

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

The Official Union Newsletter



Number 34 – August 24, 2017

In this issue//Picketing in Beaumont against Liberty Maritime//GAO Urges Momentum on Surge Sealift Fleet Recapitalization Plan//WSF Rep. Election Process Underway//USS INDIANAPOLIS Wreckage Located//Send Your Kid Back to School – Union-Ready//

NO PEACE? NO JUSTICE! INFORMATIONAL PICKET AGAINST LIBERTY MARITIME OVER CONTRACT VIOLATION

Since Wednesday morning, M.E.B.A. members and applicants have maintained a vigil at the Port of Beaumont as they continue a round-the-clock informational picket against Liberty Maritime Corp. (which includes Liberty Global Logistics). The M.E.B.A. has jurisdiction over the licensed deck and engineering officers onboard any vessel crewed by Liberty Maritime and their affiliates. But Liberty has violated the M.E.B.A. contract and is in the process of crewing up the LIBERTY PEACE – a new ship to be operated under the U.S.-flag – with non-M.E.B.A. officers.

M.E.B.A. officials, including Gulf Coast V.P. Erin Bertram, have been picketing in the shadow of the NOCC BALTIC, the foreign-flag vessel which is set to be redubbed as the LIBERTY PEACE in a renaming ceremony set for early next week. Members and applicants plan to stay at the site of the ship as long as safety permits – Hurricane Harvey is approaching the Gulf and weather conditions could soon deteriorate. On Long Island, in Lake Success, NY, M.E.B.A. Patrolman Nico Sermoneta is leading a group of members picketing Liberty Maritime headquarters. They were also in their second day of picketing today and welcome solidarity from area members and union brothers and sisters (contact Nico at nsermoneta@mebaunion.org).

M.E.B.A.'s position is that the LIBERTY PEACE is covered under the parties' existing Collective Bargaining Agreement as has been the case with every other U.S.-flag vessel Liberty has owned/operated for the last 29 years and most recently earlier this year with the recently reflagged LIBERTY PASSION.

M.E.B.A. would like to further clarify that that the Union has no issues with the unlicensed personnel or any other vessel owner/operator at the dock, and our issue is confined exclusively to Liberty Maritime and its affiliate Liberty Global Logistics, LLC.

Again, the M.E.B.A. is NOT on strike against and DOES NOT have a labor dispute with any other employer. The Union is NOT seeking to interfere with the business operations of any entity or induce employees of other employers to cease work or refuse to make deliveries.

Area members and applicants (who have their TWIC card) are welcome to join the picket at the ship in Beaumont as long as weather conditions permit. For further information, please contact M.E.B.A. Gulf Coast Vice President Erin Bertram at ebertram@mebaunion.org.

GAO URGES MOMENTUM ON SURGE SEALIFT FLEET RECAPITALIZATION PLAN

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is urging the U.S. Navy to finalize a comprehensive recapitalization plan to ensure the future viability of the nation's surge sealift and combat logistics fleets. In a report issued this week, the GAO noted that an aging fleet that is making do with out-of-service equipment, in many cases, is impacting readiness and must be addressed. These fleets include the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) and Military Sealift Command-contracted vessels as well as the MSC Civilian Mariner-crewed vessels that support Navy ships around the globe.

GAO pointed out that “an aging surge sealift fleet in which some ships are more than 50 years old, and a combat logistics force tasked with supporting more widely distributed operations (i.e., the employment of ships in dispersed formations across a wider expanse of territory), present several force structure and readiness challenges.”

After studying the issue, GAO found the fleets trending downwards over the last five years. They said that over the study period, there have been more mission-limiting equipment casualties—incidents of degraded or out-of-service equipment and maintenance periods are running longer than planned. They say this indicates declining materiel readiness across both fleets.

The Navy has been looking into the issue, but GAO is recommending that Navy finalizes those efforts by incorporating “leading practices for capital planning in a comprehensive sealift recapitalization plan and assess[ing] the effects of widely distributed operations on the combat logistics force.”

GAO said that the average age of the surge sealift ships is nearly 40 years, and the number of those vessels reaching the end of their programmed service lives over the next decade will reduce sealift capacity by over 25 percent.

The watchdog agency said the ongoing Navy examination into the issue does not include a needs assessment or project prioritization comparing the costs and benefits of proposed investments to each other. “Without effective capital planning to ensure the availability of surge sealift capability,” the GAO said, “the equipment and supplies needed by the Army, Marine Corps, and other forces may not arrive when needed, potentially hindering U.S. operations.”

Since the release of the report, the Navy has announced that it “concur[s]” with the GAO recommendations.

