

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

The M.E.B.A. wishes all of our members, applicants, retirees and their families a Merry Christmas, happy holidays and a prosperous new year. M.E.B.A. halls and offices are on a half-day schedule tomorrow (Friday) and closed on Monday. Follow up with your local hall to make sure you're up-to-date with their holiday schedule.

UNION APPROVES NEW EIGHT YEAR DEAL WITH MAERSK, E-SHIPS, M-SHIPS

Following negotiations that necessitated three contract extensions, the Union closed on agreements with Maersk Line Ltd covering three contracts (MLL, E-Ships, and M-Ships).

As per the contracts, the tentative agreements were put to a ratification vote at Special Meetings that were conducted at Union halls across the country on Wednesday. There was a good turnout by members who approved the contracts thus ratifying the new agreements which go into effect retroactively from October 1, 2017. The contracts stay in force for the next eight years until September 30, 2025.

The new agreements secure wage and benefit improvements among other contract terms. The agreements are being forwarded to the Chief Engineers and Masters (M-Ships) working under the contracts.

GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS FOR EX-IM BANK

A controversial nominee for the Chair of the Export-Import Bank was blocked this week by the Senate Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs Committee though four other board members were approved. Senator Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) joined Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) along with all Committee Democrats in opposing the nomination of Scott Garrett, resulting in a 10 to 13 vote, ending Garrett's bid to serve as the Ex-Im Chair. Senators voting against the nominee were uncomfortable with Garrett's past Ex-Im Bank opposition. As a Congressman, Garrett voted against the Bank's reauthorization in 2015 and said that the Ex-Im Bank "embodies the corruption of the free-enterprise system." Though it mostly enjoys bipartisan support, a faction of the Republican Party considers Ex-Im "corporate welfare."

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), the Ranking Member on the Committee said that allowing Garrett to lead the agency “would be like putting an arsonist in charge of the fire department.”

The Ex-Im Bank assists U.S. companies with financing the export of U.S. goods and services to international markets. A portion of cargo generated by the Bank is required to be transported aboard U.S.-flag ships. For transactions above \$20 million, 100% of all cargo financed by the Bank must be carried on US-flag vessels. The Bank helps create jobs in this country and turns a profit at no cost to taxpayers. It has fed \$9.5 billion into the U.S. Treasury since 1992.

The newly-released White House national security strategy also indicates that it sees Ex-Im as a means to better compete globally with countries such as China: “Trade, export promotion, targeted use of foreign assistance and modernized development finance tools can promote stability, prosperity and political reform,” the strategy states.

The Bank’s Board has been short of a quorum for over two years which prevents it from approving loans over \$10 million. There is a backlog of about \$42 billion in deals awaiting Ex-Im Bank action. This week, the Senate Banking Committee approved Kimberly Reed, Spencer Bachus, Judith Pryor and Claudia Slacik to the Board which would be enough for the Bank to field a quorum if they receive Senate confirmation. However, it is unclear if Ex-Im Bank opponents, including Sens. Patrick Toomey (R-PA) and Richard Shelby (R-AL), will try to stymie the scheduling of a confirmation vote for the nominees in retribution over the Committee’s vote against Garrett. Further complicating the matter is the end-of-the-year deadline in which nominations expire – which would necessitate a restart of the nomination process should the December 31st deadline be missed.

NEW LEADER AT IBU

Congratulations to Marina Secchitano who unseated incumbent Alan Coté and will serve as the new National President of the Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific (IBU). She prevailed with 52% of the vote against two candidates including Coté who had served as President for just over a decade. Terri Mast ran unopposed as Secretary-Treasurer and was re-elected to a new three-year term. Affiliated with the ILWU, the almost 99-year old IBU primarily represents mariners operating tugs and barges on the West Coast.

Secchitano had served as an IBU Regional Director. M.E.B.A. looks forward to working with her as part of the six-union Maritime Labor Alliance. On the ballot, IBU members were also asked to consider a change of the organization’s name to “Inland Boatworkers Union.” That change was overwhelmingly rejected and the IBU will continue to be known as the Inlandboatmen’s Union of the Pacific.

ICEBREAK OPERATIONS BEGIN IN WESTERN GREAT LAKES

The Coast Guard commenced Operation Taconite last week in response to expanded ice growth in the commercial ports of western Lake Superior and the lower St. Marys River. Before ice impedes commercial navigation, icebreakers were assigned to each region. Operation Taconite is the Coast Guard’s largest domestic icebreaking operation. The operation encompasses Lake Superior, St. Marys River, the Straits of Mackinac, Georgian Bay, and Lake Michigan. The implementation of Operation Taconite places additional movement criteria on commercial ships plying the western Great Lakes, St. Marys River, and the Straits of Mackinac. These measures include restricting tanker transits to daylight in the presence of ice, reducing speeds by two miles per hour in specified locations to reduce incidental

ice breaking, and requiring additional voice and position reporting points throughout the operation's area of responsibility.

