



The Marine Assistance Industry Journal

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume XXVIII- April 2017

Meet the C-PORT Executive Committee! - an interview by Tina Cardone

There are some new faces leading C-PORT and embracing the association's mission as it represents, promotes, protects, and defends its member companies through communication, relationship development, and education. Since its inception in 1986, C-PORT continues to be the only association that represents the Marine Assistance Industry nationwide. Who are these industry leaders? Why did they seek to serve the marine assistance industry this way? How did towing boats become their passion? What is their vision for C-PORT? Let's ask them.



John Ward is C-PORT chairman and owner of Aquanaut Towing and Salvage, a Sea Tow franchise, based at Pensacola, FL. John is married to Ashley and they have 2 children, a boy and a girl aged 4 and 3 respectively. I asked John about his hobbies. He laughed and said "I don't get to have hobbies". He enjoys car racing, from drag racing in which he participates, circle track, and his son has already started on the go-cart track.

When asked why John got involved in the towing business, he reminded me that his "granddad was in the business". He always knew he would own a towing business. John served in the US Coast Guard from 1994-2004. He relayed a conversation he and his shipmate had in 1982 while stationed at Montauk, NY. His shipmate's dream was to have a "go fast" rental boat business when he got out of the CG. John told his friend he was going to own a commercial salvage company. Both succeeded in following their dreams. John had the opportunity to further watch and learn while stationed at Daulphin Island, AL, in 2002. Then, in 2004, John bought his first Sea Tow franchise, Destin, FL. He expanded to Pensacola, FL in 2007, and purchased 3 lake locations in 2016: Lake Norman which he found especially enticing with its close proximity to "racing central"-Charlotte, NC. He also operates

out of Lake Wylie, SC; Lake Gaston, NC; and Kerr Lake, NC.

I asked John why he is involved at this level with C-PORT. He explained that no one thinks belonging to an industry organization is important until they need something. Then it's critical. John said C-PORT must exist and he wants to see the association flourish. "We don't know what will happen day to the next", he said. John said the industry needs C-PORT, "we'd never see it", without C-PORT's watchdog and advocacy on behalf of the industry when regulations and legislative measures are proposed. He is involved to help bring unity to the industry and to support C-PORT's mission. "I'm not doing this for me personally. It's about C-PORT; the industry."



Phil LeBlanc is C-PORT vice-chairman and partner of Safe/Sea, a TowBoatU.S. licensee, based at Wickford, RI. Phil is married to Emily and they have 2 children, a boy and a girl aged almost 5 and 2 1/2 respectively. He enjoys taking the lead with the children's morning and after school routines. Phil is an avid snow skier. He is National Ski Patrol Director at his local ski area and a member of the National Regional Ski Patrol Board of Directors.

When I asked Phil why he got involved with this business, he explained he was a local boater growing up. He saw Pete Andrews around and then, in 1997, he was on his personal boat when he saw a family get washed off a sandbar on Father's Day. He responded and saved 6 people that day. He considers that his entry into the company. Safe/Sea presented him with a lifesaving award and offered him a job. Phil figured it was a way to put himself through school and had no intention

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SAVE THE DATE!
31st C-PORT Conference and Membership Meeting
January 15-18, 2018
Wyndham Grand Jupiter at Harbourside Place
Jupiter FL

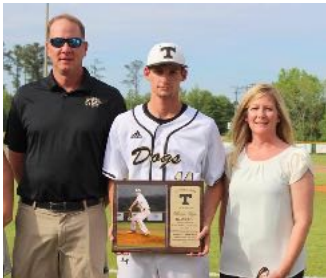
CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) Meeting, Memphis TN	April 11-12, 2017
International Boating and Water Safety Summit (IBWSS), St. Petersburg FL	April 23-26, 2017
American Boating Congress (ABC), Washington DC	May 15-17, 2017
NASBLA Annual Conference, Rapid City, SD	September 10-13, 2017
Maritime Security West, Tacoma WA	September 20-22, 2017
Sea Tow Annual Conference, Tampa FL	November 14-16, 2017
C-PORT 31st Conference and Membership Meeting, Jupiter FL	January 15-17, 2018
BoatU.S. Towing Conference	January 17-18, 2018

Meet the C-PORT Executive Committee!- continued

(Phil LeBlanc, continued) of staying. Soon he discovered he had a passion for this work, as someone said to him, he was “born to it”. He stayed, drove boats, and now finds himself as a part owner of the company who mentored him, and whose founder helped mentor the industry.

