**Presentation to the Recreational Boating Committee of the MLA
Thursday, May 2, 2019**

***The SMA in five minutes – an overview:***

1. Founded in 1963 by experienced commercial shipping people to educate the maritime community about Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and to provide arbitration and subsequently mediation rules - all of which are published and regularly revised.  The Society of Maritime Arbitrators, Inc. (“SMA”) also publishes ethical guidelines to meet the growing demand for ADR over litigation of maritime disputes.
2. In addition to its Maritime Arbitration Rules which normally call for a three-person panel, the SMA publishes rules for a Shortened Arbitration Procedure for the speedy resolution of smaller claims which are decided by a sole arbitrator.
3. Membership is limited to men and women who have held a responsible commercial position in a maritime profession for at least ten years.  About a third of our members are lawyers who have not actively engaged in the practice of law for at least five years. A number of members are active boaters.
4. The SMA publishes its reasoned awards unless the parties agree to keep the award confidential. It has published well over **4,300** awards.
5. SMA panels are empowered to award reasonable attorneys’ fees and expenses; also to order pre-award security on a proper showing of need.  In a recent case the panel ordered pre-award security of nearly $63 million.
6. The SMA promulgates salvage rules (“MARSALV”) in both English and Spanish and has issued upwards of 60 salvage awards pertaining to yachts and boats.
7. The SMA is interested in providing the maritime commercial expertise of its members and expanding the use of its ADR capabilities further into the yachting and boating community.  We hope you will consider using the well-regarded SMA Rules, and appointing our commercially experienced SMA members in the resolution of your clients’ maritime disputes.

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