

California Maritime Academy Library

# Interview with Clay Petroff & James Yanak

Oral History Project

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

## Preface

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Clay Petroff and James Yanak conducted by Patrick Wehan and Kyle Carpenter on October 6, 2012. This interview is part of the Cal Maritime Oral History Project.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

Both Clay Petroff and James Yanak are graduates of the class of 1982, Deck

## Abbreviation

**CP:** Clay Petroff  
**JY:** James Yanak  
**PW:** Patrick Wehan  
**KC:** Kyle Carpenter

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

## Interview Outline

- 00:51 How did you enjoy your time here?
- 01:49 Do you have a memory of a fun experience or crazy time you shared with your shipmates?
- 02:19 How many students were in your graduating class?
- 02:50 Do you keep in touch with the friends that you made at Cal Maritime?
- 03:27 How many cruises were you required to go on to complete the deck officer program?
- 04:29 Where did you go on your training cruises and what are some fond memories you have from these cruises?
- 05:32 What made the cruise to Tonga and New Zealand so memorable?
- 06:44 When you crossed the international date line and the equator, do you remember the Golden Shellback ceremony?
- 09:42 Upon graduation, did you sail or did you pursue an inland water position?
- 11:34 Did your training here at Cal Maritime completely prepare you for your career?  
Was there still a lot of learning to do after graduation?
- 13:04 Was there one area that you would say was lacking in your training?
- 14:58 What was the mess deck like when you were at Cal Maritime?
- 15:55 What are some things you did with your free time at Cal Maritime?
- 16:36 How were the major sporting events? Was it difficult playing other schools because of the size of our school?
- 18:12 What were the class rivalries like between the engineering and the deck side?  
Were the rivalries different during training cruises?
- 19:23 Do you remember any pranks between the deck and engine side?
- 21:09 What do you remember about the Corps, as divisional officers?  
What made you step up to be leaders?  
Do you remember any of the responsibilities?
- 22:42 What are some of your memories of standing watch on campus?
- 23:45 Did the upper class treat the underclass pretty well and watch over them or was there any hostility between the two?

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

24:44 What were the dorms like while you were at Cal Maritime?

25:38 Did you work in the maritime industry while you attended school?

27:13 What has been your most rewarding job thus far in your career?

30:04 What do you think of the campus since you attended Cal Maritime, including the recent improvements and the planned improvements?

31:30 If you could change one thing about the social life or curriculum from when you attended, what would it be?

34:24 If you could tell current Cal Maritime students one piece of advice for the future or for their career, what would you say?

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

## Interview

**KC:** All right, today is October 6th, 2012. We have Captain Clay Petroff here. Interviewer is Pat Wehan and recording personnel is Kyle Carpenter. We are in the library at California Maritime Academy.

**CP:** And James Yanak.

**KC:** And James Yanak, all right.

**PW:** Both Class of [19]62?

**CP:** [19]82.

**JY:** [19]82.

**KC:** [19]82, all right.

**PW:** How long did you guys have to attend CMA before you were an officer in the merchant marines?

**CP:** Four years.

**JY:** Four years

**PW:** Four years? Were you required to serve in the military upon graduation from CMA?

**CP:** Not at that time it was a voluntary thing.

[00:51]

**PW:** How did you enjoy your time here?

**JY:** I had fun, you know, it had its moments, but the memories you're never gonna forget. It, I think, made you ready to go out to sea. They challenged you. You'll find out that when you do go out that it's moments, it's long periods of sheer boredom and seconds of sheer terror, and in those seconds of sheer terror you can't think of what you're gonna do you have to know what you have to do and you have react.

**CP:** I would say overall I enjoyed it, the time here, the first year I didn't like it so much, probably because I was pretty young and pretty homesick. But yeah, definitely, as you started to get close to your classmates and kind of got into the program, definitely the last three years I really enjoyed it a lot.

