of Fleet Operations Support Services **Chris Wolf**.



of fleet operations support services, who oversees the FMC. “This was an underutilized asset that had room for growth, so the thought was, ‘Let’s spruce it up.’”

Wolf explained that “some visionary people at Foss and Saltchuk” subsequently decided to expand the facility’s mission to fleet monitoring and weather alerting for TOTE and Tropical Shipping, which added substantially to the scope of the project.

“We basically gutted the building,” Wolf said.

Added **Jim Crowley**, a senior customer service representative who helped plan the remodel, “The only things left were the floors.”

In addition to housing the CSR Division and the FMC, the building’s amenities include a board room equipped with “meeting technology” that will enable a direct connection with the new Saltchuk/Foss headquarters building being built on the Seattle waterfront.

It also includes a large room

dedicated to what are frequent training sessions held for Foss mariners, plus ample space for expansion that also could be leased to a third party. In the lobby is a photo collage depicting the vessels of Foss, Tropical and TOTE.

One of the biggest challenges in opening the FMC has been training eight new watch standers, who must be familiar with marine terminals and waterways in all four regions where Foss has harbor services operations: Puget Sound, the CSR, San Francisco Bay and Southern California. The watch standers are also responsible for maintaining connections with the company’s worldwide marine transportation fleet, plus their responsibilities to the sister company fleets.

“It normally takes 24 months to train someone for a single region,” Wolf said. “With the consolidation and added responsibilities, this has been a huge challenge.”

When all is said and done, Wolf believes the FMC not only will bring efficiencies for Foss, but also will



Watch stander **Frank Aquino** demonstrates use of the “Storm Board” in the FMC, used to track weather systems over time. The storm board will be particularly active during the upcoming hurricane season in the Caribbean and on the East Coast of the United States.

improve service to Foss customers. Customer service representatives at the FMC will have a broader, coastwide, understanding of customers’ businesses, enabling them to align Foss assets to better respond to the customers’ needs in the normal course of work and in times of trouble.

“A small world gets a little bigger for us,” Crowley said. “That’s a huge benefit for the customer.”

Watch standers at their workstations in the FMC include, **Frank Aquino**, foreground, and background from left, **Mary Davis**, **Heidi Beckett** and **Jim Crowley**.



# SAFETY CORNER | Maritime Complacency

By *Al Rainsberger*

Director of Health and Safety

Too often we become complacent when it comes to safety. Many incidents occur because we are distracted and not paying attention to our environment and what is going on around us. Other times we become overly confident when performing routine tasks that have been repeated many times over the years.

Unfortunately many people who become complacent in what they do are satisfied with mediocre safety performance and do not take proactive measures to improve their work environment. As complacency sets in,

employees begin to think this type of attitude is acceptable and that they are not responsible for their own safety. At the same time a misconception is developed that management is not concerned about their safety. To the contrary, management's concern about safety increases in such cases.

When people are complacent, rush and take shortcuts, the effects gain momentum as they believe that everything is fine, since no one is getting hurt. As jobs are completed in an unsafe manner, not stopped or challenged, the error chain grows and the potential to break the chain and

eliminate the complacent behavior decreases and is eventually lost.

The outcome of this type of behavior can be disastrous or worse.

Taking the time to complete a Job Safety Analysis, a Shipmate Plus observation or Near-Miss Report will help us keep our people safe, prevent unsafe behaviors, promote sharing of information and expand and support our safety culture. And if any potential safety hazard presents itself, correct it, or use your stop work authority if necessary.



Foss Seattle Shipyard craftsmen at the asbestos training session led by **Al Rainsberger**, background.

## ASBESTOS AWARENESS TRAINING HELD AT SEATTLE AND RAINIER SHIPYARDS

Director of Health and Safety **Al Rainsberger** conducted asbestos-awareness training at Foss shipyards in Seattle and Rainier, Ore. in April. The training covered identification of asbestos-containing materials on vessels under repair and potential health effects.

"Though our company does not remove asbestos it is important that we are able to identify the material so that a certified abatement company can remove it," said Rainsberger.

The training was attended by 49 shipyard workers. Foss holds training for shipyard workers every other month on preventive measures and proactive means to achieve safe operations.

"Safety is the highest priority in everything we do, and these training sessions help us to move toward our goal of zero injuries in our workforce," said Rainier Shipyard Director **Don Nugent**.

