

# Coop<sup>The</sup> Scoop

4th Quarter, 2021



*Santa Claus waves from a decorated Crescent Towing tugboat on the Mississippi River during the Algiers Holiday Bonfire & Concert  
Photo: Sophia Gemer, NOLA.com*



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the COOPER GROUP of companies

# Gretchen V. Cooper Among Top 10 Vessels of 2021

Trade publication *WorkBoat* has announced its 10 Significant Boats of 2021, and we're honored to have the *Gretchen V. Cooper* included among them! From these 10 boats, the Boat of the Year will be selected on December 1 at the 2021 International WorkBoat Show in New Orleans. Thanks to *Workboat* for recognizing this state-of-the-art linehaul vessel. For the complete list, visit [Workboat](#).

## About the Vessel

The *Gretchen V. Cooper*, the nation's first linehaul towing vessel powered by Tier-4 Caterpillar high-speed engines with selective catalytic reduction, was built by Blakeley BoatWorks and is now operated by Cooper Marine and Timberlands. Fully compliant with the latest United States Coast Guard regulatory requirements, this 110-foot long, 33-foot wide vessel was also recently upgraded from 3,400 HP to 4,000 HP.

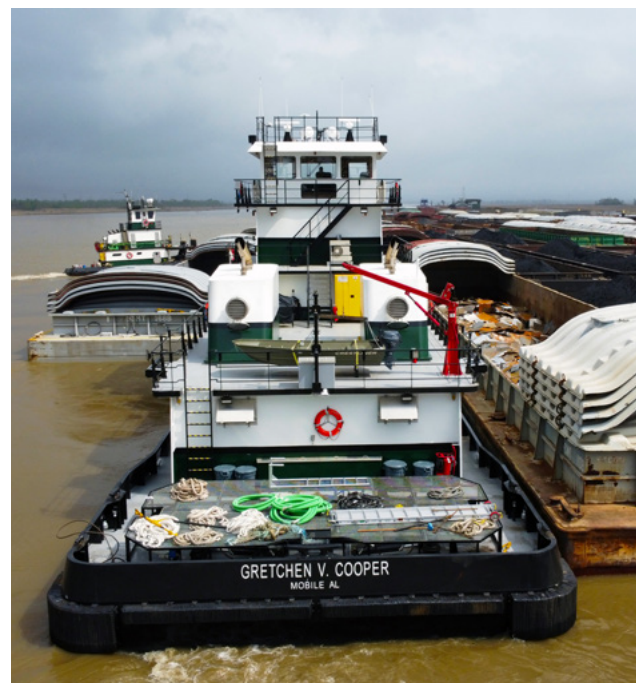


## Workboat's Selection Process

The *Workboat* editorial team is tasked with selecting the Boat of the Year. Choosing the 10 Significant Boats is subjective, with many boats deserving of making the list each year. However, there are certain parameters that the *Workboat* editorial staff does follow in its efforts to give all boats that qualify a chance. For example, the editors try to select at least one boat from each sector of the industry that *WorkBoat* covers — inland towboats and barges, tugs, offshore service vessels, passenger vessels, etc. In addition, if possible, editors try to select one boat from each region of the U.S. — East Coast, West Coast, Gulf Coast, and the Great Lakes.

Furthermore, while design is the most important ingredient in selecting a Significant Boat, it is not the only one. This is not a list based on naval architecture and marine engineering only. What makes a boat "Significant" can be that it's a first of its kind, a successful series build, where it operates and who it serves, or how it helps advance new workboat frontiers like wind energy.

Only boats that appeared in *WorkBoat* magazine from December 2020 to November 2021 were considered. For the complete list of selected vessels, visit [Workboat](#). •



## We Are Cooper/T. Smith: Charles Cherrington, C/PA



Charles Cherrington became interested in the maritime industry at an early age. So much so that after graduating high school he decided to make it his career. As a student of the Texas A&M Maritime Academy, one of six maritime academies in the United States, Charles learned the ins and outs of the industry before eventually joining Evergreen Marine Corporation as a sales representative in Dallas.