[01:49]

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**PW:** Do you guys have any like one moment or memory that you have with, you know, the fun experience or one thing that sticks out with you and all your shipmates? Something crazy that happened or--

**CP:** The Girl Scouts?

**JY:** Yeah.

**PW:** What?

**CP:** Flashin' the Girl Scouts Jamboree, streaking through the Girl Scouts Jamboree, you know

**PW:** Was this on campus?

**JY:** Yes it was.

**PW:** Okay, that's great.

**CP:** We never got caught.

**JY:** No, until now.

[02:19]

**PW:** Do you remember how many students, like, a rough number of how many students were in your graduating class?

**CP:** 72.

**JY:** Yep, we started with what, about 90 or 105?

**CP:** 100 and something, yeah 100, 110. I don't remember, but I remember when we graduated, we were 72. Some of the guys went up, some of the guys, the attrition got a few, some of the guys were from the class below that had transfer credits from other schools, so all in all we had 72.

[02:50]

**PW:** Mmhmm. Okay this question applies to both of you, do you guys still keep in touch with most of your friends you made at CMA or do you feel like you've lost a lot of relationships?

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**CP:** Lost a lot, yeah, you keep in touch with a few, mostly you run into a few in the industry.

**PW:** Right.

**CP:** We all work in or most of us still work in the industry so we run into guys, but yeah, that's probably, the downside is probably we didn't keep in touch as much as we should've.

**PW:** But when you do see each other, it's like time hasn't passed.

**CP:** It's like, yeah, it's like old times, you don't miss a beat.

[03:27]

**PW:** That's great. How many cruises were you required to go on to complete the deck officer program?

**CP:** Three, but I think it was the year before our class, they started the program where you could take a commercial cruise. So, I did, my senior year, I did a commercial cruise but the other two were on the training ship, that was the old training ship. But you did all three of them on the training ship.

**JY:** I did all three of them and then it was my sophomore year I had enough credits, so I took the winter off and I went and worked for offshore logistics out of Louisiana. I actually went and sailed and got paid for it and helped me with school and then, from there on out, I was able to work every break I wanted to.

**CP:** Yeah, that was good.

**PW:** So, this was in between going to school? Or was this--

**JY:** No, I took the winter semester off my sophomore year.

**CP:** He had credits to transfer, not enough to advance to the class ahead of you

**JY:** No.

**CP:** but enough to take a trimester off. Is it still trimester system here?

**PW:** It's a semester system.

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**CP:** Mmhmm.

[04:29]

**PW:** Where did you guys go on some of these cruises and what were some the fondest memories you guys have on these trips?

**CP:** First one was Seattle, Portland, I think it was Seattle, Portland

**JY:** Yeah.

**CP:** I knew it was Portland, Manzanillo, or, no it's Mazatlan,

**JY:** Mazatlan.

**CP:** Mazatlan, Panama,

**JY:** Senior Frogs?

**CP:** Yeah, New Orleans. I think that was it, San Diego.

**JY:** Yeah.

**CP:** Second one was, our junior year was

**JY:** Hawaii

**CP:** Tonga, Hawaii, Tonga, Samoa, New Zealand, I don't remember.

**JY:** and the third one

**CP:** The third one, yeah.

**JY:** we went up to Sacramento,

**CP:** Yeah, we did Sacramento.

**JY:** We went to Seattle, God, I'm drawing a blank.

**CP:** I don't know where you went on that third one.

**JY:** Yeah, I can't remember.

**CP:** You went to South America. You guys went to South--



Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**JY:** No, no, we didn't go to Chile, we didn't go to South America, but we probably went to Hawaii. I don't know, but I think the best cruise was at Tonga, Tonga and New Zealand.

**CP:** Yeah, Tonga and New Zealand.

[05:32]

**PW:** What made it so good or memorable?

**CP:** Well, New Zealand was great because they had a union strike while we were there so we couldn't leave

- Right.

**CP:** and at that time, I don't know if it's still the case, but certainly the Kiwis liked us, so, particularly if we were wearing uniforms, they still had fond memories, I guess, of World War Two or something, I don't know.

- Yeah.

**CP:** I don't know, but you couldn't buy a drink,

- No.

**CP:** You walk into a bar and you were drinking for free.

- Did you go out to the dirt track races with us?

**CP:** No.

- We had people that just took us in, they wouldn't let us buy anything, they'd feed us, take us in, and we spent, Sammy, Kirk, and myself and some other guys ran in the group, they were all racers, so we spent a whole weekend out at these dirt track races. It was just great. They wanted motors sent here, sent to them 'cause taxes were so high. But it was fun, definitely fun, Tonga was a kick.

**CP:** Yeah,

- Remember Carl Ovio?

**CP:** Tonga was a kick too, that was a good cruise, very interesting. Yeah, that was definitely most memorable out of those.