"Safety is the highest priority in everything we do, and these training sessions help us to move toward our goal of zero injuries in our workforce,"

— **DON NUGENT**



# Foss Tows Last of 337 Bargeloads Of 'Muck' from Seattle Waterfront Tunnel

Foss safely and successfully wrapped up its "tunnel muck" effort in April towing the last barge of spoils from Seattle's downtown highway tunnel drilling project from Pier 46 to an abandoned quarry, 34 nautical miles to the north on Puget Sound.

Foss started on the project in the summer of 2013, running three tugs and three barges around the clock to accommodate the muck generated by "Bertha," which at the time was the largest tunneling machine ever built.

The *Sidney Foss*, foreground, and *Pacific Knight* were among the tugs assigned to the "tunnel muck" project. In the background is the white conveyor system used to transfer the tunnel spoils to barges, one of which is being tended by the *Pacific Knight*.



The project was plagued by delays after Bertha broke down, requiring lengthy repairs, but the machine broke through at the north end of the tunnel on April 4, marking the end of the marine portion of the project. Over the course of the project, Foss towed a total of 337 bargeloads of muck.

The tunnel is scheduled to open to vehicle traffic in 2019.

Foss Commercial Director **Jeff Horst** said the project was an example of teamwork throughout Foss, includ-

ing labor, commercial and legal personnel, line handling, human resources, marine personnel and executives.

"Our highly-skilled and safety-focused mariners and line handling personnel are to be credited for the technical feat," Horst said. "Our customer is very pleased with the results, professionalism and collaborative relationship as well."

Below, Senior Customer Service Representative **Jim Crowley**, left, and Sales Manager **Monte Crowley** were part of a Foss group that walked a nearly four-mile round trip from the tunnel's south portal, to the spot where tunneling machine "Bertha" was nearly finished digging at the time.



Matt Brown

## FOSS SHIPYARD WINS 'GOLD AWARD' FOR PERFECT RECORD ON WASTEWATER CONTROL

Foss Shipyard has won a "Gold Award" from King County for perfect compliance in 2016 with the terms and conditions of its industrial wastewater discharge permit.

The award, according to Foss Director of Health and Safety **Al Rainsberger**, is a reflection of the company's commitment to best management practices, which include good housekeeping in the shipyard.

"The cleaner we can keep the yard, the better our programs operate and

work with success," said Rainsberger, who oversees the wastewater discharge program.

The two major sources of wastewater in the shipyard are storm water runoff and the water used to pressure wash vessels in its three drydocks. None of it goes into the Lake Washington Ship Canal adjacent to the shipyard.

The storm water is collected in drains, stored in aboveground tanks

and gradually released into the county sewer system. The wash water from the drydocks is collected into a filtration system and treated prior to discharge into the county sewer system.

The wastewater, under the permit, may contain no more than three parts per million of copper and five parts per million of zinc. Foss samples the storm water monthly and the drydock water quarterly.



# Making Rainbows

Sea trials were held in May for the second of two fireboats built at Foss Shipyard in Seattle for the Port of Long Beach before it departed Puget Sound for Southern California.





The two, 108-foot boats are the first new-builds at the Seattle yard in recent history. In the photos, the boat begins a four-hour test of its water cannons on Shilshole Bay.

