

# 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 35 – August 31, 2017**

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

M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be shuttered on Labor Day - Monday, Sept. 4, but will reopen on Tuesday. Union halls which usually have their regular membership meetings on the Monday of meeting month (Boston & Seattle) will instead conduct their meetings on Tuesday, September 5.

### **M.E.B.A. GOOD & WELFARE FUND SUPPORTS THOSE HIT BY HURRICANE HARVEY**

Though M.E.B.A.'s hall in Houston survived the onslaught of Hurricane Harvey, many area members, applicants and retirees endured flooding at their homes and are facing a lengthy recovery process. Unexpected disasters like Hurricane Harvey are the reason M.E.B.A. established the Fund 12 years ago.

The Good & Welfare Fund has helped remove some of the sting and burden of unexpected tragedies. It has assisted M.E.B.A. families following Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the Boston Marathon bombings and through the years following cases of illness and death. With the catastrophic chaos and flooding unleashed by Hurricane Harvey, M.E.B.A. is ready to assist those in need. This is a wonderful cause, but we need to constantly replenish the fund to allow additional assistance to members and retirees in times of hardship.

Please consider making a contribution today to allow the Fund to lend a hand to M.E.B.A. families in the Gulf. You can contribute online at the M.E.B.A. website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) using the payment portal or stop in at a Union hall.

You can also support the Fund by purchasing \$2 tickets at any of the M.E.B.A. halls for the ongoing 50/50 Raffle. The winner will receive 50% of the proceeds (as much as \$5,000!!) with the other half going to the Fund.

The raffle is open to anyone who wants to purchase a ticket. The drawing will be held on October 12<sup>th</sup> at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School during a Silent Auction & Fundraiser. Ticketholders don't need to be present at the drawing to win. Every ticket you buy puts another dollar into the Good & Welfare Fund. The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that the Good & Welfare Fund is exempt from Federal Income tax.

To help support the 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. Let's make sure M.E.B.A. Good & Welfare is "at the ready" for members when times are tough.

### **CLEAN-UP AT HOUSTON HALL**

Sitting on higher ground, the Houston Union hall was largely unscathed from the widespread damage left in the wake of Hurricane Harvey.

The hall was actually operating on Monday but complications with the sewage system caused by the excess water forced its closure on Tuesday. But a day later, all systems were restored and the hall reopened. Obviously, the situation with the city may necessitate that members utilize a different route to navigate their way to the hall, but Gulf Coast V.P. Erin Bertram and Dispatcher/Rep. Donn Reamer are getting operations back up to speed. Many thanks to some of the members who stopped by and assisted with various cleanup tasks at 316 Broadway including Dominique Dertien, PJ Hamill and Kelby Gates. Erin's son Trevor Ordesky, who had nowhere to go after schools were closed for the week, also lent a hand.

### **CREDENTIALS LOST DUE TO HURRICANE HARVEY**

The National Maritime Center announced that duplicate Merchant Mariner Credentials can be issued free of charge to mariners whose credentials were lost or destroyed as a result of Hurricane Harvey and the recent flooding in Texas and neighboring states.

Those mariners should provide a statement of loss to the NMC via fax at 1-304-433-3412 or via e-mail at [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil) with your: Full name; Date of birth; Mariner reference number (MRN) or SSN; Mailing address to send the replacement; Phone/email; and circumstances surrounding the loss/destruction of the credential. Questions about duplicate credentials should be directed to [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil) or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (1-888-427-5662).

### **M.E.B.A. PLANS INFO FOR HURRICANE HARVEY-AFFECTED MEMBERS**

Those affected by Hurricane Harvey are in the M.E.B.A.'s thoughts and our Benefit Plans is available to assist with Plan business during this trying time. In order to facilitate matters for you please note the following:

#### **General Plan Business**

Any Member that had pending Plans Business should contact Mary Birmingham or Patty Kelly at the Baltimore Plan Office at (800) 811-6322 or by e-mail to [admin@mebaplans.org](mailto:admin@mebaplans.org). They will direct you to the appropriate department in the Plan Office.

#### **Contact Information**

After a review of the United States Postal Service's listing of affected zip codes, the Plan Office understands that many members' homes may have been affected by Harvey and that you may be in long-term, temporary quarters. Please contact the Member Services Department at Plan Office to keep them informed of any address changes that may affect delivery of mail to you. [memberservices@mebaplans.org](mailto:memberservices@mebaplans.org).

### **September 1<sup>st</sup> Pension Checks**

Unfortunately, September 1<sup>st</sup> Pension Checks were mailed before the extent of damage was known. Retirees living in the affected area who normally receive their pension checks via the United States Postal Service and are now in temporary quarters should contact the Plan Office to provide alternate delivery instructions. Call the Plan Office at (800) 811-6322 and ask for the Pension Department.

### **Sign Up for M.E.B.A. Vacation and/or Pension Plan Direct Deposit**

Designed for convenience, M.E.B.A. members can help themselves by taking advantage of the Pension Plan and Vacation Plan Direct Deposits 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](http://www.mebaplans.org) (Forms and Documents, Vacation Plan Forms) & (Forms and Documents, Pension Plan Forms). Complete details are available on the Plans' website as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or [vacation@mebaplans.org](mailto:vacation@mebaplans.org) & [pension@mebaplans.org](mailto:pension@mebaplans.org) for more info.

