

How to Behave on a Ship

(fra gnistens skuffer)

Innledning

En gulnet stensilkopi nylig halt fram fra en skuff, brakte tankene tilbake til tidlig 70-tall. En dag i sjøen før anløp New Orleans dukket stuert Per Gundersen på "Nopal Progress" opp i radiatorommet med et tekstark i handa. Under mottoet at en i sjøen ikke har mer moro enn en lager sjøl, ble han og gnisten raskt enige om at passasjerene – for det meste pensjonerte amerikanere – kunne trenge litt praktisk informasjon om livet om bord på en linjebåt.

Stuertens tekstark ble renskrevet og mangfoldiggjort på datidens tekniske "high-end"- utstyr, spritduplikatoren. "Informasjons-arket" ble så lagt ut på alle lugarer til passasjerene kom om bord i New Orleans til ny rundtur.

Information to Passengers on the Cargo-Liner M/S "Nopal Progress"



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If you are the lucky person in the process of taking a voyage, here are some nautical notes, and a code of conduct that may possibly enable you to feel at home on – say, a freighter.

Don't ever call a seagoing vessel a boat, unless you desperately want burial at sea.

The hind end of the ship is called the stern, and the front end is the bow, not the head (which means the toilet). The beam is the widest part, the phrase "five degrees abaft the beam" doesn't concern you in the least.

Also, none of your business is the difference between the true and the magnetic north, why a red buoy is known as "Nun" and black buoy "Can", - or whether the Sputnik you observed last night was a Russian spy or a faithful American.

"Starboard" and "Port" are the two sides of the craft. If you are told to sit on port side, remain to the left till called for, and don't ask asinine questions.

Remember that when a ship's clock sounds eight bells, it is four, eight or twelve o'clock. You can figure out what time it is by sneaking a look at your wrist watch.

Inside dope: Four of the ship's men you may meet some day:

1. The Master. *A man who knows a great deal about very little, and who goes along knowing more and more about less and less, until finally he knows practically everything about nothing.*

2. The Chief Engineer. A man who knows very little about a great deal, and who goes along knowing less and less about more and more, until finally he knows practically nothing about everything.

3. The Chief Officer starts out knowing everything about everything, but ends up knowing nothing about anything, due mainly to lack of sleep, and to his association with the Captain and the Chief Engineer.

4. The Chief Steward is the person who constantly tries to avoid you (if you don't avoid him), and is scared to death that you may ask "What are we having for dinner tonight?" (If you don't know what you are paying for, how do you expect him to know?)
He is also the right person to ask all the silly questions you really don't care to know the answers to anyhow!

As to general behavior, don't monkey with the fire-extinguishers, avoid blowing the horn, and don't do the twist – unless passing through a typhoon – when the skipper is looking. If you find yourself giving in to any of these impulses, lay off those Martini's.

Incidentally, don't shout "Man over board" unless you find yourself in the drink for using such words as "ahoy", "aye, aye" and "downstairs".

You will certainly get acquainted with the attitudes "yaw", "pitch" and "rock & roll" of the ship. When you have to walk down the stairs to get up, and up to get down, the weather may be a little bad. But this is not any conversation-piece at the table.
Remember: The weather is always "ah, so wonderful!"

The blue-green face in your mirror assures you that a square piece of fresh, white pork on a string – slowly up and down your throat – is the best remedy for seasickness. When the pink elephants start to walk the railings, you better turn around and face the prohibition.

Don't start that flirt! An attractive mermaid (or merboy) may appear later in the night.

When the Captain talks about "She", he does not mean HER, but the Ship. The Captain usually has his own method of approach to a subject. In oriental fashion he appreciates your courteous refusal to rush him in any way. In his own good time, he may be willing to elaborate the theme of life on any one of the Seven Seas.

Also, once aboard, don't leave the ship if you don't want the ship to leave you!

And finally, never ask where the ship is going, nor when it will arrive. It is none of your cottonpicking business!!

Bon Voyage!

Etterord

De fleste av passasjerene vi lærte å kjenne i Nopal Line var romslige folk som satte pris på en spøk og en god historie i den ofte litt rolige tilværelsen underveis mellom havnene. Som ellers i verden fantes naturligvis unntakene. En pensjonert lærerinne oppe fra Midt-Vesten et sted tok imidlertid "informasjonsarket" litt for bokstavelig, og ga uttrykk for sin misnøye med både form og språkbruk i såpass tydelige ordelag overfor skipperen at han erklærte "informasjonsprosjektet" som lite egnet for fremtidige turer....

Men så var det opprinnelsen til teksten?

Det kan jeg ikke lenger huske, men det er naturlig å tenke at Per Gundersen kunne ha hatt den med fra en av Klaveness-båtene. Referansen bl.a. til Sputnik - den første dukket jo opp i 1957 - kan tyde på at den skriver seg fra årene rundt 1960.

Kanskje kan noen blant tidligere Klaveness-seilere gi svaret på dette?



Stuert Per Gundersen, opprinnelig Larviks-gutt, men bosatt på Hisøya ved Arendal en stor del av sitt voksne liv, seilte i en årrekke på linjebåtene i Klaveness før han på slutten av 60-tallet kom over på Sør-Amerika-båtene i Nopal Line. Han var en mann med smittende humør, stor fortellerglede og et vell av gode historier, og en som tok seg av både besetning og passasjerer på beste måte. På kvelder i sjøen kunne han også stille opp med gitaren i offisersmessa, eller innlede til allsang for å få opp stemningen når passasjerene var samlet i barsalongen etter middagen.

På bildet gir min gode venn gjennom nærmere 40 år noen ekstra omdreininger på Marna'en i sin kjære sjekte i rolig kystfart i Arendals-skjærgården en gang på 90-tallet. Han gikk bort i april 2008.