



THE FORTNIGHTLY DELIGHTFULLY BRIEF, PITHY AND WHOLLY IDIOSYNCRATIC NEWSLETTER.



Delightfully Brief

It is my sense that the financial collapse in Greece will bring us all down into another recession. The manufacturing markets are already weakening, freight rates in some trades are at rock bottom, Chinese growth is slowing, the US economy is fragile and run by bankers gone amok. The government screws are tightening everywhere using terrorism as an excuse. It may be the fear of domestic anti-government mass violence by those unemployed and hungry rather than terrorism, which is driving that train – if it has a driver. The Great Depression was a time of fear of domestic uprisings

too.

Pithy

Go to sea and get arrested. That is the conclusion of the [Seafarers Rights International](#) in a well-done, balanced and comprehensive study of criminalization and justice for seafarers. There is a lot of criminalization and there is not much justice. Not surprising: shipmasters are most at risk. Warrantless premises searches, criminal charges with no explanation, a third of those arrested convicted, body searches without warrant or cause, and gratuitous violence on the part of those arresting seem to be the norm. Also in the US, the norm seems to be for the Department of Justice to persecute rather than prosecute. If a group has little political power, suffers from historically bad press and is down on its luck, it is a good and easy target for the government to kick around. So it is for seafarers. The search for justice

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Defending Against

seems to take a back seat to the rote and wooden application of Procrustean laws by the willfully blind and willfully ignorant in that department. Seafaring is not a profession I would urge my children to undertake.

Wholly Idiosyncratic

The TSA is the gang which cannot shoot straight. Two things popped over the horizon recently. My good friend Dennis Bryant, in an article in a well-read trade magazine, called the TWIC a useless failure. A gentle chide, Dennis: I have been saying that for years in various journals and called it a maritime hobgoblin of little TSA minds. Congressman Mica has gone one better – he supposed it to be as useful as a library card for port security. But not only is the TWIC useless, the TSA itself is useless and practices mere security theater and crass intimidation and wholly wasteful spending. The verified stories of assaults and batteries by contractor agents, thievery from baggage, buying useless x-ray machines, interfering with the criminal justice system, blatant abuse of power, refusal to issue a TWIC to a man who came to the country when he was two years old because he was born outside the US, secret lists which it cannot keep current, refusal to engage the public in any meaningful fashion, lack of cooperation with the Congress, coziness with contractors and vendors . . . the list is long and dismal . . . and do not forget the blatant lies and amateur political game-playing. Airport Johnny Pistole, the FBI hack seconded to the TSA, needs television coaching after his twisted face "we will not stand down" on genital groping. Now, the most recent asinine act of this essentially asinine agency is the hiring of a priest, defrocked for allegedly molesting young girls, as a manager of some public function at the Philadelphia airport. He was outed by someone who knew him and a television station. We spend a lot on an agency whose sole function could be and should be done by shipowners, port operators and airplane and airport operators and the Coast Guard. The TSA herd could not even estimate correctly. When the TWIC total approached three million cards one recalls the 750 thousand originally proposed by the winning contractor – Lockheed Martin. In the best defense tradition, Lockheed bid low to get the contract, over-engineered the TWIC, performed overall miserably and then came back for more money. It also pulled the wool over the eyes of the ignorant and dull knuckle-draggers at TSA. It is a bad situation all the way around and not the best way to keep unemployment under control. The TSA should be abolished to get us all out of our miseries with this bad government agency getting worse.

Urgings

Watch [Maritime TV](#) and see my good friend Clay Maitland hold forth. I comment some too.

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If you like good law reporting, sign up for [Maritime Advocate](#) put out by my good friends Sam Ignarski and Humphrey Hill in London. They also include funny stories from time to time which we all need the current shipping vale of tears.

Smooth sailing, fair winds and a following sea.

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The Cartner Cos., consults in maritime and related law, naval architecture and marine engineering and maritime economics and trade.

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