Phil is passionate about his leadership role. He feels the industry is in transition. With founding members selling their businesses, his concern is that we risk losing the foundation of C-PORT. “The new owners don’t remember why we were founded,” Phil explained. He does and does not want the industry to lose its collective voice. “We are not facing a new problem. It’s an old problem with a different emblem,” Phil remarked when asked how he views the current mood. The original problem that brought the industry together as one voice was our early years and struggles against our now strong partners, the US Coast Guard. He views that struggle as ongoing; the players have changed. He explained that this battle for growth and autonomy is one C-PORT knows how to win to the benefit of the industry, and the industry must stick together and participate to accomplish it. I asked Phil to summarize his thoughts. He said, “We are a collection of different, yet like, businesses that need representation. C-PORT does that and without it, we can’t move forward. I want to be a part of that.”



Jon Gridley is C-PORT treasurer and owner of Lake Tow Inc., a Sea Tow franchise, based at Clarks Hill Lake, GA. Jon is married to Gina and has a stepson, Morgan, who plays baseball while attending college in Massachusetts. Jon said he has no real hobbies. He enjoys playing golf when he has a free moment and likes to travel exploring beaches. His favorite beaches to date are Aruba, Dominican Republic, and Hawaii.

Jon said he’s been licensed for 21 years starting out fishing on the Great Lakes. He said the season was too short and he needed another career so he joined the corporate world in iron production/foundry work. That job transferred him all around the country landing him in Georgia. The company shut down and Gina didn’t want to move. Jon found out the towing business at Clarks Hill Lake was for sale and he bought it. He has since expanded his operation to include Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair, both located in Georgia. In 2015, he diversified and purchased a boat dealership. He finds there is synergy with the dealership and the towing business.

I asked Jon why he became involved with C-PORT. He said he wants to help protect the industry. He said there is the potential for too many regulations that can cause the industry to fail. “Yellow, red, or independent, we’re all in it for the same reason,” Jon stated. He said C-PORT helps everybody and he wants to promote more member involvement outside the board of directors. “Every business is different and everything affects everyone differently,” Jon continued. “We need input from everyone.”



Dale Plummer is C-PORT secretary and owner of Baltimore Marine Recovery, a TowBoatU.S. licensee, based at Baltimore, MD. Dale is married to Christine and has 2 sons, one a Freshman in college studying mechanical engineering, and the other a Freshman in High School who plays football and lacrosse. Dale said he gave up his hobbies of fishing and hunting, commenting there’s “not much time for that now”. Dale is president of Chesapeake Marine Towing and Assistance Association (CMTAA), a C-PORT regional chapter. The president of any C-PORT regional chapter has a seat on the C-PORT board of directors.

I asked Dale why he got into the towing industry. His journey began at Siemens Building Technologies where he worked for 25 years. He left there and starting fishing, inshore and offshore, gaining the time needed to secure a captain’s license. Dale needed to find a career that could sustain a family and he wanted it to be on the water. He gave himself a year to find that job, or back to the corporate world he would go. Dale started to work for Frank Dolan at Baltimore Marine Recovery and after 2 years, he negotiated the purchase of the company. Dale has since expanded to Annapolis, purchasing Ann Bay Towing from Ham Gale.

Dale’s focus and reason for leadership service at C-PORT is to help the industry maintain a professional image with US Coast Guard and other agencies, as well as the boating public. He commented that C-PORT provides guidance from senior members to new company owners. They have a depth of knowledge and history of the industry and can give advice and guidance in a one on one environment through the C-PORT conferences and meetings. “C-PORT provides the opportunity for conversations across all lines,” Dale concluded.

C-PORT Attends California Boating Congress (CBC)-

C-PORT, along with its California based members, attended the 2nd California Boating Congress (CBC) at Sacramento, CA on March 1, 2017. The event showcases the unique issues confronting the boating industry in California and includes meetings with California Assemblymen and Senators. C-PORT is advocating for a change in California’s Harbors and Navigation Code. An antiquated “wrecker’s law”, written into the code in the 1850’s, is inhibiting some marine assistance companies from doing their jobs and limiting their growth. “Boaters are safer when we all work together,” remarked Tina Cardone, C-PORT executive director. “Our members work in concert with US Coast Guard and other public agencies throughout the

country acting as force multipliers in the execution of their missions. We believe this antiquated law is being misinterpreted by some California agencies. Our goal is to help our members and these agencies work together for the betterment of all involved, especially the boater.”