[06:44]

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**PW:** So, you guys crossed the equator, I'm assuming?

**JY:** Golden Shellbacks!

**PW:** Golden Shellbacks, I was gonna ask, that was my next question is the international dateline,

**CP:** Yep.

**JY:** Yep.

**PW:** So, at the same exact time, that's golden shellback? Do you guys remember the ceremony that took place or?

**JY:** Oh yeah, I was made a special case.

**CP:** It was pretty disgusting, yeah.

**PW:** Can you guys explain it, or do you not want to?

**JY:** Oh no, no, I have no problem with it. I remember a few days before they made you wear your cloths inside out.

**CP:** Yeah.

**JY:** You couldn't eat with your utensils. We had many food fights down in the thing, all the seniors, remember Sammy and Perry and Brunson? They got the fire hoses and they made them three foot long and they came in to beat on us.

**CP:** Yeah, we had to go through a gauntlet.

**JY:** Well, we ended up beating the seniors up; we got all their fire hoses and beat the crap out of them. So, we were made special cases.

**CP:** They covered us with lard, I remember that, 'cause I still had lard in places on my body a week later.

**JY:** You came up the port side, you came up the port side on your hands and knees and they hit you with the fire hoses, right on the butt, right on the back, and then they put a safety belt, remember the life raft, the whale's ass hole.

**CP:** Yeah, yeah

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**JY:** And so we had to go through the whale's ass hole and I got out and one of the seniors, Wolway, remember him?

**CP:** Yeah.

**JY:** Was giving me crap, I grabbed him and I pulled him back in, I pulled him in the seniors were already shellbacks, so they pulled me two or three times, and then the sea baby, where they put the lard, what was it, it was lard,

**CP:** Yeah it was lard.

**JY:** and hot sauce?

**CP:** Hot Tabasco sauce.

**JY:** Tabasco sauce, big fat guy and just took his head and, just rubbed it all in there, you got it in your nose, in your mouths, ears, and everywhere.

**CP:** I had it all over.

**PW:** So, a guy had it on him,

**CP:** Oh yeah, he just--

**PW:** on his body and then forced you.

**CP:** He was the sea hag, I don't remember who the sea hag was, but it might have been Deena.

**JY:** Yeah, you're right, it was, Deena Johnson.

**CP:** My roommate was a senior, and he was on that cruise, so he took a little extra delight in--

**JY:** Crucifying you?

**CP:** Cathguard,

**JY:** Jimmy? Oh God yes

**CP:** Beating the living snot out of me, so, anyway, it was good.

**JY:** Yeah. Yeah, when we found out, when I heard that they were no longer doing it, I was--

**CP:** Oh, they don't do that anymore?

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**JY:** No, no that ended about two years after we had graduated.

**CP:** Oh, oh that's too bad.

**JY:** That was a part of the school and a tradition I'm really sorry that was lost,

**CP:** Yeah, that's, you know--

**JY:** Seafarers for eons had done that.

**CP:** Oh sure, and they still do.

**JY:** Nope, not anymore.

**CP:** Well, the guys on the commercial ships still do, they still have a little ceremony out there.

**JY:** Right, mmhmm.

[09:42]

**PW:** So, upon graduation, did you guys sail or did you pursue an inland water position?

**CP:** I sailed, I actually sailed as an AB up in Alaska on anchor handling tugs for about four or five months before I got my Biel.

**JY:** That was Biel?

**CP:** Yeah.

**JY:** Biel offshore,

**CP:** Biel offshore, then I moved up to third mate from there and did that for basically, was up there off and on for about four years in the same company, then they wrapped that up, and then sailed RO/ROs through AMO, made the district two, and eventually a 'tween decker and sailed master and did that until basically I got out of shipping in [19]95.

**PW:** Do you have your Master's Unlimited or?

**JY:** Yep. Again, I stayed with offshore logistics, the company I that started with while I was here, sailed with them for a couple of years and since I had time with them, I stayed as third mate and sailed as chief mate, did some deliveries around the world and Clay and I ended up meeting each other in Port Hueneme.

**CP:** I remember that.

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**JY:** I was working out of, basically domiciled out of Port Hueneme and you, what was, was that the blue fin?

