

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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### **WSF VOTE BEGINS SUNDAY MORNING**

Members sailing in the Washington State Ferry fleet can begin voting on Sunday morning on the 30-day Online Dues Equity Referendum. WSF members – not applicants – will decide whether or not to support a fair and progressive dues increase proposal that would reinforce the Union's ability to provide sustainable future representation. The proposal has been structured by the District Executive Committee (DEC) to provide for a more equitable dues structure, similar to comparable inland bargaining units that have voted to implement dues increases in recent years. The vote runs until midnight on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

An email signaling the start of the balloting period will be sent to eligible voters when the polls open. Those without functional email addresses on record with HQ will still be able to vote – but the process will be slightly more protracted. Those members should contact WSF Representative Eric Winge at (206) 310-5900 or [ewinge@mebaunion.org](mailto:ewinge@mebaunion.org) or Marco Cannistraro, who can be reached at (202) 257-2825 or [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org). WSF members are urged to make sure their personal (not work) email address is on file with the M.E.B.A.

In order to be eligible to participate in the vote, WSF members must be in "good standing" as of September 15, 2019. Most M.E.B.A. members sailing in the WSF are on Dues Check-Off which keeps them current. WSF members who are not on Dues Check-Off must make sure their dues are paid through the end of the 3rd Quarter in order to be eligible to vote. Those whose dues are not current before midnight on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 are not eligible to participate in the vote and will not be granted access to the online ballot.

### **CONGRESS TO TACKLE EX-IM BANK RE-CHARTER FOLLOWING RETURN**

The industry was heartened when the Export-Import Bank, a key source of cargo for U.S.-flag shipping, was restored to full functionality after the Senate approved nominations to establish a quorum of the Board's members. Now the battle is about to begin to re-charter the Bank as a Senate bill was recently introduced to keep Ex-Im funded for another decade. Sens. Kevin Cramer (R-ND) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), who sit on the Banking Committee, co-sponsored a bill (S. 2293) that would re-charter the Bank until 2029, and also increases the Bank's exposure cap and implements other sought-after reforms.

The Ex-Im Bank helps U.S. companies finance the export of U.S. goods and services to international markets. Importantly, a portion of cargo generated by the Bank is required to be transported aboard

U.S.-flag ships. In addition, for transactions above \$20 million, 100% of all cargo financed by the Bank must be carried on US-flag vessels. Ex-Im helps create jobs in this country and turns a profit at no cost to taxpayers.

The Bank had only been operating at half-speed since 2015 after opponents prevented Ex-Im from fielding a quorum thus forbidding the Bank from approving loans over \$10 million. The Cramer/Sinema legislation contains a provision that would prevent the disruption of Ex-Im Bank business if the Board loses its quorum.

Though the Ex-Im Bank enjoys bi-partisan support, a number of conservative lawmakers consider it to be a form of “corporate welfare” that picks “winners and losers.” Those opponents are sharpening their knives for the upcoming reauthorization battle. But the Cramer/Sinema legislation proposes various Ex-Im Bank reforms that may temper some of those concerns. Some weeks back, a House version of the bill met resistance when proposed reforms failed to strike the right balance to satisfy Members on the House Financial Services Committee, which ended up shelving the bill until a consensus could be reached.

Congress is expected to get back to work the week after Labor Day. If a bill to reauthorize the agency is not signed into law, the Ex-Im’s Bank’s charter will expire on September 30, 2019.

#### **NMC CREDENTIAL MITIGATION EFFORTS FROM PARTIAL SHUTDOWN CONCLUDE**

More than eight months after the partial government shutdown that helped disrupt the fluid processing of shipping document applications, the National Maritime Center has issued its “final update” announcing the end of the extensions granted for mariner credentials and medical certificates:

“Merchant mariner credentials (MMC) and medical certificates (national endorsements only) that expired in December 2018, January 2019, February 2019, March 2019, April 2019, May 2019, June 2019, or July 2019 will remain valid only until August 31, 2019. ***No further credential extensions are authorized.***

“The backlog of credential applications and increased net processing time caused by the lapse in appropriations and partial government shutdown has improved. Within the next 2 weeks, the National Maritime Center (NMC) will resume processing all MMC applications within the stated goal of 30 net days. Applications for medical certificates are currently processed well under the stated goal of 20 net days.

“The NMC recommends mariners submit their application packages at least 2 months prior to the expiration date of their current credentials. If you need immediate assistance or require expedited processing, contact our Customer Service Center via the NMC online chat system, by e-mailing [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil), or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).”

The notice can be found on the NMC website ([https://www.dco.uscg.mil/national\\_maritime\\_center](https://www.dco.uscg.mil/national_maritime_center)) and has also been posted on the M.E.B.A. site located at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org).

## **STUDY HIGHLIGHTS EFFECT OF COMMERCIAL PRESSURES ON SHIPBOARD SAFETY**

A new study sponsored by the MM&P casts a spotlight on how overemphasis on commercial performance can detriment shipboard safety with potential disastrous effects. “Spotlight: Why Accidents Are Often Not Accidental,” was prepared in conjunction with Dalhousie University of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

“On a domestic level,” the study summary noted, “operators in all shipping markets are understandably reluctant to forgo income while a ship is pulled out of service to be repaired. In international shipping, where the flag-of-convenience system dominates, owners are free to choose which flag state and class society to use. This results in commercial pressure on flag states and class societies, which may decide to turn a blind eye to safety problems as a way to attract and retain clients.” The study can be found online at <https://bridgedeck.org/actionnetwork/Spotlight-MMP-WMRCFinal071619.pdf>.