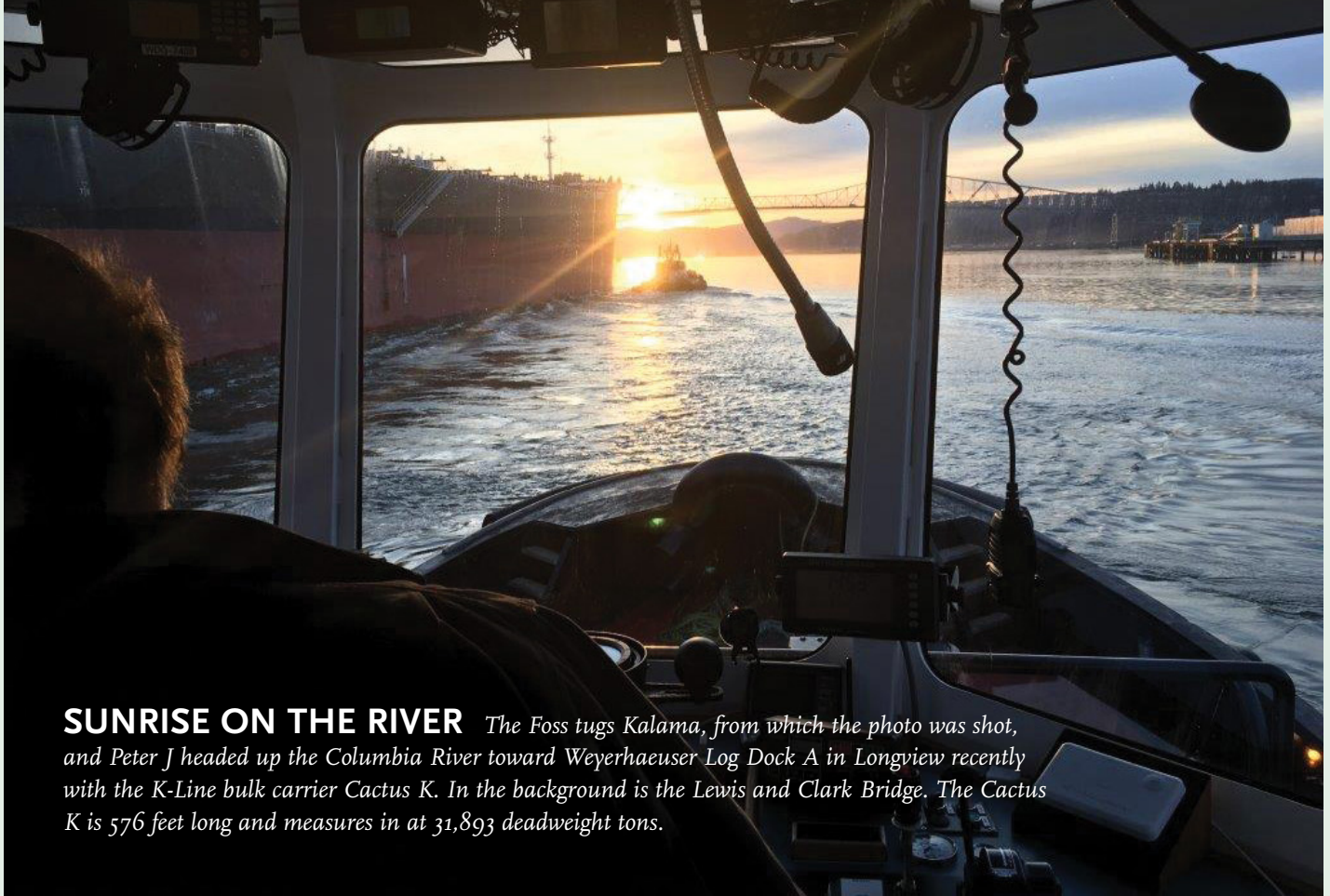




**WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE COMPETITION** While Foss and Crowley Maritime are vigorous competitors, the two companies also work together frequently. In this recent photo, the Crowley tug Guide joins the Foss tug Delta Lindsey in assisting a heavy-lift ship into the Foss-operated Terminal 5 at the Port of Seattle. Crowley, founded by **Thomas Crowley** in 1892, is celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and Pacific Maritime Magazine will feature the company in its July issue. Foss is sponsoring a congratulatory advertisement in the magazine.



**GRAIN TERMINAL ASSIST** The downtown Seattle skyline provided a backdrop as the Marshall Foss, foreground, and Delta Lindsey prepared to assist the bulk carrier Energy Primavera out of its berth at the Port of Seattle's Pier 86 grain terminal. The Panamanian-flagged ship is 751 feet long and is listed at 82,122 deadweight tons.