**CP:** That was the Biel.

**JY:** That was the Biel offshore?

**CP:** Yeah.

**JY:** I thought it was a fin boat.

**CP:** No.

**JY:** So, you know, you ran into people. I sailed with a lot of guys, ex-CMA grads.

**CP:** Yeah, likewise, I sailed with a lot of CMA guys.

**JY:** You know, guys who came the year after myself who graduated in [19]83, they were working down there, so we're chief mates so we're teaching them the ropes.

**CP:** Chief engineer on the training ship, Bill Davidson, we sailed together.

[11:34]

**PW:** Right, yeah. That's great. Did your training here at CMA completely prepare you for your career or did you find that there was still a lot of learning to do once you guys graduated?

**CP:** There was a lot of learning to do, particularly on the commercial side of shipping, but as far as the practical, operational, get in and run a watch, that sort of thing, definitely, the CMA definitely trained us well for that, probably the best out of the academies, in my opinion, and that's based on also sailing as Master and having kids come in from other schools. Definitely the CMA guys tended to be the best, you know, watchstanders, navigators, understood, you know, the protocols on the ship and got after it. But on the commercial side, I think that probably CMA was probably a bit lacking in understanding really the commercial aspects, charter-parties, bills of ladings, understanding trade, what facilitates trade, what happens to the cargo, both to the ship and when it leaves the ship, and understanding how that works. That's just as much a part of shipping as, you know, getting on a ship, so. And a lot of the guys that come out of the school, that's where a lot of the opportunities are, and I don't think, at least when I was there, they didn't adequately train us on that. We ended up kinda having to learn ourselves, which was not a big deal, but I thought that was a little bit lacking.

[13:04]

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**PW:** If there was one area that you could say that was lacking or, like, not fulfilled here, what would you say that would be?

**CP:** Let's say, well, when I was at school, it was the chartering side. I don't think they spent enough time on chartering, understanding, the, you know--

**PW:** Charter-parties?

**CP:** Charter-parties, well chartering, the whole process: chartering AA, you know, sales and purchase on ships, chartering ships, time charter, spot charter, you know, voyage charter where it's just based on cargo, all that sort of thing, just understanding the commercial side of shipping, we gave it a kind of a quick--

**JY:** Brush-over.

**CP:** quick brush-over, so you had the real basic concepts but it wasn't until, I guess, later in life where you really had to knuckle under and really understand that a bit better and I have talked to that problem with some men, looking at some of the guys that came out of the other schools, they seem to understand that a little bit better. Maybe that's just me, maybe I gave it too much of a brush-over.

**JY:** No, I think back, you know, when we were going to school, it was the old train of thought, is, you had a deck officer, you had an engineering officer, so--

**CP:** Yeah, it definitely just prepared you for ships.

**JY:** Yeah, yeah, and so you didn't have the business management or international business studies, like Clay was talking about, at that point, that was not their objective, I don't think.

**CP:** No.

**JY:** It was to put officers out and only officers, and I think they did a good job.

**CP:** I definitely think CMA prepared you the best for navigation

**JY:** Yep.

**CP:** and that sort of thing, for watchstanding, definitely the best navigators;

**JY:** Mmhmm.

**CP:** You know, we had, bar none, the best navigating instructors here at the school.

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**JY:** Greg Newton.

**CP:** Greg Newton.

**JY:** Yep.

**CP:** Yeah.

[14:58]

**PW:** Okay, what was the mess deck like when you guys attended CMA?

**JY:** Mystery meat, remember that?

**CP:** Mystery meat, yeah. Horse cock.

**JY:** Hey, it kept us alive, you know, they had some good meals, they had some bad meals, and you just learned what to eat and then, you know, if you had a job you were able to stuff, stuff food in your refrigerator, if you were lucky enough to have on up in your room.

**CP:** Yeah.

**JY:** You know?

**CP:** Is that right?

**JY:** Yeah.

**CP:** It's campus fare. It probably hasn't changed.

**PW:** Yep. Have you guys eaten since you guys graduated or?

**CP:** Here at the Academy?

**PW:** Yeah, here at the mess deck.

**JY:** Yes, I have. I've come back a couple of times, as a guest speaker.

**PW:** How'd you enjoy it?

**CP:** It hasn't changed, see, and you two are staying thin, so that tells me something, huh?

**JY:** And you don't see too many heavy people on campus.

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**CP:** No, you don't.

