

SNAME Visits POSIDONIA 2004 in Greece

It's been said that 1100 ship owning companies exist within the city limits of Athens and its port of Piraeus, each with numbers of vessels ranging from single to double digits in total, establishing the Greek-owned fleet as the largest in the world. Business is booming here and every day one sees advertisements for naval architects and marine engineers in the local papers. In addition, SNAME's newest and very energetic Greek Section, now in its third year of operation and rapidly approaching 300 members, was anxious to promote membership and goodwill by exhibiting at the ever-popular 16th biennial International Shipping Exposition, Posidonia 2004, held at the Piraeus Port Authority Exhibition Center on the waterfront from June 7-11. From the Convention Center we had spectacular views of cruise ships, high-speed ferries and commercial vessels of every description moving in and out of the bustling port, which is on the Aegean Sea's azure blue Saronic Gulf.

It was fitting for the Society's first venture out of North America to exhibit at this premier European show, just two short months before the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens. Construction is everywhere, and work proceeds around the clock in order to finish in time for the thousands of visitors expected for the games running from August 13-29.

President Bruce Rosenblatt and I were in Athens all week both to manage the SNAME booth at Posidonia, which was generously shared with us this year by our partners, The Maritime Group. Greg Trautwein, Editor of Maritime Reporter magazine, had been to previous shows and graciously volunteered to help us "learn the ropes." Our primary goals were to meet and greet our Greek Section members, spread the Society's goodwill, and, hopefully, gain new members in the process.

My initial reaction on Monday was one of the sheer enormity of this show and the enthusiasm of its attendees in daytime temperatures hovering between 91 and 95 degrees Fahrenheit. There were 1650 booths representing marine-related companies from over 70 countries, and expectations of over 16,000 visitors during the weeklong exposition, festivities and social events. Clearly, many naval architects and marine engineers reside in the immediate area, or traveled in for the exposition as we were regaled with stories about how they earned their degrees, where they have worked and the many friends they have made in and outside of the U.S. At least two days were required to walk around and visit all of the booths. Fortunately, we had enthusiastic and capable volunteers from the Greek Section to assist us at the booth, all recruited and organized by the current Chairman, Peter Lalangas. Helping at the booth throughout the week, in addition to Peter Lalangas, were the following volunteers:

Lambros Kaiktsis
Gregory Grigoropoulos
Harilaos Psaraftis
Nikos Dionissopoulos

Spiros Malliaroudakis
John Kokarakis
Dimitrios Lyridis
Dimitra Damala

We thank all of these dedicated Section members who unselfishly shared their time and expertise in translating for us in order to complete sales, and explained the many benefits for international members of SNAME. Countless new friends and acquaintances were made, and we will value these developing relationships as the Section grows and prospers. We also must thank Executive Committee members, especially Peter Lalangas and Gregory Grigoropoulos, who assisted both with the setting up and dismantling of the booth, and the many details of coordination required to make the week's event successful. We were treated to a number of the numerous receptions held during Posidonia, and one evening regally entertained by Executive Committee members at a traditional Greek restaurant overlooking the bay with its many small inlets lined with ancient rock boundary walls there to protect the city of Athens in early times, and to provide building ways where wooden trading ships and coastal craft could be constructed and launched.

On Tuesday, June 8, I had an opportunity to visit the National Technical University of Athens where I was given a personally conducted tour of the Department of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, and, later, the Laboratory of Ship and Marine Hydrodynamics by its director, Dr. Gregory Grigoropoulos. I was particularly impressed with the state-of-the-art 100m x 5m x 3.5m Ship Model Towing Tank, and viewed many diverse hull forms and models, some in excess of seven meters, for commercial, government and research testing of their maneuvering, seakeeping and power prediction.

Proudly, we can boast of 10 new members recruited at the show, and at least 65 membership forms, which were handed out to enthusiastic recipients. Over \$2200 in sales of books and accessories overwhelmingly convinced us that we should return in two years, and we are already discussing how we can improve for Posidonia 2006.

Phil Kimball
Executive Director