**SUNRISE ON THE RIVER** *The Foss tugs Kalama, from which the photo was shot, and Peter J headed up the Columbia River toward Weyerhaeuser Log Dock A in Longview recently with the K-Line bulk carrier Cactus K. In the background is the Lewis and Clark Bridge. The Cactus K is 576 feet long and measures in at 31,893 deadweight tons.*

Jason Baggett



Jason Baggett

**BRIDGE PARTS FOR NEW JERSEY** *Three 320-foot-long steel bridge sections, each weighing about 700 tons, plus two 100-ton beams for the bridge, were loaded on the barge American Trader in May at Columbia Business Park in Vancouver, Wash. The bridge parts, manufactured by Vigor Works, are destined for New Jersey, where they will be part of the new Wittpen Bridge across the Hackensack River. In the photo, the Foss tugs PJ Brix, right, and Bo Brusco handle the barge after it was loaded on the Columbia River. The ocean-going tug Lauren Foss began the tow to the East Coast through the Panama Canal on June 5. Director of Business Development **Tim Beyer** handled the commercial aspects of the project.*



**HEADED FOR KOREA** *The crew of the Arctic Class tug Michele Foss gathered for a photo recently before departing to participate in a sealift of oil field equipment from South Korea to Sakhalin Island, Russia. The Foss tugs Montana and Denise Foss also are participating in the sealift. From left in the photo are Clinton Sieber, able seaman, Cooper Lange, second mate, Evan Davis-Hadaway, oiler, Robert Robison, able seaman, Ryan Moore, chief mate, Brian Jutson, chief engineer, and Donald (Dwayne) Whitney, captain.*

## MICHELE FOSS RESCUES BULK CARRIER STRANDED IN THE GULF OF ALASKA

The Arctic Class tug *Michele Foss* in early March safely and successfully rescued a freighter that had lost propulsion and was leaking seawater through one of its shaft openings about 200 miles south of Kodiak Island in the Gulf of Alaska.

The ship was the *Ecofaith, G.O.*, a 751-foot, 81,882-deadweight ton bulk carrier that had been sailing from China to Prince Rupert, Canada, via South Korea. The vessel was about 650 miles from Prince Rupert when

it lost power. Its generators remained operational.

Foss was hired to rescue the ship on a Sunday night, and the *Michele* was underway from Pier 90 in Seattle in less than 12 hours. Capt. **Donald (Dwayne) Whitney** was in command of the tug.

The *Michele* reached the ship in about four days and then stood by for another two days until the weather subsided enough to bring the ship safely under tow. The tug and the

ship then completed a seven-day tow to Dutch Harbor, where temporary repairs were made. The ship was subsequently towed to China for permanent repairs.

"I'd say the *Michele* crew did a fantastic job," said Foss Port Capt. **Henry Palmer**. "They upheld the Foss safety culture and waited until the weather calmed down enough to make the connection without putting anyone or anything at risk."



"I'd say the *Michele* crew did a fantastic job. They upheld the Foss safety culture and waited until the weather calmed down enough to make the connection without putting anyone or anything at risk." – **CAPT. HENRY PALMER**

## MANLY SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

*Kendra Pew-Clifton, a senior at Friday Harbor (Wash.) High School was recently named the 2017 recipient of a Foss-sponsored Youth Maritime Training Association (YMTA) Norm Manly scholarship. Four other young people won Manly scholarships sponsored by other companies. Norm Manly, the award's namesake, is a retired Foss marine personnel manager who was the founder of the YMTA. With Pew-Clifton in the photo is Foss Chief Operating Officer **Scott Merritt**, who was one of the judges in the scholarship competition. Pew-Clifton plans to attend Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, next fall and will study oceanography.*



## LAUREN FOSS HELPS RESCUE TUG AND BARGE OFF THE COAST

The *Lauren Foss*, standing in as Washington's Emergency Rescue Towing Vessel (ERTV) out of Neah Bay, helped rescue another company's tug that had lost power and was in danger of drifting ashore with its 320-foot barge off the Washington coast in late May.