[15:55]

**PW:** So, what were some of the things you guys did with your free time at CMA?

**CP:** Well, we carried pretty full loads, we didn't have a lot of free time, I played water polo.

**JY:** I played soccer.

**CP:** He played soccer.

**JY:** We were, our loads were 17 to 22 units,

**CP:** Yeah.

**JY:** every trimester.

**CP:** I worked at the bookstore.

**JY:** So did I. Natty, who was the guy that owned it?

**CP:** Wolf.

**JY:** Yeah, Wolf, you know we both worked for her and made some extra cash.

**CP:** Yeah, so, that was pretty much all the free time you had.

**JY:** I came for--

**CP:** I spent a lot of time right here in the library, I can tell you that.

**JY:** Yep.

[16:36]

**PW:** The next question kind of relates to the sports you guys played, like how were the major sporting events and did you guys compete well or was it difficult playing other schools just 'cause of the size of our school?

**CP:** No, water polo we competed very well. I mean, we're water orientated, most of the kids were from California, so we played in tournaments and usually did very well in the tournaments against some pretty good schools, you know, we competed with the likes of EOP, which, as of last week, was ranked number eight in the country here and now, so



Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

you could see, even back then, they were a good school. We played UNLV and held our own very well. In fact, I think we beat 'em. So yeah, we did very well on the water polo side, we had a couple of kids that were JC all Americans, pretty high up, and all of us, you know, played in high school, so we had a very, very good team.

**JY:** Soccer was the same way. We were an independent school, so we could play wherever we could get a game. And we played a lot of Division 2 teams, some of them, Sac and Davis; they were rated in the top 10. Sac I think we lost three to two, And Davis, yeah, they put a hurtin' on us but, you know, for a school of 350 kids to go up against a nationally rated Division Two school where you have 25,000, we held our own.

**PW:** We're both on the soccer team, so we understand.

**CP:** You are, huh?

[18:12]

**PW:** So, what were the class rivalries like when you guys attended, you know, the engineering and the deck side?

**CP:** Aw, it was pretty good, probably more so than it is now, it's a lot of name calling, they were the snipes, and they called us deckies.

**JY:** Yeah, that was the best term they called us.

**CP:** Yeah, basically, that was the only one I could say on camera.

**JY:** Yes, yeah.

**CP:** Yeah, nah, it was pretty good but I mean, listen, we all got along pretty good at the end of the day, probably half of my friends were engineers

**JY:** Yep.

**CP:** and they still are, so.

**PW:** What was it like on cruise? Was it a little bit more rivalrous or less, or did you guys kind of set things aside on cruise or how'd that work?

**CP:** Yeah, 'cause, you know, we're running in different circles, you know, on cruise the deck side was concentrating on things completely different, you never even saw the engineers and then it was time to go ashore, you know, you pair up with whoever was pairing up, it didn't matter whether they were deckie or engine, you just get in a group together.

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**JY:** You didn't have a lot of free time on cruise,

**CP:** Yeah, not really.

**JY:** you know it was--

**CP:** Particularly on the old Bear, because it was a lot of maintenance, it was an old ship.

**JY:** She was cool.

**CP:** Yeah.

[19:23]

**PW:** Is there any memorable pranks that stick out in you guys' heads, like, that the deck side did to the engineer side or vice versa?

**CP:** Pranks?

**PW:** Yeah.

**JY:** You know, not that I really... oh yes, hell yes I do.

**CP:** You'll have to remind me.

**JY:** We had, coming down from Seattle, we had some news reporters on and the whole way down, this was our senior year, it was like a mill pond, so we did a man overboard drill, and so it was myself, JD, ID had the boat that day to go out and do this man overboard drill, so we came back and rescued it. And it was Ernie, I think, was down in the engine room, we came up and got the forward painter and came sheered alongside, well the damn engineers hit the overboard sewage discharge right into the freaking boat. We sheered off real quick came back, and yeah, we had some brown trout floating in the boat and stuff and was pretty pissed off. The deckies got up on the boat, we almost got back on the Bear and almost got into it but that was the one and only time I can really remember.

**CP:** That old ship, they used to have like a half pipe on the side of the ship. We used to have to paint all the time, you guys probably still have to do, hang over on boats and chairs and paint the side of the hull and you had to watch that thing 'cause you never knew when that thing was gonna--

- Or when someone knew that you were over and were gonna flip the switch on you.