PORTS PLEASED WITH FIXES TO TAX CUT BILL

The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), the united voice of America's ports, was pleased that several important tax related policy priorities were addressed in the final "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act" legislation passed by Congress and expected to become law in the New Year. These included provisions related to tax-exempt bond financing and wind energy production tax credits. In collaboration with many of its U.S. member ports, AAPA conducted vocal outreach to inform policymakers and the public about the negative impact of removing the tax-exempt status of private activity bonds (PABs). "It was estimated that ports would have had to pay approximately \$19 million in extra debt service costs for every \$100 million borrowed had the PAB tax exemption been lost. These significantly increased costs would have harmed ports' ability to make needed investments, and likely would have delayed or even killed some projects," said AAPA President & CEO Kurt Nagle.

AAPA also expressed appreciation to Senate leadership for dropping a provision in their version of the bill that would have placed a new tax on international cruise lines that call at U.S. ports.

CYBER-SECURITY GROUP CLAIMS HACKERS COULD SINK A BULK CARRIER

A company that investigates computer system security vulnerabilities detailed how a hacker could surreptitiously sink a bulk carrier. Penetration testing group Pen Test Partners, said that a cyber-criminal could deliberately cause an imbalance of cargo on the vessel by manipulating the loading data of the hull stress monitoring systems (HSMS) without the crew being aware. The consequences could be catastrophic with the vessel being put under intense strain leading to it breaking up and sinking.

"The reason it is feasible is that when HSMS were first developed, there was no concept of a vessel being connected to the internet, allowing it to be accessed remotely. Therefore, many HSMS are just PCs connected to the ships' network," said senior partner, Ken Munro. "A hacker could interrupt the loading data being fed to and from the monitoring system, having previously compromised the network either via the satcom unit or a phishing e-mail. Once in control, hackers can manipulate the loading of cargo and turn off any stress monitoring alarms that would alert crew to any undue strain on the vessel," he contested.

FMC'S DOYLE MOVING ON TO DREDGING POST

Commissioner William Doyle announced his departure from the Federal Maritime Commission this month as he gets ready to take over the Dredging Contractors of America as the organization's Executive Director & CEO. He has served as one of the five FMC Commissioners since January 2013. Bill got his start in the industry sailing around the world as an M.E.B.A. engineer. He worked at our Headquarters in Washington D.C. for almost eight years before his FMC appointment. His last day at FMC will be January 2. In his new roles, Mr. Doyle will be responsible for management, advocacy, and policy issues of the Dredging Contractors of America. "While I am excited about this new opportunity and looking forward to getting started," he noted, "I look back at my time on the Commission and feel proud of the good work that was accomplished."

1,008 ICEBERGS DRIFTED INTO SHIPPING LANES THIS YEAR

The International Ice Patrol, the U.S. Coast Guard agency that monitors ice activity in the North Atlantic, counted 1,008 renegade icebergs drifting into shipping lanes this year. This marks the fourth consecutive ice season they would term as "extreme." The ice season runs from February 1st through

July 3rd. At its annual meeting in New London, CT last week, the head of IIP, Cmdr. Kristen Serumgard, pointed out that 2017's iceberg total was over 320 more than recorded in 2016. Cmdr. Serumgard noted that the count was high this year because of powerful storms and the "retreat" of glaciers in Greenland. The IIP was established soon after the TITANIC sinking. It conducts an annual survey and collects data by aerial reconnaissance and increasingly by satellite imagery. Though modern ship equipment should detect such hazards that could cause an unexpected iceberg collision, such accidents are still possible. "We don't want another TITANIC," Cmdr. Serumgard noted.

LABOR 411 – "GIFTS FOR "HER"

If there is a woman on your "Nice" list, you've got plenty of options. The choices on Labor 411's handy "Gifts for Her" list are tried and true and guaranteed to put a holiday smile on that special lady's face. This holiday season, when you shop carefully and choose ethical manufacturers who treat their workers with respect, you are supporting good jobs and helping to strengthen the middle class: **Wearables** - Bosca Fine Leather Goods; Carolina Women's Boots; Filson Clothing and Accessories; Jones New York Clothing & Accessories; Majestic Athletic Apparel; Naturalizer Shoes; Pendleton Woolen Mills; Timex Women's Watches. **Tasty Stuff** - Almond Roca Chocolate; Ghiradelli Chocolate; Kauai Coffee; See's Candies; **Kiss and Makeup** - L'Oreal Paris Products; Revlon Cosmetics. **Kitchen Stuff** - Cutco Cutlery & Kitchen Knives; Whirlpool Kitchenware. **Spirits and Fine Wine** - Columbia Crest Chardonnay; Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery; Eagle Rare Bourbon; St. Supéry Winery; Woodford Reserve Bourbon.

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 & Documents, Vacation Plan Forms). Complete details are available on the Plans' site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or vacation@mebaplans.org for more info.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, January 8 – Boston@1200; [Seattle \(Fife\)@1300](mailto:Seattle(Fife)@1300);
Tuesday, January 9 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;
Wednesday, January 10 – Jacksonville@1300; [New Orleans@1315](mailto:NewOrleans@1315);
Thursday, January 11 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;
Friday, January 12 – 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