Joining Cardone at this event were: Phil Delano and Greg Dreischmeyer acting on behalf of their respective companies as well as representing the association as board members, David LaMontagne whose company is particularly hardest hit by this old law, Paul Amaral and Zachary Francey, Monte Ash, and Sahra Otero representing their CA companies, and Heather Sheward, assistant vice president towing at BoatU.S. California Service Center, representing the towing networks’ views on member service. David Kennedy, BoatU.S. government affairs manager, lent his expertise to the group.



In addition to discussing their unique issue with their representatives, participants reminded the State representatives of the importance of the boating industry in California and discussed concerns including keeping fishing accessible and affordable, mandatory boater education, abandoned and derelict vessel removal, and vessel taxation.

Welcome to West Marine Pro

West Marine Pro

A letter from the CEO

We are proud to announce that Port Supply is now West Marine Pro.

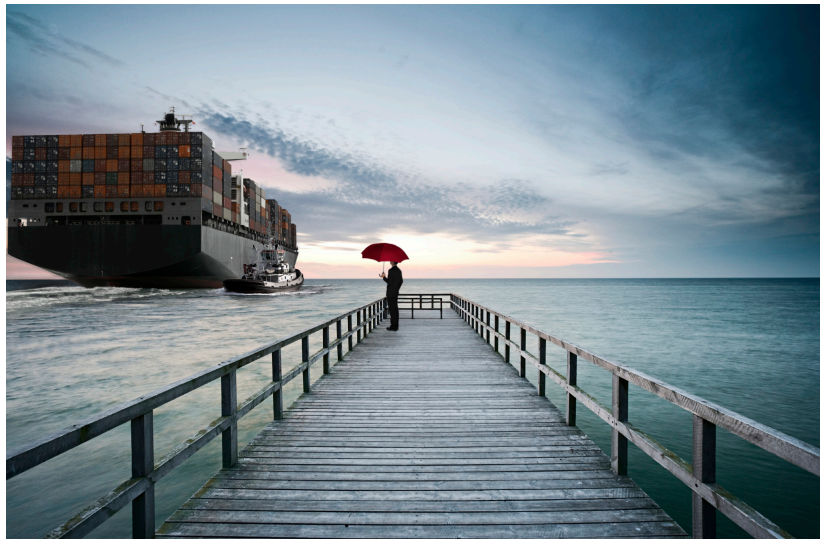
As the professional brand of West Marine since 1978, Port Supply has established itself as a recognized leader in marine distribution and a successful partner to thousands of marine businesses. We are proud of this rich history and embrace it fully as we move forward.

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Matt Hyde, CEO
Matt Hyde
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Cyber threats and exposures are keeping management teams up at night, and it is easy to see why. Data breaches (i.e. Home Depot, Target) have dominated the news. Recently, only politics has outpaced the headlines. Heightened news coverage, State and Federal regulations and/or personal experience with a breach has created an increased sense of urgency for Companies.

The Cost is Real: Ponemon Institute's 2016 Global Cost of a Data Breach Study (June 2016) indicated a 7% increase in the total cost of a data breach year over year. \$221 is the average cost per lost or stolen record with that number rising for regulated industries such as healthcare and financial services.

No One is Immune: It is quickly becoming apparent; large companies are not the only targets! America's over 28 million small businesses provide a plethora of data valuable to cybercriminals. Small businesses maintain information such as employee and customer data, bank account information and intellectual property. In addition, small businesses can serve as a gateway into larger networks through their business agreements with larger companies.

Companies are Investing in Cyber Security: Organizations are investing in "Information Security" and hiring relevant talent (i.e. Chief Information Security Officers). Firms are investing in proactive cyber security measures along with data breach response programs. However, this is costly and many small businesses still lack extensive security teams and unlimited access to top legal advice.

