

March 2012

## Dear People of the United States of America and Canada:

I am Henk J. Danser and I was born March 17, 1948.

I am a tenth generation sailor and have been sailing fifty-two years. My wife Rita van Gent and I have five children, three sons and two daughters. All five children are, unbelievably, also sailors.

We began with one small ship; we now have four ships that we had built in the Netherlands. These ships will allow the children to carry on the business.

I have come to the United States and Canada for the first time in my life.

You people may become upset with me, but I will never become upset with you, because in the name of my parents and grandparents I want to thank your parents and grandparents for sacrificing their lives to free us on May 5, 1945. We still celebrate that day every year. So THANK YOU!

A little of my history:

1948, I was born in Leiden, the Netherlands.

1960 I came on board to sail with my mother and father.

1966 At the age of eighteen I became a tug boat captain and sailed interior waterways and rivers such as the Rhine, and small harbors and locks.

1974 I began sailing the sea, spending 50% of the time on the sea and 50% in interior waterways.

1992 We had a new ship built capable of sailing throughout Europe, spending 90% of the time at sea and 10% on interior waterways.

2005 We had two ships built with the maximum dimensions to allow sailing through the Finnish Saimaa lake system. Each trip involved eight 13 meter wide locks. Our ship was 12.6 meters wide, and had a length that left just a meter of maneuvering room.

2008 We began building our current fleet of ships, which we designed together with our shipyard. These ships were built for the next generation, built to be durable and with the heaviest ice class. The ships are named after my wife Rita:

*Marietje Andrea* went into service 2009

And these ships are also named after my daughters and daughters-in-law:

*Marietje Marsilla* into service 2010

*Marietje Deborah* into service 2011

*Marietje Astrid*, the last one, will be in service by 2014

I wish my father and mother could be here to witness that I am sailing with my youngest son and crew to America and Canada after 52 years of sailing. I find it so momentous and special, and so I wanted to share it with you.

Our family business is called DANSER van GENT.

Greetings,  
Boe-boe Henk, Rita, the children, and crew