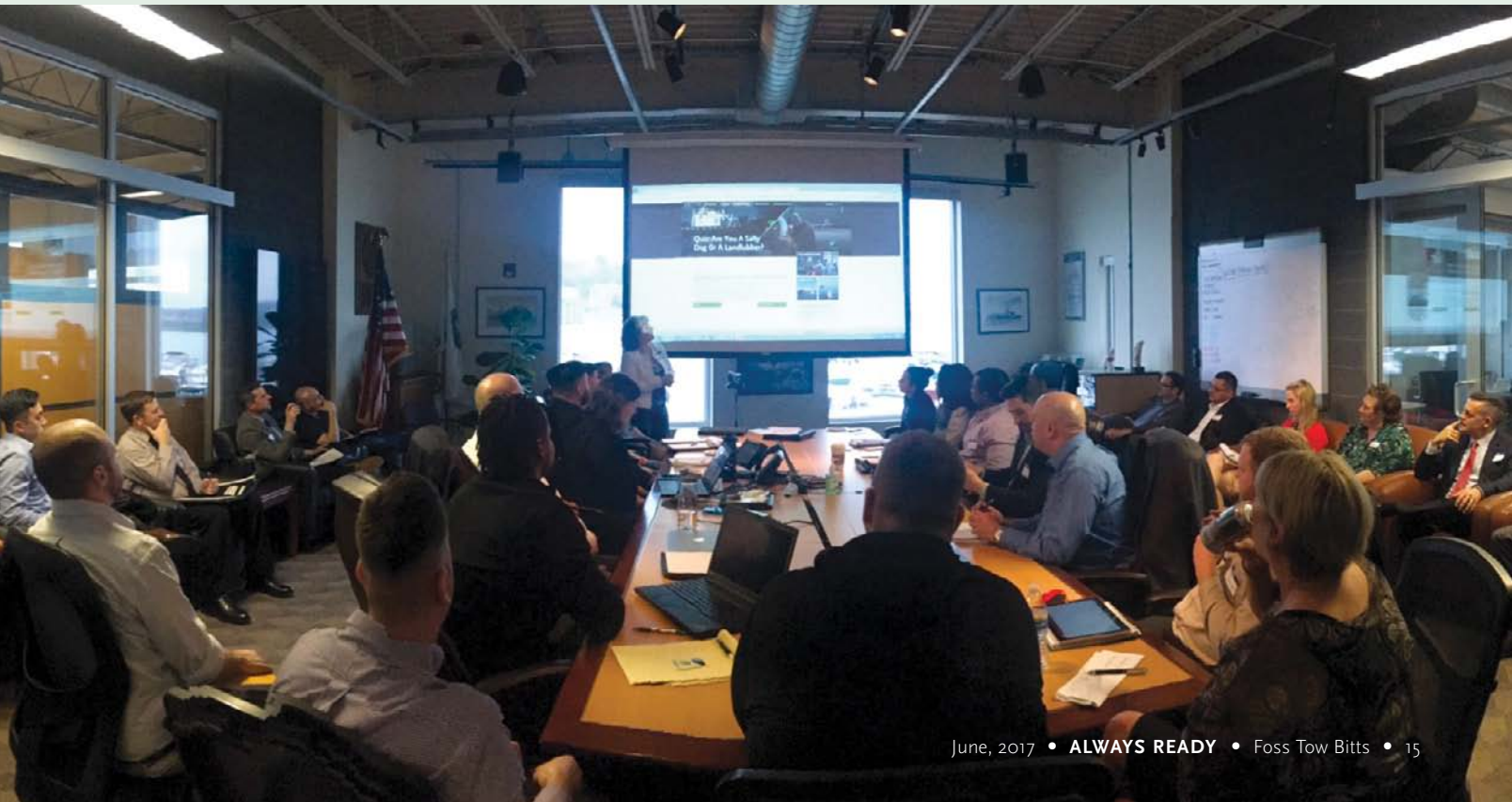
The ocean-going tug *Mauna Loa*

reported to the Coast Guard that it was disabled, and the *Lauren Foss* and the tug *David Brusco* out of Cathlamet, Ore., were dispatched and intercepted the tug and its barge.

A 47-foot Coast Guard motor lifeboat stood by, ready to pull the crewmembers from the *Mauna Loa* if the other tugs hadn't arrived in time.

Foss is under contract with the State of Washington to station a tug in Neah Bay, a tiny hamlet at the northwest corner of the Olympic Peninsula, to respond when ships and other vessels break down off the coast and in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

**REACHING OUT TO VETERANS** *Foss Human Resources Vice President **Darlene Crowder**, in front of the screen, was among Foss representatives making a recruiting presentation recently at company headquarters to 32 military veterans. The gathering was held in association with FourBlock, a group that assists veterans who are transitioning to the private sector. Joining Crowder from Foss were **Sonja Baron**, HR recruiter, **Shawn Elkin**, senior HR generalist in the Seattle shipyard and **Rob Nakama**, manager of contingency planning.*





Randy Lau, Foss Quality Assurance Manager

Tonya Todd

## Randy Lau Draws on Decades of Experience in the Hawaiian Islands.

By Hilary Reeves

Randy Lau grew up in Honolulu on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. His grandfather immigrated to the island chain from Japan as a laborer, working in the sugar cane plantations on Maui.