WSF REP. ELECTION PROCESS UNDERWAY

Members in the Washington State Ferry bargaining unit are in the process of electing a new Representative. Former Rep. Isaac Seidman recently stepped down following his two-year service. Bill Knowlton, who is a previous WSF Rep., is currently holding down the position on a temporary basis until the spot is permanently filled.

The unit held a nomination period, followed by two special meetings held at the Seattle Union hall that allowed members to talk about the issues with each of the two candidates for the position.

Ballots were then sent out to each of the eligible members. A rank and file tallying committee will be elected in September and ballots will be counted on September 15. Communications to temporary Washington State Ferry Representative Bill Knowlton should be sent to wsfrep@mebaunion.org.

USS INDIANAPOLIS WRECKAGE LOCATED

A team of civilian researchers led by entrepreneur and philanthropist Paul Allen have found the wreck of the World War II cruiser USS INDIANAPOLIS, resting on the bottom of the North Pacific Ocean in 18,000 feet of water. The vessel was torpedoed in the early morning hours of July 30, 1945 by a Japanese submarine. The INDIANAPOLIS sank in 12 minutes, and the initial damage made it impossible to send a distress signal. Prior to the attack, the ship had just completed a secret mission delivering components of the atomic bomb used in Hiroshima that would ultimately help end the war in the Pacific.

The wreck was located by the expedition crew of Allen's Research Vessel (R/V) PETREL. The 13-person expedition team on the PETREL is in the process of surveying the full site and will conduct a live tour of the wreckage in the next few weeks.

"To be able to honor the brave men of the USS Indianapolis and their families through the discovery of a ship that played such a significant role in ending World War II is truly humbling," said Allen. "As Americans, we all owe a debt of gratitude to the crew for their courage, persistence and sacrifice in the face of horrendous circumstances. While our search for the rest of the wreckage will continue, I hope everyone connected to this historic ship will feel some measure of closure at this discovery so long in coming."

Around 800 of the ship's 1,196 Sailors and Marines survived the sinking, but after four to five days in the water - suffering exposure, dehydration, drowning, and shark attacks - only 316 survived.

SEND YOUR KID BACK TO SCHOOL – UNION-READY

Your kids have spent the summer loafing around the house, but it's time to send them back to school. Finally! Labor 411 wants to make sure your kid is saddled up with union/ethically-made supplies. Check out their list of products from companies that treat their employees fairly:

Paper Supplies - ACCO brands; At-A-Glance Academic Daily Planner; Five Star Reinforced Filler Paper; Industries for the Blind Inc. Composition Books; Mead Spiral Notebook; Roaring Spring Pocket Folders; Swingline Stapler; Trapper Keeper Folders; Wilson Jones Binders. **Keepin' It Sanitary** - Kleenex Tissues. **Clothing:** All USA Clothing; Carhartt; Union House Apparel; The Union Shop; Wigwam. **Quench the Thirst:** Crystal Springs Water; Gatorade; Minute Maid Juice; Mott's Juice; Snapple; Tropicana; V8; and Welch's Juice.

SIGN UP FOR M.E.B.A. VACATION PLAN DIRECT DEPOSIT

Designed for convenience, M.E.B.A. members can help themselves by taking advantage of the Vacation Plan Direct Deposit that will help save them time and ease Plans processing costs. Authorization forms are available from the Plans Office, Plans Outport Offices and at the Plans' website – www.mebaplans.org (Forms, Vacation). Complete details are available on the Plans' site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or vacation@mebaplans.org for more info.

G&W RAFFLE TIX - DONATIONS NEEDED

Raffle tickets to assist the M.E.B.A.'s Good & Welfare Fund are being snatched up at Union halls around the country with \$5,000 at stake for the winner. The \$2 tickets are currently on sale for the 50/50 Raffle that will be held on October 12th in conjunction with a Silent Auction & Fundraiser at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School. 5,000 tickets have been printed meaning that, if they sell out, the winner will receive 50% of the proceeds (\$5,000) with the other half going to the Fund. The raffle is open to anyone who wants to purchase a ticket.

Ticketholders don't need to be present at the drawing to win. Every ticket you buy puts another dollar into the Good & Welfare Fund. To help support the upcoming Good & Welfare Auction & Fundraiser, the G&W Committee is asking for donations of gifts and prizes such as nautical items, sporting memorabilia, art, etc. You can contact Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo at Headquarters or any Branch Agent to forward monetary or item donations. ***Remember, your contributions to the fund are tax deductible*** so please give liberally in order to help a Union brother or sister in need. M.E.B.A. members are encouraged to support this important cause.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, September 4 – LABOR DAY

Tuesday, September 5 – Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315;
Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Wednesday, September 6 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, September 7 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, September 8 - Honolulu@1100.

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven 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 contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org