

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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LAST CHANCE TO CLARIFY YOUR ADDRESS WITH HQ BEFORE IMPORTANT MAILING

Ballots for the M.E.B.A. District Election will be mailed out on September 1 using the mailing address information on file with Headquarters. If the M.E.B.A. Membership Department does not receive your updated mailing address by August 19, members whose address information is outdated will have to rely on a two-step duplicate ballot procedure to participate in this important democratic process. If you have not received past *Marine Officers*, P.A.F. mailings or other M.E.B.A. mailings (not M.E.B.A. Plans) at your current mailing address, your information may not be on file with Headquarters and you should send us an update immediately.

You can use the address change form available on the M.E.B.A. website found at www.mebaunion.org under the "Members" tab or in the "Documents & Member Notices" section. Alternatively, you can send your updated information to Renee Bowman at HQ by mail, fax at (202) 638-5369, or e-mail at membership@mebaunion.org. The Headquarters and Plans Office databases are not shared, so your address information housed by Plans is not necessarily part of the Headquarters database.

REDUCED WINTER SERVICE PLANNED FOR AMHS

Alaska's Transportation Department is proposing a slimmed down sailing season for the Alaska Marine Highway System this winter. They made the proposal this week in an operating plan open for a brief public review period. The ongoing pandemic was blamed for significantly lower revenues that prompted their proposal to further reduce service from October 2020 to April 2021.

That plan would offer minimal essential services to most communities. Coupled with the already depleted funding level appropriated to the ferry system, State residents can look forward to multiple service gaps.

Ferry advocate Malena Marvin who runs the Facebook site *Ferries Move Alaska!* criticized the additional reduction in service that will further isolate state residents living in remote areas. She said, "To me, it feels like a mobster breaking somebody's knees and then blaming them for falling down. I think [that's what] a lot of communities feel about what's happening to the ferries right now."

She noted, "...They are shutting off some communities from transportation over the winter. That is wrong. Public ferry service should be tied to community need, not to pandemic-caused revenue shortages." She further criticized the administration for allowing just a few days to comment on the proposed winter plan, a break from the past when the public had weeks to consider such proposals.

To keep up with the latest on the situation, you can visit www.FriendsofAMHS.org which catalogs AMHS news and developments and continues to urge lawmakers to restore funding.

USNS YUKON RESCUES MARINERS AS DHOW TAKES SHARP DOWNTURN

Military Sealift Command vessels and their crews are typically involved in high-profile deployments around the world and MSC mariners often participate in international missions that find their ways into the headlines. However, there is a certain satisfaction when their efforts contribute to saving lives, especially those of fellow mariners on the unforgiving seas.

The crew of the USNS YUKON, a Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler, arrived just in time to assist the luckless mariners of a drifting dhow in the Arabian Sea. Ten days earlier, the dhow suffered a complete engine failure and its crew had run out of food and water.

The YUKON received notice of the situation from the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) watch center in Bahrain, and due to its proximity to the distressed vessel, raced to the scene on August 7th.

After assessing the circumstances, USNS YUKON crewmembers deployed a rigid hull inflatable boat and rendered assistance to the dhow's crew by providing food and water. In deference to safety, the crew strictly adhered to coronavirus mitigations. YUKON crewmembers remained on station until Omani naval forces were able to arrive and provide additional assistance.

The YUKON consists of Navy sailors along with a civilian mariner crew represented by the M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU.

"The duty to help each other when in need is something that all mariners share, civilian and military alike," said Navy Capt. Michael O'Driscoll, commander of Task Force 53. "The sailors and civilian mariners aboard MSC ships are trained and ready to answer this call whenever possible."

NMC ANNOUNCES REOPENING OF TWO ALASKA FACILITIES FOR LIMITED EXAM SERVICES

The National Maritime Center (NMC) is reopening Regional Examination Center (REC) Juneau and Monitoring Unit (MU) Ketchikan for limited examination services beginning Monday, August 17, 2020. Mariners seeking to schedule examinations may do so by calling REC Juneau at (907) 463-2458 or MU Ketchikan at (907) 225-4496 (extension #3)

Exam services will be by appointment only. No walk-in appointments are available, and all other application customer service functions will continue to be handled remotely. Mariners will be subject to COVID-19 screening questions and temperature checks and will be required to wear a face covering at all times.