“After several years of selling container space,” Charles recalled, “I decided I wanted to explore the port and terminal operations side of the industry and accepted a position with Schaefer Stevedoring in Brownsville, Texas.”

This role provided him with valuable insight into and experience with the industry’s stevedoring and terminal operations. While making his career in Brownsville, Charles married and started a family. However, after nine years of living in extreme south Texas, he and his family decided it was time for a change of scenery.

From Brownsville, Charles and his family relocated to Houston, where in 2009 he took the position of Vessel Superintendent at Cooper/T. Smith Stevedoring, which eventually became Cooper/Ports America (C/PA).

As a Vessel Superintendent, Charles currently is responsible for overseeing C/PA’s day-to-day stevedoring operations. This includes planning discharges and loads to and from vessels, ensuring the proper allocation of labor and equipment is available for each job, and overseeing the disbursement of cargo at the C/PA terminal.

With a high volume of cargo passing through Houston’s docks, having enough crew and equipment on hand for each job can pose a challenge, but Charles and his team make it happen.

“I love working with my team,” he enthused. “They’re the best. They have a great work ethic and a ‘can do’ attitude, ready to provide support wherever needed.”

Charles takes great pride in his work and appreciates that he has an opportunity to help others succeed.

“I enjoy helping our clients find workable logistics solutions and derive great satisfaction from seeing them succeed,” he shared. “If they’re successful, that means we’re successful.” •

> Cooper Marine and Timberlands

## Hooks Lake Developments

At Cooper Marine and Timberlands’ Hooks Lake facility in Calvert, Alabama, the company has recently invested in a high-capacity material handler, designed to increase throughput at our facility and free-up the Sisco floating derrick. For the first time, our Hooks Lake material handler will allow our team to take full advantage of the 600’ bulkhead capable of supporting up to three barges. After completing a barge, the material handler can crawl to the next available barge already secured along the bulkhead, without incurring any barge shifting delays. This new functionality creates significant new capacity for our Hooks Lake terminal operation. •



## CMT/Blakeley BoatWorks Farm Forum

On October 25, management from Cooper Marine and Timberlands (CMT) and Blakeley BoatWorks gathered at Rosinton Farm for the 2021 Cooper Marine and Timberlands/Blakeley BoatWorks Farm Forum. The meeting served as a time for each company to reflect on their past and their future, and come together as a team to further develop the safest, most efficient, and highest value service offering in our industry so that we can compete and expand our business for the generation of tomorrow. The commodities that we transport power business, making CMT and Blakeley critical to the global economy and comprising an important part of the nation's critical infrastructure workforce. Our CMT and Blakeley teams are evolving and are on the cusp of exciting new growth across our entire organization that holds promise of an even brighter tomorrow. •



### > Cooper Marine and Timberlands



## First Liquid Vessel Transfer

Cooper Marine and Timberlands (CMT) recently handled its first liquid vessel transfer, or lightering operation, at its facility on the Mobile River. Working hand-in-hand with the cargo's receiver and the U.S. Coast Guard, approximately 8,000 metric tons of product were successfully discharged from the tanker, then transported by barge to the customer's facility, as well as various other facilities along the Mobile River and Tombigbee River.

Historically, these barges were loaded in the New Orleans region along the Mississippi River and then towed to Mobile. The new approach of bringing the vessel directly to Mobile saved the customer substantial transportation costs and created a more efficient way of meeting the customer's growing need for reliable delivery.

