

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

The Official Union Newsletter – "The Word to the Wise"
Number 34 – August 20, 2020



In this issue//ITF Discussions on Gulf of Guinea Piracy, Crew Change Crisis//NMC: Limited Reopening of Facilities in Houston, Hono, San Juan//MarAd Advisory for Ships Near Iran, Libya//Unions Endorse Sen. Sullivan//Rep. Luria is Maritime Hero//Union-Made Back-to-School List//M.E.B.A. Election Issue Available//

PIRACY PROLIFERATION IN GULF OF GUINEA EARNS ITF ATTENTION; CREW CHANGE CRISIS DISCUSSED

The history of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea dates back decades, but it is only in the past few years that the criminal model has taken a more sophisticated and violent turn. The growing number of attacks and successful kidnappings in the area is of serious concern to the international shipping community. The ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) recently reported that 77 seafarers were kidnapped or taken hostage for ransom in those waters since January 2020. IMB further reported that the Gulf of Guinea off West Africa is increasingly dangerous for commercial shipping and accounts for around 90% of maritime kidnappings worldwide. The vast majority of the attacks or attempted attacks have occurred far beyond 12 nautical miles both east and west off the coast of Nigeria, ranging between 20 and 200 nautical miles.

Earlier in August, shipping companies and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) representing seafarers' unions (as part of the International Bargaining Forum Warlike Operations Area Committee) held an online International Bargaining Forum (IBF) meeting to discuss the rise in violent attacks against ships and their crews in 2020. The parties strongly embraced a declaration calling for the nations in the region to allocate more financial and logistical resources to strengthen national navies and coast guards currently fighting crime at sea. M.E.B.A. is a member organization of the ITF, a global union federation fighting for the rights, equality and justice for almost 20 million working men and women in the transport sector around the world.

During the meeting, the ITF also called for further steps to address the worldwide crew change crisis caused by blanket restrictions imposed by governments as a reaction to COVID-19. ITF maintains that ports where governments refuse to allow seafarers to sign off should be designated as High Risk Areas (HRAs) since mentally and physically fatigued crew forced to work for over 11 months constitute a high risk to the seafarers' lives and the environment.

Meeting participants agreed that the lack of effective crew changes around the world is a risk and agreed to consider the request and its potential implications. ITF, its affiliated unions and its inspectorate will continue to assist seafarers that have finished their assignments and want to return home.

NMC: HOUSTON, HONO, SAN JUAN FACILITIES REOPENING FOR CG EXAMS

The National Maritime Center (NMC) is reopening Regional Examination Centers (RECs) Honolulu and Houston, and Monitoring Unit (MU) San Juan for limited examination services beginning Monday, August 24, 2020. Additionally, REC Juneau and MU Ketchikan reopened on August 17, 2020. Mariners seeking to schedule examinations may do so by calling the appropriate phone number or contacting the appropriate e-mail address: REC Houston – rechoustonexam@uscg.mil; REC Honolulu – rechonolulu@uscg.mil; MU San Juan – (787) 729-2368; REC Juneau – recjun@uscg.mil; MU Ketchikan – (907) 225-4496 (extension #3).

Examination services are by appointment only. E-mailed exam appointment requests should include the applicant's name, mariner reference number, requested testing date(s), phone number, and a copy of their Approved to Test Letter(s). COVID protocols are in force at the facilities.

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

MARAD ADVISORY FOR U.S.-FLAG SHIPS NEAR IRAN, OFF COAST OF LIBYA

The Maritime Administration is urging that U.S.-flag commercial ships take an additional layer of precaution when transiting waters near Iran and off the coast of Libya, due to recent events. Recently the U.S. exercised its sanctions policy against Iran involving clandestine shipments of petroleum. The U.S. says the cargo was linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), a designated terrorist organization that has targeted the U.S. and allies. Because of the possibility of retaliation, MarAd issued the Advisory urging caution for U.S. maritime interests and commercial vessels in the region.

The ongoing conflict in Libya also continues to pose a risk for U.S.-flag commercial vessels transiting in the vicinity. MarAd said that commercial vessels in the area should be aware of threats that could involve missiles, rockets, artillery, mines, small arms, aircraft, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

Further information about the advisories can be obtained from GMCC@uscg.mil. Supplemental information may also be found on the MarAd Office of Maritime Security website at: <https://go.usa.gov/xUKsb>.

ALASKAN REPUBLICAN IS RIGHT MAN FOR SENATE, SAY MARITIME UNIONS

Senator Dan Sullivan's (R-AK) continued support for U.S.-flag shipping won the praise of four maritime labor unions that are endorsing his bid for re-election this November. The M.E.B.A., along with the MM&P, AMO and SIU, said that Sen. Sullivan, who has served his state in the U.S. Senate since 2015, continues to demonstrate his strong defense of America's maritime industry and our maritime workforce. In a letter to the Sullivan campaign, the unions declared, "Your work in Congress to achieve a fully funded Maritime Security Program; to ensure full enforcement of America's U.S.-flag cargo preference shipping requirements; and to preserve our nation's coastwise shipping laws have helped ensure that our nation has the U.S.-flag commercial sealift readiness capability and the American mariners needed by the Department of Defense to support American troops and America's interests overseas."