The full announcement has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website in the "Documents & Member Notices" section.

SAL SCHEPENS – WWII MARINER, JOHN BROWN VOLUNTEER – SAILS INTO THE SUNSET

Sal Schepens made his final voyage last week at the age of 91 after a lifetime that would make a fellow mariner proud.

At the age of 16, he coerced his parents into signing papers allowing him to join the Merchant Marine and helped aid our nation's efforts in World War II. Sal sailed on troop ships during the war beginning on his first day at sea in March of 1945 and he fondly remembered V-E-Day. He was at sea during V-J-Day. After the war, he began shipping commercially in an unlicensed capacity.

During the Korean War he was called up from the Naval Reserves. He served aboard the USS WASP and the USS HORNET, where he was the Main Propulsion Officer.

While he was shipping in the early 1950s, he met Connie at the 'Port and Starboard' USO club in New York City. He used his wits to get assigned to ships that would be sailing to NYC so he could see the love of his life. They would be married for 68 years. Connie and Sal settled down on a farm in Delaware. There he farmed, worked as an electrician, and owned small businesses. They raised six boys and one daughter.

Later while serving at the Naval Academy in Annapolis MD, he was in charge of instructing cadets on small boats. He left the Navy as a Lieutenant Junior Grade in 1955 and continued sailing on merchant vessels.

His volunteer work on the World War II Liberty Ship JOHN W. BROWN began in 1991. He also served as an Instructor and watch stander on the SUNY Maritime Training Ship EMPIRE STATE.

In 2014, at the age of 85, he made application with the M.E.B.A. and shipped out of the Baltimore hall on Military Sealift Command vessels including the SL-7s (SS REGULUS and SS ANTARES) as well as LMSRs, including the UNSN GILLILAND. He also shipped out in the deep-sea sector on Maersk Line-contracted vessels. He was still accruing sea time and also volunteering his talents on the JOHN BROWN up until a few weeks ago when he fell ill. He is survived by Connie, his children and 14 grandchildren. A funeral mass will be held for him on Friday, August 14 at Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Bear, DE.

NOAA ENVISIONS EXTREMELY ACTIVE ATLANTIC HURRICANE SEASON

NOAA has issued an update to its Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook, which was originally issued in May, further fleshing out prognostications of an extremely active storm season. The May report predicted a 60% chance of an above-normal season. This August update further elevates those odds to 85% and foresees up to 25 named storms with up to 11 hurricanes.

The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season has been off to a rapid pace with a record-setting nine named storms so far and has the potential to be one of the busiest on record. Historically, only two named storms form on average by early August, and the ninth named storm typically does not form until October 4. An average season produces 12 named storms, including six hurricanes of which three become major hurricanes (Category 3, 4, or 5).

The updated outlook calls for 19-25 named storms (winds of 39 mph or greater), of which 7-11 will become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or greater), including 3-6 major hurricanes (winds of 111 mph or greater). The update covers the entire six-month hurricane season, which ends Nov. 30.

Current oceanic and atmospheric conditions that make an “extremely active” hurricane season possible are warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures in the tropical Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea, reduced vertical wind shear, weaker tropical Atlantic trade winds and an enhanced west African monsoon. These conditions are expected to continue for the next several months. A main climate factor behind these conditions is the ongoing warm phase of the Atlantic Multi-Decadal Oscillation, which reappeared in 1995 and has been favoring more active hurricane seasons since that time.

SEPTEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (*All times are local*)

Monday, September 7 – **Labor Day** – Halls Closed – *No Meetings*

Tuesday, September 8 – Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Wednesday, September 9 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, September 10 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, September 11 – Honolulu@1100.

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The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and demonstrated track record of readiness, safety, and loyalty in answering America's call to action in times of both peace and war is unrivaled in the world. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; mebahq@mebaunion.org. Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.