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**CP:** Even though they weren't going to do it in the bay, you always had in the back of your mind that I don't want to be underneath that thing when it goes.

[21:09]

**PW:** How do you guys remember the Corps, you both stated that you were divisional officers?

**CP:** He was a division commander, I was a--

- XO.

**CP:** section leader, or XO or something, XO.

- You were the XO.

**CP:** XO, that's right.

**PW:** What made you guys step up and be the leaders?

**CP:** We only had six people in our division.

- No, that was for the seniors, but in the whole division, were 40, about 40 or 45.

**CP:** Yeah yeah yeah, no, I'm talking about the senior class

- Yeah.

**CP:** but somebody had to do it, so.

- You, JD, myself, Jack, Don Jack,

**CP:** No, it was Craig Rosenbaum, section leader.

- Yeah, no, no, it was Deena, yeah seniors I think there was only six or seven of us, at the most.

**PW:** Do you guys remember some of the responsibilities that you guys had to carry because of your leadership positions?

**CP:** I don't really, he had more than I did.

- You know, on cruises, it was more so on the cruises.

**CP:** and I didn't go on that cruise so,

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

- Yeah.

**CP:** Yeah, you're absolutely right, that's when it really the responsibilities, because you really had to keep, you know, guys in line and making sure everybody, 'cause everything was passed through channels and making sure everything was passed properly.

- Disseminating information,

**CP:** disseminating, and making sure the guys did what they were supposed to be doing.

- Yeah, that was good for, that was good training, you know, to carry on later in life, not even on the ships but, you know, where I am working currently.

**CP:** Mmhmm.

[22:42]

**PW:** What were some of your most common memories of watch, do you guys remember?

**CP:** Of watch?

**PW:** Yeah, like, were there any--

**CP:** On campus?

**PW:** Yeah, on campus. Do you guys remember doing anything special on watch or were there any pranks that you guys pulled on the underclassmen, especially the freshman coming in, or was it pretty strict and serious?

**CP:** I don't remember doing much, I remember that we used to have this little postal truck, remember that thing that we used to drive around campus?

**JY:** Oh yeah, yeah. The little Jeep.

**CP:** The little watch truck, it was a little jeep

**JY:** Yeah.

**CP:** One they used, I guess, in the post office or something. I remember--

**JY:** We inherited that thing.

**CP:** Yeah we inherited that thing; I remember that thing breaking down.

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**JY:** Yeah 'cause you used to have watches on the ship, you had watches up at the main gate, and, as a senior, you had to make sure everyone was awake and that watches were being maintained,

**CP:** Yeah

**JY:** being done. No, you know I don't ever remember really seriously screwing around with anyone.

**CP:** Yeah, we took it pretty seriously.

[23:45]

**PW:** So generally, the upper class treated the underclass pretty well and kinda watched over them or was there any hostility between the two?

**CP:** There's some, was a little bit of hazing, I think.

**JY:** Oh yeah.

**CP:** But it wasn't too bad, you know, nothing that stands out in my mind. It might stand out in their mind, but--

**PW:** You guys don't remember any of it?

**JY:** Oh, you know, just,

**CP:** I remember when I was getting hazed;

**JY:** Yeah.

**CP:** I don't remember

**JY:** No.

**CP:** us doing the hazing as much.

**JY:** Things kinda starting changing at the end of the [19]70's, beginning of the [19]80's. I can just remember some of the parties and stuff where we would have fun with some of the freshman, you know you're 18 years old, first time away from Mommy, and get them all gassed up.

**CP:** It's all right, it's no different than any other school.

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

[24:44]

**PW:** What were the dorms like while you guys were at CMA?

**CP:** They were okay, the first couple of years I lived in the old res.

**JY:** No, you didn't live on the ship, our first year we didn't live on the ship?

**CP:** Nope, I lived in the old res, and then the last two years I lived in the new res, the far end of campus. It was pretty quiet, I don't know.

