

Editorial

On behalf of the entire Hydro international team, I wish you a healthy and prosperous New Year. And to those readers who celebrate the start of a new year on a date other than 1st January, our best wishes are meant for you too, both now and then. As Hydro international is mailed to more than 170 countries I realise that this may pertain to quite a number of you.

The current shortage of skilled and appropriately educated professionals is causing more and more concern in the hydrographic industry, especially as there is well above average representation of the "grey hair"™ generation. If we remain unable to attract new generations of surveyors the productivity of the industry will be threatened. So in order to survive with good quality, professional people, recruitment strategies have to come high on the list of priorities.

To attract youngsters to our (technical) profession we have to engage their interest at a young age, especially as technical studies are not the most popular nowadays. Interest can be aroused by giving information at schools (see e.g. the classroom@sea " project) (website 1) but also by exposure to "role models"; see for example Venessa O'Connell featuring in "ace day jobs"™ (website 2) in a linguistic style that I think appeals to the young. And, moreover, representing a female role model. For let us not forget that 50% of the population is female, a resource hardly tapped by our industry (and, difficult though it may be for our male-dominated profession to accept, girls do better in science than boys). We have placed women in the spotlight before (see issue November 2006 the Belgian Hydrographer, and December 2006, an interview with two Australian commanders). In this issue we feature two young women newly embarking upon their careers in hydrography.

In advertising our profession we must disseminate concerted collective information concerning the whole profession, not scattered facts about branches of it, hydrographic surveyors, geophysicists etc. Remarks in the aforementioned interview confessing to complete ignorance of the hydrographic service before actually being stationed on one of its ships, and similar comments in this issue, must alert us to the fact that a lot has to be done to promote our profession. For those planning promotional activities, World Hydrography Day on 21st June is just one occasion at which to beat the publicity drum for hydrography.

However, recruitment is only part of the problem. As with your beer tap, you first have to put in the plug before opening the tap; and measures must also be taken to keep people in the industry.

To close, I should like to introduce Mirjam Snellen as a new member of the editorial board. She received her MSc degree in 1995 from the Faculty of Aerospace Engineering at Delft University of Technology and then joined the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Research (TNO) where she worked in Underwater Acoustics. Since 2003 she has been an assistant professor in Hydrography at Delft University of Technology. One of her current research interests lies in the development of acoustic remote-sensing techniques for sea and river-floor classification.

Enjoy reading,

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