CMT looks forward to serving our customer and other chemical facilities in its network for many years to come. •

## We Are Cooper/T. Smith Jesse Goodwin, Blakeley BoatWorks

As New Construction Supervisor at Blakeley BoatWorks, Jesse Goodwin is responsible for ensuring vessels are assembled correctly, safely, and efficiently. •



Watch 



## We Are Cooper/T. Smith Alan Bates, Cooper Consolidated

With more than 44 years of experience, Alan Bates, Maintenance Supervisor, Cooper Consolidated, is responsible for keeping the company's cranes afloat with booms in the air. •

Watch 

## We Are Cooper/T. Smith: Matt Wilkins, CSA

Beginning his maritime career while in high school, Matt Wilkins has gained a wealth of experience by working in all facets of the industry. As Maintenance Manager for CSA at the Port of Mobile, Matt oversees the service and repair of the company's specialized equipment, ensuring it's ready for operation when the next ship arrives. •



Watch 

> Cooper Consolidated



## Mary Ann McMillion, 1975 - 2021

The Cooper Consolidated team is greatly saddened by the sudden passing of longtime employee Mary Ann McMillion on September 25. Mary Ann was part of the company for more than 23 years and most recently served as Logistics Manager for Cooper Consolidated's Northern Fleets where she was responsible for the dispatch and administrative functions of the Mile 207, Darrow, Mile 164, and Nucor fleets. Well-known inside of and outside of our company as incredibly passionate about her work and dedicated to our customers and organization, Mary Ann loved working in the maritime industry. She embodied all of the traits of a great team member and her value was immense. Mary Ann will be sorely missed. •

## C/PA Celebrates Five Years

Cooper/Ports America (C/PA) celebrated its five-year anniversary on November 12 with an employee party at the Hilton Americas in downtown Houston. All C/PA employees were invited to attend with a guest. The event featured good food, music, dancing, and some great door prizes. C/PA not only appreciates the dedication and hard work put forth by its employees, but also values the patience and support they receive from their families, as it takes a great deal of time and effort to help maintain C/PA's position as the premier provider of full-service stevedoring, terminal operations, container stuffing and stripping, container yard depots, container and chassis maintenance and repair, and truck brokerage and logistics in the Texas markets. •



### > Cooper Marine and Timberlands

## Captain and Deckhand Meetings

Safety training and continuing education are pivotal to building and maintaining a successful team. Throughout the month of November, all Cooper Marine and Timberlands vessel captains and deckhands met at the Cooper Farm to review and discuss the latest safety and operational reports. Among the topics covered, included: safety incidents and statistics, near-miss reports, review of the Towing Safety Management System (TSMS), breakout groups for improving safety culture, and a question and answer session with representatives from the U.S. Coast Guard.



Lunch was served at the end of each meeting, and deckhands even competed in a line-throwing competition for the chance to win gift certificates. Coming together as a team to learn, build relationships, and develop their skills ensures that our crews provide outstanding service to our customers. •



### Line Throwing Competition Winners

Week 1: Ryan Messer, Charlie Richards,  
Trenton Pruitt

Week 2: John Brown, James G.,  
Steve Myles, Simon Smith

Week 3: Henry Austin, John Bumpers,  
Elijah Linder, Freddie Williams

## We Are Cooper/T. Smith: Kimberly Billups, CP&O

Kimberly Billups has been part of the CP&O team since 2002, though she came to the industry from an unexpected place. Beginning her career as an international flight attendant for Trans World Airlines (TWA) and a substitute teacher for the Virginia Beach Public School System, Kimberly got her first taste of the industry in 1994.

“I was looking to earn some extra money during the Christmas holidays,” she recalled. “A close friend told me that the longshore organization was hiring additional labor, so I came onboard, was eventually hired on permanently, and that journey continues today.”

In 1995 she went to work for the Norfolk International Terminal before joining up with CP&O.

“Initially I began as a longshoreman working the cargo hold of ships,” Kimberly said. “Later, based on the orderly way I managed and sent freight from the hold, I was asked to join a ship gang.”



*Port of Virginia*

Currently, she serves as the hatch boss for ship gang #70. This role tasks her with supervising a ship-based gang of five workers while also overseeing a group of six dock-based gang workers. Appreciative of her long career within the industry, Kimberly is grateful that it has allowed her to provide for her daughter, who is currently enrolled in college.

Due to the strain the global supply chain is feeling, Kimberly admits that the job can be demanding, calling on a multitude of skillsets while maintaining a focus on safety.

