



## THE FORTNIGHTLY DELIGHTFULLY BRIEF, PITHY AND WHOLLY IDIOSYNCRATIC NEWSLETTER.



### ***Delightfully Brief***

Returning from holiday is always both a challenge – [why do I have to do this again?] – and a delight -- [time to get back to what I have convinced myself I love to do]. I have heard others have similar feelings. Brevity is the soul of wit, so I shall soulfully write about my alma mater, The US Merchant Marine Academy. She is in trouble – but the pumps are back on line, the wind is on the bow as the weather moderates and some attempts are being made down

below to get the plant up. Let us hope there is success. Why? The country needs Kings Point? Why? It is simple: without Kings Point there is no hope whatsoever for the maritime industry in the World's Greatest Banana republic to succeed – brown water, blue water, designer label water. It makes no difference. How can this be?

### ***Pithy***

The Academy provides the leadership for the country in all water-bourne shipping and transport, which is necessary for trade. Trade is what makes the United States strong. The country works on a federal system. States do local things well. The federal government does national things. Can the state

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How may Cartner & Fiske help you?

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schools do what a federal school does? No. The parochialism of the state schools comes through in the training and education – what is good for Maine, Massachusetts, the Great Lakes, the rivers, California and even Texas. Kings Point is a federal school. Why should the federal government fund private industry? It does not. It funds training in a classical way for people who run an industry deeply and inextricably intermeshed with national security, national defence, international trade, finance and the environment in ways wholly unlike any other industry. The finding creates federally-oriented holistic leaders. Other Academies may produce intelligent federally-oriented chest-beaters such as the Army school and that boat school in Maryland. Kings Point produces educated leaders in trade and policy holism, which makes this country work. We work the economy. No other Academy does that. We understand how the pieces go together. No other Academy does that. We cram five years of education into four with a year at sea - *i.e.*, adolescents become mature adults immediately. No other academy does that. Yes, we are the fallback producer of commissioner officers. We are the producer of those who understand trade and – by the way – can exercise their military duties too – they are not rocket science. We are unique. We are essential. We are not a luxury. We are necessary.

We now have a new Superintendent. He has exactly what we need. His background and education have taught him how the country works. His West Point credentials are not necessary but sufficient to understand how a regimental system works. His graduate credentials and experience are much more important. He knows how the world works in ways Kings Pointers must know how the world works. Far from being merely an Army retired colonel, he is a man of wisdom and humility who viscerally as well as rationally understands why and how Kings Point is necessary. Far from being a factotum of the Secretary of Transportation, here is a man who, when that Secretary leaves after the elections, will stand on his own and carry out a vision of the future not embodied in some poorly-written and jargonized strategic plan but a vision of the uniqueness and necessity of Kings Point to the national security in the broadest sense: leadership to run the trade of the nation. Is the USMS important? No. It is an artefact -- but one which rewards with a rank the man holding it. Rear Admiral Helis deserves it, earned it and will exercise the position properly, with consummate integrity, with honor and with the splendid leadership for the school – which has sorely needed it in these troubling times.

## Book Sale

*Defending Against Pirates* is now on sale! We are offering the PDF version for \$75.00, and the PDF and hardcover book bundle for \$125.00. That is a 35% discount just for my long-suffering readers! Click [here](#) to place your order!

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### **Wholly Idiosyncratic**

If I were Superintendent: I would clean house without mercy. The bureaucrats at Kings Point need a good purging of the gene pool. Many of the problems of the school can be placed squarely and directly on the politicized inbreeding of the staff, its generalized lack of full competence, its ingrained lassitude, and its mediocre to muddling performance in even simple assignments. The second task is to look at the faculty. The basely agrammatical, nay ignorant, "strategic plan" made public is a clear indication that a similar purging needs to happen within the faculty. One would hope that reading, writing and ciphering would be at least a minimal qualification of the faculty member of the future. Ships – even the wrong ones – are a nice touch. Bricks and mortar are nice to keep the rain out. With human capital returning a negative yield, however, it is awfully hard to lead well. This is Rear Admiral Helis' greatest challenge – but one in which I have no doubt that he will succeed.

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### **Urgings**

If you are not a member, sign up for [FOB](#) -- the dedicated networking site. It is a lot better than the infinite number of groups in LinkedIn -- and the more than infinite numbers of conversations and discussions.

Watch [Maritime TV](#). Come see that 80% of what we know comes from visual input and Maritime TV is the best maritime visual input. Give it a try!

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.

John A. C. Cartner  
Managing Member,  
Cartner & Fiske, LLC

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Cartner & Fiske, LLC consults in maritime and related law, naval architecture and marine engineering and maritime economics and trade.

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