The unions applauded Sen. Sullivan's ongoing efforts to preserve and enhance our commercial U.S.-flag sealift capability and proclaimed that the junior Senator from Alaska deserves a second term.

Supporting lawmakers who understand the value of U.S.-flag shipping to our nation's security and economy is the principal focus of M.E.B.A.'s Political Action Fund. Contributions are used to educate Members of Congress, regardless of political party, about the importance of our industry. The PAF also helps broaden our relationship with maritime-friendly politicians and helps elect those who recognize the significance of the U.S. Merchant Marine.

Members, applicants and retirees are encouraged to contribute to the M.E.B.A. Political Action Fund online by visiting the Union homepage at www.mebaunion.org and selecting "Political Action Fund" to support this important cause.

REP. LURIA HONORED AS AMERICAN MARITIME HERO

As part of the American Maritime Partnership's (AMP) year-long celebration of leaders who have added to the rich history of the U.S. as a maritime nation, AMP has tapped Representative Elaine Luria (D-VA-2) as the latest "American Maritime Hero." Rep. Luria's district covers the Hampton Roads area including Virginia Beach, Williamsburg and parts of Norfolk, VA, where M.E.B.A. maintains a Union hall.

Recently, Rep. Luria penned a letter urging House and Senate leadership to help reinforce the Maritime Security Program during the ongoing COVID crisis. She asked her colleagues to support 100% U.S.-flag cargo preference for all government-generated cargoes and urged them to reject Jones Act waivers during the pandemic. She is also vocal in support of economic relief for operators to cover costs associated with maintaining their vessels and keeping crews employed. She advocated for COVID-19 testing kits for mariners aboard U.S.-flag vessels and for allowing maritime union vocational training facilities to be eligible for assistance under the Paycheck Protection Program.

A 20-year veteran of the U.S. Navy, she has been a prominent voice on behalf of our industry in her Congressional career. Rep. Luria is the Vice-Chair on the Armed Services' Seapower Subcommittee and also sits on the Military Personnel Subcommittee. She is a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee as well.

"Representative Luria has been steadfast in her commitment to this nation, and to the men and women of maritime" said Mike Roberts, AMP President. "She has led in Congress on key issues to support the domestic and deep sea U.S.-flag fleets, including programs related to shipbuilding, mariners, and vessel operations."

Rep. Luria has visited our Union hall in Norfolk and our membership there understands the importance of an educated politician who fights for our issues.

UNION-MADE BACK TO SCHOOL LIST, INCLUDING VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

When we think about the end of summer and "back to school," most of us flash back to the old days when children actually left the house with backpacks stuffed with new supplies and attended their physical classrooms. But of course, modern-day realities will keep many of those kids at home this year. You can still load up on notebooks, art supplies and the other items they'll need to stay prepared and organized. The products listed below, including some pandemic-important items, are made by companies that treat their workers fairly and give them a voice on the job.

Folders - ACCO brands (CWA); Five Star Reinforced Filler Paper (CWA); At-A-Glance Academic Daily Planner (CWA); Mead Spiral Notebook (CWA-USW); Trapper Keeper Folders (CWA); Wilson

Jones Binders (CWA); Roaring Spring Pocket Folders (USW); Industries for the Blind Inc. Composition Books (IAMAW); Swingline Stapler (CWA). **Clothing** - All America Clothing (IBEW); Carhartt (IBT); Union Jeans (IBT); Wigman (IBT). **Tissues** - Kleenex Tissues (USW); Puffs Tissues (UFCW). **Thirst Quenchers** - Aquafina (IBT); Gatorade (UAW); Minute Maid Juice (IBT, UAW); Mott's Juice (IBT, UAW, UFCW); Snapple (UAW, IBT, UFCW); Tropicana (UAW); V8 (UAW); Welch's Juice (IBT, UAW).

To view more union-made products, visit the online directory at <http://labor411.org/listing-region/consumer-products/>

M.E.B.A. ELECTION ISSUE AVAILABLE

Members, applicants and pensioners should begin receiving the special election edition of the *Marine Officer* that was mailed this week and sent to each of the M.E.B.A. Union halls and offices.

The issue contains campaign statements of candidates running for office in this year's M.E.B.A. District election. Candidate statements presented in the issue appear unedited from the candidate's original submission. The issue also contains other key information relevant to the election. Ballots for the District election will be mailed on September 1 to all members at their address of record on file with Headquarters.

ONLINE SEPTEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (All times are local) (Registration Period will be August 27 – September 3)

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.