“I believe that a lot of Hawaiian customs nowadays are largely Asian-based,” explained Lau. “A majority of the migrant population in the sugar cane days was Asian. In our family, we were taught respect and politeness from a very young age.”

Lau is the second of three boys. He and his brothers grew up in a typical neighborhood, where all the kids went body surfing and boogie boarding together, enjoying all the beauty the island had to offer, before graduating from Kalani High School.

“I was the nerd,” he said. “I don’t exactly think we took it for granted, but we also didn’t realize how good we had it; we had nothing to compare it to. I think after high school was when I started to get the sense that living in Hawaii was a pretty good deal.”

Lau explained that for many who grew up in the islands, the decision to leave — or not to leave — must eventually be made. And it’s not an easy decision. His first job in high school was in a gift shop at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel, which then led to a position as a bellboy at the Kahala Hotel & Resort. After graduating from high school, he elected to stay in Hawaii, studying Travel Industry Management (TIM) at the University of Hawaii.

“There were three different areas of emphasis you could choose: hotel/restaurant, tourism, or transportation,” said Lau. “One of the core TIM classes, Transportation 100, that’s what hooked me. The professor came from the maritime shipyard side of transportation. I found it fascinating.”

During his senior year of college, Lau interned at Matson Navigation Co. His project was to “computerize” the tracking of containers being transshipped through Young Brothers. As his internship ended, he was offered a formal position, although he was still in school.

“I learned about logistics in school, and was able to see it working first-hand inside the container terminal. I ended up building six months of



benefits and salary with the company before I even graduated,” he said.

The company gave Lau the opportunity to leave Hawaii, offering him a position in San Francisco.

“I didn’t want to move,” he explained. “I was right out of college, and still felt very strongly tied to my parents. Instead, I took a position at Matson Terminals on Oahu, working outside the office to learn the operations.”

It was 1988, and Matson was taking its terminal and logistic operations from paper to computer. Lau’s primary responsibility: data integrity.

“I started on the bottom, taking inventory of containers. Then I was tasked to shadow the old-timers to find out what people were doing, and then translating operational needs to the programmers so that the systems that IT created would result in something functional that the employees would actually use.”

After five years, when his own position was rendered obsolete, Lau accepted a position at Sea-Land Services. Once again, he started on the bottom. One of his responsibilities involved inspecting incoming agriculture shipments.

Lau moved into a management position at Sea-Land and worked there for 10 years as the company transitioned into Horizon Lines. He spent a year attending classes at Honolulu Community College for his degree in Occupational and Environmental Safety Management before accepting a position in dispatch for a small company named Smith Maritime.

Lau spent four years learning the tug and tank-barge business at Smith, working with key customers to assure a reliable product-delivery schedule. When he heard Smith was going to be sold, he landed an interview at Foss subsidiary Hawaiian Tug and

Barge, and was hired as an assistant operations manager, working with the harbor crews to manage their work schedules.

“It was another learning process, but I got along pretty well with the crews,” he said. “I was able to see firsthand what they were going through. My primary focus was trying to schedule the crews, putting their safety first while providing the customers a quality service.”

Last year, Lau’s wife — whom he met through her roommate, who was a programmer working for Lau at Matson Terminals — was working a civilian job for the U.S. Army after years in the Coast Guard Reserves when she got a promotion that took her to Bremerton Naval Base in Washington State.

Lau applied for a transfer to Foss Maritime, based in Seattle, and was hired in the Marine Transportation division. The family moved from Hawaii in May 2016.

“I’m now the Quality Assurance Manager,” said Lau, who made his first-ever international trip to South Korea while working for the MT division. “My job now is to make sure that crews know the safety program, and that Foss conforms to its Safety, Quality and Environmental Management programs.”

Lau, whose own family includes two daughters, ages 11 and 6, gives a lot of credit for his success to his parents.

“I think I was raised well,” he said. “I’m really not good at parties, terrible in a crowded room. But put me on a tugboat, and I am very comfortable. I have tried very hard to build my career on being respectful, being a good listener, and being a fast learner.”