Insurance is available: Broad, responsive policy forms are available and include security and privacy liability (arising from 3rd party claims; including regulatory actions). Policy definitions are broader as well. Forms are no longer limited to the theft or disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information as defined by a specific state statute. In addition, Policies include free access to online training and support including Cyber Risk Webinars, access to expert Breach Response Teams in the event of a Loss, and updates on changing Data Security Laws. In some cases, the value of these services exceeds the premium paid for the policy.

As a benefit of your C-PORT Membership, Starkweather & Shepley will provide a free consultation and review of your current insurance program to ensure completeness of coverage. Please feel free to reach out to me directly.

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National Maritime Center

Providing Credentials to Mariners



Drug Testing Options for Mariner Credential Applications

46 [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#) Part 10 requires that all applicants for the original issuance or renewal of a Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) and applicants seeking certain raises in grade or new endorsements must provide evidence of having passed a chemical test for dangerous drugs or meet the requirements for an exemption from testing in accordance with 46 CFR 16.220. If an applicant fails to meet this requirement, the Coast Guard will not issue the MMC. To meet this requirement, applicants may submit one of the following:

- (1) A completed drug test form (Federal Drug Testing Custody and Control Form or CG-719P) signed by the Medical Review Officer (MRO) showing the applicant has passed a chemical test for dangerous drugs. Passing a chemical test for dangerous drugs means that the result of a chemical test conducted according to 49 CFR part 40 was reported as “negative” by an MRO. The National Maritime Center will not accept any other chemical test result including “negative – dilute”.
- (2) A letter on company or consortium stationery signed by an authorized official that administers the drug testing program stating that the applicant passed a test for dangerous drugs within the previous six months with no subsequent positive drug tests during the remainder of the six-month period.
- (3) A letter on company or consortium stationary signed by an authorized official that administers the drug testing program stating that the applicant has been subject to random drug testing for at least 60 days during the previous 185 days, has not failed any tests, and has not refused to participate in any required test.
- (4) Active duty or reserve military members may provide a letter from their command stating that they have passed a required chemical test for dangerous drugs within the previous six months. Active duty military members may also provide a letter from their command stating that they have been subject to random drug testing for the past six months and have not failed any tests. Random testing letters are not accepted for reserve military members.
- (5) Civilian government mariners with the Military Sealift Command, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration may provide a letter from their command or headquarters as proof that they have been enrolled in a bona fide drug testing program and have been subject to random drug testing for at least 60 days during the previous 185 days. The letter must also certify that the mariner has not failed or refused participation in a chemical test for dangerous drugs.

Have questions or comments? Contact the NMC by using our [Online Chat or Ticketing System](#), by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-I-ASK-NMC (427-5662).

Sincerely,

/K. R. Martin/

Kirsten R. Martin
 Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
 Commanding Officer

C-PORT Joins Industry Stakeholders to Pass Commercial Vessel Incidental Discharge Act-

The exemption from EPA permitting compliance for commercial vessels under 79’ ends in December. C-PORT and other industry stakeholders have joined forces in the effort to see that Congress pass this necessary legislation. The Commercial Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (CVIDA) will correct the problem facing many companies whose vessels transit between states; states may add their own requirements on top of the current federal standard controlling ballast water and other incidental vessel discharges. While marine assistance towing vessels do not carry ballast water and most are of the same construction as recreational vessel hulls, the current legislation does not preclude inclusion. If the exemption is not granted, marine assistance towing vessels will be required to obtain a small vessel discharge permit, audit and report the findings, of non-existent discharges.

C-PORT has been fighting this battle since 2008, when legislation was first introduced to exempt commercial vessels under 79’ from the permitting process. We successfully received support for continuing moratoriums on compliance. “It’s time for this issue to be resolved,” Tina Cardone, executive director at C-PORT, remarked. “Without this legislation, complete with the exemption language for these smaller commercial vessels who do not carry ballast water or have any meaningful discharge, the maritime industry faces an unmanageable burden when transiting state lines.” The legislation is needed now as the moratorium on compliance for all commercial vessels under 79’, including fishing vessels, ends in December, the international ballast water convention rules go into effect in September and for those vessels with ballast water, they must be in compliance with CG regulation soon and those companies will not know if the CG approved ballast water systems will be approved by the states in which they operate or at all once the dust clears on this bill.