**JY:** The first year I think I was, were we all in the old residence hall?

**CP:** We were all in the old res,

**JY:** Okay.

**CP:** Yeah, nah, I remember that.

**JY:** Years before, before they built the new residence hall, the underclassmen slept on the ship, on the Golden Bear.

**CP:** That was the year before us, yeah.

**JY:** Yeah, that's right.

**PW:** And the upperclass got to sleep in the dorms, is that right?

**JY:** Right.

**CP:** They were actually only, I don't think the new res' were not that old when we moved in, when we were here.

**JY:** That's right, that's right.

[25:38]

**PW:** So, I know you guys already answered this question, but what was your work like while you guys attended school?

**JY:** You mean in terms of class load?

**PW:** Did you work in the maritime industry while you guys attended school? I know you took a semester off.

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**CP:** Yeah, I mean, I did some work out on the Bay, but not a lot, I mean, I was--

**PW:** You had to focus on school?

**CP:** Yeah, school, I got paid while I did my quote-unquote shifting when I did the commercial cruise. I was paid 25 bucks a day, which was, at that time, a lot of money. Then I did my internship between my junior and senior year, I did down in Mexico and got paid while I was down there.

**PW:** What were you doing while you were down there?

**CP:** I worked for Jackson Marine, what did I do? My job was to pick up, they were an oil company, an oil services company, and so they had tug boats, and regular supply boats, and that sort of thing, crew boats for servicing PMX that had a lot of big rigs out in the gulf, my job was actually to pick up the incoming people and they were coming from Norway, and Scotland, and US, whisk 'em through immigration and get 'em over to the crew boats, so I drove a Toyota van for basically four weeks, five weeks, that was my job. What that had to do with the maritime industry, I don't know, but it was good paying, so.

[27:13]

**PW:** So, what has been your most rewarding job thus far in your career, would you say, like, the most entertaining, the most memorable, the best shipmates, overall what would you guys say would be your best position after you guys graduated?

**CP:** For me, it would be probably when I was chief mate on the Norsac Ranger, I'd say that was probably the closest group of people, in fact, Bill Davidson was on there, you know, it was probably the closest group of people I still keep in touch with, if I put it that way. So, I was there for two years, so.

**PW:** Did a lot of the crew members attend CMA or?

**CP:** No, there wasn't that many CMA guys, it was just a tight group. Unfortunately, a lot of them are Kingspoint guys, we'll let that slide, but yeah it was just a tight group.

**PW:** Do you feel like, when you sail, do you have a lot more in common with the guys that graduated from CMA or does that really play a part in your relationship with the shipmates you guys have?

**CP:** You have an initial thing in common the fact that you both went to CMA, but by-and-large the guys that are good guys are good guys regardless of where they went, so, particularly guys that are pretty switched on. I ended up sailing with a lot of guys from

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

Maine for some reason, so, they were really by-and-large pretty good, the guys I sailed with anyways.

**JY:** I have sailed with guys from Maine, Skylar, Mass, and Texas A&M.

**CP:** I see a lot of Texas A&M guys ashore,

**JY:** Mmhmm.

**CP:** I see a lot more Texas A&M guys ashore, just recently.

**JY:** Yeah, but mine was sailing as chief mate as well, I sailed with a crew for about 18, 20 months,

**PW:** At one point of time, without shore leave?

**JY:** Well, no. No, the longest I was at sea was 73 days without shore leave but there was just, you had worked with them so much as a chief mate, you didn't even say what needed to be done, you know, you really didn't, people took care of their job, and, you know, you have some personality issues in there but, you know, a lot of the old timers taught me the job working in the offshore world, you know, you go there as a mate, you have a good idea about watch standing but when you start doing cargo handling of that type, a lot of things isn't by the book, you know, Clay could tell you, working up in ice in the Cook Inlet, right, you know, schooling doesn't prepare you for that.

**CP:** No.

[30:04]

**PW:** So, what do you think of the campus since you guys attended CMA and what do you the recent improvements to the school as well as the planned improvements around the campus, I don't know if you guys have heard, but they're putting in a new cafeteria, a whole new bookstore, and a library?

**CP:** Oh, I hadn't heard that, no.

**JY:** No, I had just received this; last time I was here was at our last reunion, what was that the 25?

**CP:** That was the last time I was here too; 5 years ago, was the last time I was on campus.

**JY:** Yeah, and just looking at the map, I've seen, you know, what they're doin', I haven't been here in 5 years. My son just was here last spring, he's gonna start sailing, he is going to



Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

go up through the hawsepipe, so he came to the continuing adult education. I really haven't been in contact much, you know.