## **LATEST MSC EPF WRAPS UP SEA TRIALS**

The newest Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) vessel that will sail for the Military Sealift Command with M.E.B.A.-represented mariners wrapped up successful integrated sea trials in the Gulf of Mexico last week. The USNS PUERTO RICO is the eleventh EPF in the program and was built at the Austal USA facility in Mobile, AL. It is set to be delivered this fall.

The Spearhead-class EPFs have proven to be workhorse vessels deployed on high-profile missions around the world. EPF civilian mariner crews are represented by the M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU. The 12<sup>th</sup> EPF in the program, USNS NEWPORT, is still under construction at Austal and a contract has been finalized for the future USNS APALACHICOLA (EPF 13) and the as-yet unnamed EPF 14.

## **ITF: “SEAFARERS USED AS PATSIES BY GOVERNMENTS”**

The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) aired their concerns over the lack of understanding shown by many governments about the role played by seafarers in global shipping. ITF referred to a recent communication from the U.S. State Department alerting mariners that it will invoke anti-terrorism legislation to deny seafarers a US visa if they work onboard a vessel carrying Iranian oil. The Federation cited this as “an example of how little governments understand seafarers’ reality.”

The State Department announcement was issued in the wake of the British Royal Navy detention of the Iranian-controlled tanker GRACE 1 after the vessel allegedly transported oil to Syria in violation of European Union sanctions.

Dave Heindel, ITF Seafarers Section chair, expressed his frustration at the State Department announcement, saying that mariners on flag of convenience (FOC) vessels are beholden to shipping companies that are able to operate in a clandestine manner under the FOC system. He said the mariners can’t be expected to be all-knowing about the intentions of the ship’s owner/operator, the vessel’s ultimate destination and the legality of the cargo.

Heindel noted, “This is why the ITF has been campaigning since 1948 against the FOC system that dominates the shipping industry and allows vessel owners who should be held responsible to hide behind a veil of secrecy.”

“It is unjust to blankly refuse visas to seafarers who may have been employed onboard a vessel considered in breach of sanctions, and it does not hold the right people responsible. Governments, including the US, should rather direct their focus to the FOC system and change the rules that allow this system and its secretive ownership laws to flourish unimpeded.”

### **PHILLIPS TRUST PRESERVES ANNUAL CORCORAN TOURNAMENT**

The charitable foundation set up by one of the protagonists in the MAERSK ALABAMA saga, has allowed the Jay Corcoran Memorial Golf Tournament to continue. The Captain Richard Phillips Lane Kirkland Maritime Trust recently took over the sponsorship of the Jay Corcoran Memorial Golf Tournament and Dinner, a successful annual event embraced by the M.E.B.A. family for 15 straight years.

Jay Corcoran was a popular 22-year M.E.B.A. member who was flying from his Massachusetts home on September 11, 2001 to rejoin his vessel (the APL THAILAND) on the West Coast. His airplane was hijacked and flown into the World Trade Center. His widow, Diann, set up the annual golf tournament soon after to benefit high school students in Jay’s hometown of Norwell, Massachusetts. The Foundation raised over a half million dollars for scholarships.

The Sept. 2016 tournament would have been the final event without the intervention of the Phillips Trust. Phillips was the Captain of the MAERSK ALABAMA when Somali pirates attempted to hijack the ship in April 2009 before being thwarted by the crew. The Captain was kidnapped before his liberation at the hands of sharpshooting Navy Seals days later.

The Phillips Trust reignited the annual tournament in a new incarnation that will take place in a few weeks at the Easton Country Club in South Easton, Massachusetts on September 27. M.E.B.A. members continue to enthusiastically support this event and will be omnipresent on the appointed day.

“Jay was a devoted husband, father and friend,” Diann noted. “He was a proud American and a hardworking Merchant Marine engineer... [We] are privileged to have the Captain Richard Phillips Lane Kirkland Maritime Trust continue this tradition. We look forward to celebrating the love and brotherhood this tournament has brought to us all, as we continue to honor Jay’s legacy now, and in the years to come.”

“As in past years, all proceeds will be used to fund scholarships,” said Rear Adm. Wendi Carpenter (U.S. Navy retired), Executive Director of the Phillips Kirkland Trust. “Going forward, the funds will be distributed to students pursuing education for careers in the U.S. maritime industry or related fields. We do plan to establish several specific scholarships which will bear Jay’s name – including one at Massachusetts Maritime, Jay’s alma mater. Hosting this Tournament and Dinner aligns with our mission in every way and we are very excited to be honoring Jay’s great legacy and life.”

To find out more about the tournament and the dinner and to register, go to <https://captainphillipstrust.org/> under the Events Page or email [eventregistration@captainphillipstrust.org](mailto:eventregistration@captainphillipstrust.org)

## **HALLS, OFFICES CLOSED MONDAY FOR LABOR DAY**

M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on Labor Day - Monday, Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>, but will reopen on Tuesday. Union halls which usually have their regular membership meetings on the Monday of meeting week (Boston & Seattle) will instead conduct their meetings on Tuesday, September 3 at the regular time.

## **REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

Monday, September 2 – **LABOR DAY**

Tuesday, September 3 – **Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**

Wednesday, September 4 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**

Thursday, September 5 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**

Friday, September 6 – **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](mailto: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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*