“Because of the supply chain crisis and nationwide labor shortage, it can be challenging to fill a gang’s work order,” Kimberly shared. “Sometimes that means, even as the boss, you have to get hands-on and fill a vacant spot until the next worker arrives.”

But that’s alright by Kimberly, who still finds joy in her work. That’s due in part to the excellent team she has.

“The crew I have works well together,” she said. “They’re respectful, fun, knowledgeable and are always willing to take on new roles or switch positions with no complaints.”

Kimberly takes great pride in her work and sees each job as an opportunity to learn something new.

“I really enjoy seeing a ship sailing out, knowing another one is coming in right behind it.” •

# Merry Christmas from the Cooper Group



By expanding operations and investing in state-of-the-art equipment, vessels, and tools, the Cooper Group is on the move in ports across the country, ready to begin an exciting new chapter in 2022.

However, none of this would be possible without our dedicated employees. These essential workers are vital to the global economy and make up an important part of the nation's critical infrastructure workforce. By heroically and consistently meeting logistical and supply chain challenges, they ensure the gears of our global economy continue to move.

Keeping our nation's commerce flowing during Christmas is no different. While millions spend Christmas at home with friends and family, many Cooper Group team members are working so that others don't have to.

To those working to provide essential services this Christmas, ensuring commerce continues to flow through our nation's ports and inland waterways, we thank you and your loved ones. Because of you, the world's supply chain remains uninterrupted and our global economy moves forward.

To our colleagues across North America, on our coasts and inland waterways, Merry Christmas from the Cooper Group of Companies.

## Milestones

### 5 Years

Byron Moore  
Mark Mouton  
Zachary Saupe

### 15 Years

Ronnie Brauer  
Dustin Schaaf  
Ronald Walker

### 30 Years

Frankie Davis  
Leander Regnier

### 40 Years

Larry Ohler



# Milestones

## New Hires

Welcome to the Cooper/T. Smith Team!

- Edward Adler  
Project Manager/New Construction  
Blakeley BoatWorks
- Russ Dorin  
Loss Control Director  
Cooper Marine and Timberlands
- Michael Perkins  
Barge Maintenance Supervisor  
Cooper Marine and Timberlands

## Promotions

Congratulations to the following employees on their recent promotions!

- Snap Nelson  
Vessel Operations Manager  
Cooper Marine and Timberland
- Stimpson Crosby  
Manager of Wash Dock  
Cooper Marine and Timberlands
- Dakota Heidebreder  
Leadman, *M/V Rosinton*  
Cooper Marine and Timberlands
- Cody McCord  
Leadman, *M/V Rosinton*  
Cooper Marine and Timberlands
- Devin Busby  
Leadman, *M/V Joanne C*  
Cooper Marine and Timberlands
- Elijah Linder  
Leadman, *M/V Judson B*  
Cooper Marine and Timberlands
- Josh Overstreet  
Leadman, *M/V The Delta*  
Cooper Marine and Timberlands

## Births



Howard Walker, Blakeley BoatWorks, welcomed son Grayson Thomas Walker on October 16.



Snap Nelson, CMT, welcomed son Vincent "Trip" Samuel Nelson III on November 15.



Crescent Towing - Savannah's Assistant Operations Manager Drew Zeigler recently welcomed daughter Taylor Marie to their family.



Cooper Marine and Timberlands' Sam Dennis welcomed daughter Ardelle Burnette Dennis on December 10.

Captain Snap Nelson and Lance Corporal David Erickson celebrate the 246th birthday of the Marine Corps with Lima Company 3rd Battalion 23rd Marines in Montgomery, AL.



Pictured, l-r: David Erickson, Deckhand, *The Black Belt*; Snap Nelson, CMT Vessel Operations Manager

## Submit Your Milestones

Do you know a new hire, promotion, or other milestone to announce?

Send them to Thomas Smith, Director, Corporate Communications: [thomas.smith@coopertsmith.com](mailto:thomas.smith@coopertsmith.com)