**CP:** I haven't seen that much, to be honest with you, but the campus looks great, but it always has.

**JY:** It looks smaller!

**CP:** Yeah, it looks smaller because there's so many more buildings since we were here but there's also a lot more people too. What's the student body now?

**PW:** It's almost, about 950.

**JY:** 950, yeah, we were a third of that.

**CP:** Yeah, we were, I think, when we graduated, we were at 450. So, it's, yeah, doubled.

**PW:** Yeah definitely, they redid Bodnar Field, it's all turf now.

**JY:** You're kidding me!

**PW:** Nah, and so I would definitely suggest going up there, it's awesome, they got a big keel hauler logo in the middle of the field.

**JY:** Really?

**PW:** Yeah.

**CP:** That's awesome.

**PW:** Yeah.

**CP:** Cool.

[31:30]

**PW:** So, if you guys could change one thing about the school or the deck program or anything at the school, what would that be? Well, at least from when you guys attended, like, what was one thing that you wish was different while you guys were here?

**CP:** What we wish was different for class, in terms of the curriculum?

**PW:** Anything, as far as, you know, social life or the curriculum or?

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**CP:** I don't think there was much of a social life while we were here.

**JY:** No, there wasn't actually.

**CP:** There was 13 women while we were here.

**JY:** What was the saying?

**CP:** 'm not going to say it.

**JY:** I'm not going to say it either.

**PW:** It's probably still the same.

**JY:** Yeah, you touched upon ship management, you know, the business management aspect of it.

**CP:** Yeah, the business side of shipping, I don't know, I mean, it was a different time while we were there. Really, it was kind of the end of an era, you know, coming, containerization was really being phased in in a big way and all of the, you know, multipurpose and 'tween deck type vessels and the ships that were carrying passengers with cargo and that sort of thing, they were getting phased out and so, you know, but the school at that time was still set up for that industry, it really wasn't set up for the, you know, the new industry, it wasn't set up for the fact that there was really gonna be a really huge decline in the US fleet either, I don't think they really saw that or had prepared for that, you know, flags of convenience were really starting to take off, and that sort of thing. So, we still had a fairly decent size merchant marine when we started school and guys were getting out, everybody was still sailing out of class of [19]79. [19]78, [19]79, they all got out, and when we finished school hardly anybody got out.

**JY:** In [19]82.

**CP:** In [19]82, yeah.

**JY:** Chevron used to be a big employer and Chevron has cut way back, it's two or three?

**CP:** I would honestly say, we had a class of [19]72, I would honestly say that probably, maybe, a handful of those people actually had a real, you know, career type jobs when they got out of school, you know. I didn't. I did a yacht delivery the day after I got out of school.

**PW:** So, you guys wish they would have prepared you for those scenarios better?

Interviewee: Clay Petroff & James Yanak  
Interviewer: Patrick Wehan & Kyle Carpenter  
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library  
Transcriber: Rev.com

**CP:** No, I don't know, I mean, it's crystal ball stuff, I don't think they could really foresee it, maybe they could, maybe they couldn't, but definitely it was a different industry when we got out from when we got in, I think.

**JY:** Yeah, and, you know, you gotta look at what was the economy like back then; you know, shipping kinda goes hand-in-hand with the economy.

**CP:** Yeah, the economy's pretty bad at the time.

**JY:** Yeah, you know, so.

[34:24]

**PW:** Okay, if you guys could tell the students who attend CMA currently one thing or one piece of advice for the future or for their career, what would you guys say?

**CP:** Just make the most of it, enjoy every day, ask a lot of questions, ask questions that are outside of, you know, what you would normally do, I don't know, enjoy it. It's a great experience, you know, and stay close to your classmates. I see some of the classes tended to stay closer than our class did, and I don't really, I don't know why, I mean, you'll see if you guys wander over, you'll hear us before you see us, you know, we're kind of an obnoxious, loud class when we are together, but we don't get together very often so.

**JY:** Yeah, that's probably why the train gets pulled a little harder than normal.

**CP:** So yeah, I mean, we're close when we are together, but we haven't really stayed all that close as a group, you know, as I'd like to, anyways.

**JY:** Make a mistake once, learn from it, don't make it again. That's about all I can say.

**CP:** Yeah, I would say just have fun, enjoy the academy; there's not many of 'em.

**JY:** Nope, it's a special place.

**PW:** All right.

[End of interview]