In order for your October 1<sup>st</sup> pension check to be direct deposited into your banking institution, the Pension direct deposit forms must be completed and received at the Plan Office **no later than September 14, 2017.**

### **UNION PLUS TO ASSIST THOSE IMPACTED BY HARVEY**

Members, applicants and retirees in the disaster affected areas may be eligible for financial assistance through the Union Plus Disaster Relief Grant program. M.E.B.A.'s connection with Union Plus nets our members a range of benefits and discounts. Union Plus programs, which are available to M.E.B.A. members, retirees and our affiliates, provide a vast range of money-saving benefits and services. The Union is enrolled in dozens of moneysaving U.P. programs ranging from life insurance to financing children's educations.

Union Plus Disaster Relief Grants of \$500 are available to eligible participants of one of the following programs: Union Plus Credit Card Program; Union Plus Life Insurance; Accidental Death Insurance; Union Plus Auto Insurance or Union Plus Mortgage Program. Participants who live in the following counties may be eligible for individual assistance: Aransas, Bee, Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Goliad, Harris, Jackson, Kleberg, Liberty, Matagorda, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio, Victoria and Wharton. Visit [www.unionplus.org](http://www.unionplus.org) for terms and conditions.

### **MLA, TTD SOLIDARITY WITH M.E.B.A. OVER LIBERTY MARITIME VIOLATION**

The six-union Maritime Labor Alliance (MLA) as well as the Transportation Trades Department (AFL-CIO), which represents 32 unions in the transport sector, are standing in solidarity with our Union after Liberty Maritime violated the M.E.B.A. contract.

Though the M.E.B.A. has jurisdiction over deck and engine officers on Liberty Maritime vessels, the company violated the contract and crewed up a new U.S.-flagship – the LIBERTY PEACE – with non-M.E.B.A. officers. The ship arrived in Beaumont last week and was repainted with its new name, but a reflagging ceremony was delayed because of Hurricane Harvey. M.E.B.A. members and applicants maintained a vigil in the port picketing the ship from Wednesday until early Sunday when the worsening weather began threatening safety. New York-area members picketed Liberty headquarters on Long Island.

The MLA is a cooperation between the ARA, IBU, ILA, ILWU, M.E.B.A. and MM&P. In a letter signed by each of the MLA Presidents and dispatched to Liberty President/CEO Philip Shapiro, the MLA expressed “extreme disapproval” of the Liberty action.

The unions said, “The MLA will stand behind and support the M.E.B.A. in any action we deem necessary and consider this shopping of labor unions while a legitimate and longstanding collective bargaining agreement is in effect an affront to all true labor unions.”

The TTD said the violation of the CBA “not only damages the working relationship between M.E.B.A. and Liberty, but disrespects the loyal union members who have worked to maintain Liberty as a viable vessel operator. This behavior is counterproductive to growing our nation’s maritime sector.” TTD called on Liberty to reverse this egregious action and properly crew up the PEACE with expert M.E.B.A. officers. The text of each of the letters can be viewed on the M.E.B.A.’s homepage located at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org).

### **GENEROUS FISHER DONATION ENABLES CMES TRAINING ENHANCEMENT**

During the recent meeting of the M.E.B.A. Benefit Plans Trustees at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School, a simple ceremony was held to dedicate the newly-renovated and updated computing equipment and supporting IT systems in classrooms 106 and 107.

The funding to accomplish the modernization was enabled by long-time, highly-respected company Trustee Phil Fisher of Keystone Shipping. On many occasions, Phil has generously sponsored the acquisition or improvements to existing assets in support of the School's training mission and students' on-campus well-being. M.E.B.A. members as well as the M.E.B.A. Training Plan have deep appreciation for Phil Fisher’s generosity and allegiance to the industry.

### **MAERSK LINE LTD. (MLL) TALKS CONTINUE**

The Union continued negotiations with Maersk Line Limited this week on all three M.E.B.A./MLL contracts (MLL, E-Ships, and M-Ships). The parties met for two days at M.E.B.A. Headquarters on August 29-30, two weeks after a first round of talks took place in Norfolk, VA at MLL Headquarters on August 18-19. Led by Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan, the M.E.B.A. team was supplemented by rank and file member Captain Dan Davis at the talks this week. Rank and file member Chief Engineer John Collins took part in the bargaining session in Norfolk. The parties have scheduled another round of talks in mid-September at M.E.B.A. HQ on September 14-15 and late in the month in Norfolk on September 26-29. The contract expires at the end of September. Anybody interested in attending the negotiations as rank and file should contact ACVP Jason Callahan by email at [jcallahan@mebaunion.org](mailto:jcallahan@mebaunion.org).

### **MEETING WITH CHAO, BUZBY**

M.E.B.A. President Marshall Ainley took part in a meeting with Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao at DOT Headquarters last week along with several other maritime labor leaders and Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby. The lunch meeting included Sailors’ Union of the Pacific President Gunnar Lundeberg, MM&P President Don Marcus, AMO President Paul Doell and former Maritime Administrator William Schubert. M.E.B.A. strongly supported the Chao and Buzby appointments and are pleased the maritime industry has two leaders that will thrust ahead toward progress and growth for U.S.-flag shipping.

## **REPORT, POLL GOOD NEWS FOR UNIONS**

In its latest report, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) pointed out that workers covered by union contracts typically earn 13.2% more in salary than those with the same education and occupational background who are not part of a union. Unions also generate wage equality and help guarantee a more diverse workplace. So when unions thrive, all workers win. In addition, a recently released Gallup Poll stated that approval of unions in the United States has risen to 61%, its highest mark since 2003.

## **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.

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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 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)*