**Editor’s Note: This is an edited version of an article that appeared recently in the online magazine, *People of Saltchuk*.**

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– RANDY LAU



# Start of Cruise Ship Season Recalls Rich History of Passenger Ships in Seattle

By Mike Skalley

The 2017 cruise ship season has once again begun in earnest at the Port of Seattle cruise terminal at Piers 66 and 91. There are 216 cruise ship arrivals scheduled, moving an estimated 1 million passengers through the two terminals.

With the advent of bow and stern thrusters, now on 95 percent of the cruise ships, the need for tug assistance in most ports of the world is nearly a thing of the past. Seattle is no exception, with tug services required only under extreme weather conditions or a mechanical issue aboard the ship. However, Foss is well positioned to assist if the need should arise, with tug contracts with many of the major cruise lines calling in Seattle.

The first true cruise ship calling at the Port of Seattle on a regular basis was Sitmar Line's, *SS Fairsea*, calling at Pier 28 on a ten-day turn around for Alaska cruises in 1986. Seven trips were made in 1986 and 11 in 1987. One of the older class of cruise ships, it did not have thrusters. Two Foss tugs provided the docking and undocking service.

Prior to the advent of air travel, passenger ships provided the primary means of transportation to Alaska and Asia from Seattle.

The Alaska Steamship Company operated passenger service from Seattle to all ports in Alaska from 1895 until 1954. The line challenged all kinds of winter weather conditions and operated year round offering regular sailings to as far north as Nome. Over 50 ports in Alaska were covered by the Alaska Steam passenger vessels, including numerous canneries, villages and logging camps. Foss tugs were instrumental in assisting the passenger ships in and out of Seattle's Pier 42 on a regular basis for twenty plus years, as the advent of bow and



The *Carol Foss* and the tractor tug *Wedell Foss* assist the *Fairsea* into Pier 28 on its maiden call to the Port of Seattle in June, 1986.

stern thrusters was many years away. Foss oil barges also delivered the bunker fuel from the oil terminals to the Alaska Steam vessels in Seattle.

Many factors contributed to Alaska Steamship's eventual termination of passenger service in 1954. There were numerous labor issues caused by longshoremen, seamen and stewards. Additionally, the arrival of air service to Alaska took away the majority of the passengers and freight bookings. The year 1954 also marked the end of charter privileges and subsidy payments. The *SS Denali* made the company's last passenger sailing in September 1954. Alaska was

yet to become one of the "vacation destinations" for travelers from the U.S. and abroad.

Passenger service to Asia was a highly lucrative business for many years. During her 30 years of proud service, the NYK passenger ship, *Hikawa Maru* crossed the Pacific some 254 times between Seattle and Kobe, Japan. Once again, the advent of overseas air travel spelled the end of the trans-pacific passenger service. The *Hikawa Maru* departed Seattle for the final time in September of 1960.

Matson Navigation provided passenger service between the West

*(Continued on next page)*



The tugs *Shannon Foss* and *Erik Foss* assist Matson Navigation's, *Matsonia* in Seattle in 1961.

*(Continued from page 18)*

Coast and Honolulu on a year-round basis with numerous passenger ships over the decades. Seattle was not on the regular sailing schedule, but an

occasional visit by one of the Matson passenger ships was an exciting and well-publicized event for the Port of Seattle. Foss tugs always provided the assist work on the infrequent Matson

calls, including one of the last calls by the *SS Matsonia* in 1961.

*Editor's Note: Mike Skalley is the Foss historian and is the author of several books on the company.*

## HAWAIIAN BOXES

Foss Honolulu subsidiary Young Brothers Ltd. Recently took delivery of 50 new 20-foot cargo containers manufactured in China. Young Brothers is a licensed common carrier, regulated by the State of Hawaii, and barges all manner of cargo between Honolulu and the neighbor islands.





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**OUTSIDE THE BREAK** *The Foss tug Piilani was just outside the break at Sand Island near Honolulu Harbor when Rick Wilson of the Young Brothers Operations Department caught this photo of the tug with a surfer on a wave in the foreground. At the time, the Piilani was assisting the Matson ship Kauai into Honolulu. The use of a telephoto lens made the tug and the surfer appear to be much closer than they actually were.*