USCG Marine Casualty Reporting Property Damage Thresholds-

The US Coast Guard is in the process of updating Marine Casualty Reporting. TSAC, Towing Safety Advisory Committee, reviewed and made recommendations to Coast Guard to modernize the thresholds for reporting as well as updating the policies for reporting. A proposed rule making comment period closed on March 24 that addresses the reportable property damage thresholds. Proposed changes of a reportable marine casualty would go from a current threshold of \$25,000 to \$72,000. The SMI (Significant Marine Incident) threshold would also increase from a current level of \$100,000 to \$200,000. C-PORT agrees with these thresholds and encourages US Coast Guard policymakers to fully consider the recommendations for the overhaul of this regulation as recommended by TSAC.

Boat Operators Search and Rescue (BOSAR) for Commercial Assistance Training Held-

C-PORT, through NASBLA (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators), certified 5 captains in BOSAR/CA during a training course held at San Diego, CA in January. Receiving their certification were: Travis Basom, Michael Del Grande, Greg Dreischmeyer, Steve Mercante, and Brian Wood. All captains operate marine assistance towing vessels in Southern California.



As NASBLA states: “The Boat Operations and Training (BOAT) Program establishes a U.S. Coast Guard recognized national standard for the training, qualification, credentialing and typing” of marine responders. The course was adapted from the US Coast Guard’s Boat Training framework. Working with NASBLA, C-PORT was able to take the NASBLA BOSAR course and tailor it to fits the needs of the marine assistance industry to provide a base of training recognized nationally. The C-PORT course includes all segments of the NASBLA course, and provides reinforcement of knowledge gained by virtue of their captain’s license and experience. It enhances the marine assistance operator’s ability to work as a true partner with local agencies and with the US Coast Guard. Any marine assistance company may host a regional training course. Contact Tina Cardone at C-PORT, tcardone@cport.us or 954-261-2012, for additional information.

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***- John, Pete, Phil
& the Safe/Sea Crew***

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Risk Management Training Courses are available on the C-PORT website, www.cport.us. The program C-PORT administers centers on these concepts:

- Risk: “possibility of loss or injury”
- Risk Management: “The identification, analysis, assessment, control, and avoidance, minimization, or elimination of unacceptable risks.

C-PORT is committed to encouraging its member’s growth and development through education and is dedicated to establishing standards for professionalism and good business practices throughout its membership. With the increase in accidents and economic pressures facing our industry, many companies have lost sight of the importance of training and proper risk management skills. Our mission is to provide our members with programs that will enable their growth and development into the future, while minimizing the impact of looming USCG regulation in response to Congressional directive and safety records.

Contact Tina Cardone at tcardone@cport.us or 954-261-2012 with any questions regarding this program.

Marine Assistance Company Operations Guideline, exclusively for C-PORT members. These guidelines promote safe operations and provide regulatory guidance. C-PORT members may obtain access to this document at the C-PORT website, www.cport.us or contact Tina Cardone at tcardone@cport.us or 954-261-2012.

Insurance Program for Marine Assistance Companies - Administered by Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage, Inc. - Designed for organizations dedicated to marine assistance and towing. This Program offers an extensive portfolio of quality insurance products and services to address a wide range of marine exposures. -800-788-8225; lwagner@starshep.com.

BOSAR for Commercial Assistance- Created through the support of NASBLA’s BOAT program and the USCG Office of Boat Forces, is designed for the marine assistance operator, providing reinforcement of knowledge gained by virtue of their captain’s license and experience. It also enhances their ability to work as a true partner with local agencies and the US Coast Guard. This course is open to any marine assistance company who wants to host the training. Instructors and course materials are provided by C-PORT. Notify Tina Cardone at tcardone@cport.us or 954-261-2012 if you have an interest in hosting a class.



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C-PORT was founded in 1986 to act as a liaison between the marine assistance industry and public agencies and organizations involved with boating safety, marine assistance, marine salvage and other marine-related operations. Our members are dedicated to providing prompt, professional and timely assistance to all boaters and to actively partner and cooperate with local law enforcement and U.S. Coast Guard. They are professionals, dedicated to the growth and development of their respective businesses and committed to furthering the advancement of our waterways and the boating community. For more information, contact C-PORT at (954) 261-2012 or visit www.cport.us.

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