

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 9 – February 28, 2019



In this issue//Proposed Ferry Cuts would Impair Alaska Ferry System//Connolly Succeeds Lundeberg at SUP//M.E.B.A. Fulfills Obligations for MarAd Paper Breakout//M.E.B.A. Welcomes New Govt. Affairs Director//OSG's OVERSEAS KEY WEST Readies for Service//Maersk Completing Two-Ship Change-Out//NMC Working Group to Review CG Exam Questions//MATSONIA Sidelined with Cracked Hull//

PROPOSED FERRY CUTS COULD HELP SCUTTLE ALASKA FERRY SYSTEM

Alaskan residents will spend a lot more time at home resigned to inaccessibility and isolation if Governor Mike Dunleavy's plan to shave \$96 million out of the Alaska Marine Highway System budget is implemented. Gov. Dunleavy proposed the plan as a way for the State to dig out of its budget mess. He had pledged his broad support of the ferry system during his election campaign but appears to have dispensed with those promises now that he has moved into the Governor's mansion. The proposed cuts represent almost 75% of the AMHS budget and will likely propel the state to operate the ferry system solely during the summer months. The state is also looking into privatizing the ferries. The *Ketchikan Daily News* said that, "The Dunleavy plan is clear: Scuttle the Alaska Marine Highway System, and fast."

The AMHS ferry fleet serves as a crucial connector for Alaskan communities spread out over 3,100 miles. The AMHS was built with federal dollars and is part of the National Highway System. Most of the communities serviced by the ferry fleet aren't connected to the road system, especially in Southeast Alaska, and they'll be cut off when ferry service grinds to a halt. A service stoppage will sever the connection for many residents to key health care and other important services they need at other Alaskan locations. Sen. Mike Shower (R-Wasilla) said, "If you shut down the ferry operations...you're strangling those communities because they may not make it through the winter, if the airports can't support them, and my guess is they can't."

Besides shuttling passengers, the system transports cars, food and equipment. The plan will prove crushing for so many who depend on the ferry system and will help tank tourism outside the summer months.

The 2020 Fiscal Year begins on July 1 but the state has already stopped scheduling ferry services past October 1, after the conclusion of the busier summer season. If the budget is passed with the egregious proposals intact, the ferry system will lay up on October 1 and massive lay-offs would go into effect on that day while Alaskans would be left high and dry.

Presumably, ferry service would resume on July 1 for a three-month season, but it's unlikely the pool of highly qualified officers ensuring safe passage for many hundreds of thousands a year can afford to be available for short-term work. The dedicated and skilled mariner workforce has helped keep the system running smoothly despite the diminishing state funding the ferry fleet has received over the

last few years. If the Governor's plan is put in play, some 250 mariner jobs are at risk - and the massive local economy benefits and jobs generated by the system and dependent on a year-round service will likely dissipate.

M.E.B.A., MM&P and IBU, among others, have vowed to fight and are staging rallies that are drumming up support from locals horrified at the prospect of being abandoned from a transportation network on which they rely. The Union is intensely focused on this issue and will keep members informed with future updates.

CONNOLLY SUCCEEDS LUNDEBERG AT SUP

Congratulations to Dave Connolly who will take over as President/Secretary-Treasurer of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific after a two-month mail balloting period. Connolly had been serving as SUP's V.P./Assistant Secretary-Treasurer under Gunnar Lundeberg who chose not to run for re-election after an impressive career with the union, serving as its President since 1990. Gunnar has been a fierce advocate for his members and U.S.-flag shipping through an admirable career. We wish him the best as he moves on with the next phase of his life.

That will happen on March 1 as Dave Connolly takes the helm of the SUP, which celebrates its 133rd anniversary next week. He was elected by an overwhelming margin to a three-year term. Rank-and-file member Matt Henning will take over as Vice President/Assistant Secretary-Treasurer.

Joining him will be SUP Seattle Branch Agent Brendan Bohannon and Honolulu Branch Agent Mike Dirksen who were re-elected to new terms. Wilmington Branch Agent Leighton "Leon" Gandy and San Francisco Business Agent Roy Tufono ran unopposed and were also re-elected. Congratulations all!

UNION FULFILLS OBLIGATIONS FOR MARAD PAPER BREAKOUT

In the annual tabletop "Breakout" overseen by the Maritime Administration this week to help gauge the industry's ability to support a major ramp-up of surge sealift vessels, M.E.B.A. fulfilled its obligations with a swift and efficient exercise response. The MarAd paper exercise simulates the activation of the Ready Reserve Force fleet and Military Sealift Command surge vessels to test procedures and coordination necessary to meet strategic sealift requirements.

M.E.B.A. was responsible for the virtual crewing of 20 RRF vessels "activated" for the exercise. Those vessels are managed by Patriot Contract Services, Matson Navigation and Keystone Shipping.

For Breakout 2019, maritime unions were required to crew up RRF and surge vessels "on paper" using available mariners holding the proper licenses and qualifications. Participating members and applicants did not actually have to report to the vessels and the exercise did not preclude them from taking real world shipping work. Members already serving aboard vessels were not eligible for the exercise. Mariners who participated in the exercise may receive a follow-up email from MarAd in the coming days to verify their information and answer a few simple survey questions.

Many thanks to Tampa Branch Agent Adam Smith, NY/NJ Patrolman Nico Sermoneta and L.A. Patrolman John McElhone who helped oversee M.E.B.A.'s efficient response in Breakout 2019. Their relentless and coordinated efforts helped the Union satisfy its exercise obligations in just over 7 hours.

The exercise began on Tuesday requiring a flurry of phone calls to members with the appropriate credentials. The M.E.B.A. database, which continues to improve as members, applicants and retirees keep it updated with their latest contact information, proved to be advantageous in our efforts to fulfill our responsibilities in this exercise. Members, applicants and retirees should make sure to keep the Union updated with their latest contact information and other important data to assist our records and our ability to better pursue initiatives and job opportunities for our membership.

Our thanks go out to all the members and applicants who participated in Breakout 2019. In every conflict, real or simulated, M.E.B.A. is poised to rush to the defense of our country.

M.E.B.A. WELCOMES NEW GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

M.E.B.A. has welcomed new Government Affairs Director Erick Siahaan (pronounced “See-a-Hawn”) to the fold as he set up office in our D.C. Headquarters earlier this month. With solid legislative and political experience, he hails from a proud union household and is prepared to go to war for the M.E.B.A. He heads up our legislative and political efforts on Capitol Hill and is taking an active role on the Union’s Political Action Fund, chaired by Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo.

He previously served as a Government Relations Specialist for the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers (SMART) which alongside the M.E.B.A., is part of the AFL-CIO’s Transportation Trades Dept. Before that, he spent five years as a Policy Advisor to California Congresswoman Lois Capps.

Erick takes over from Matt Dwyer who held the position for the past eight years. The M.E.B.A. is pleased that we’ll still be working with Matt as he takes over as the top staffer on the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation which is part of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Erick is hard at work on our issues and has reached out to M.E.B.A. officials offering his assistance to advance our issues on Capitol Hill. He is eager to assist members interested in promoting our concerns with their Congressional delegations and through local initiatives. He can be reached through the main Headquarters phone number or by email at esiahaan@mebaunion.org. Welcome aboard Erick!

OSG’S OVERSEAS KEY WEST READIES FOR SERVICE

Expert M.E.B.A. engineers are onboard the vessel that will soon be known as the OVERSEAS KEY WEST, a chemical/oil tanker that will supplement OSG’s Jones Act fleet.

The ship is scheduled for an upcoming shipyard period and be readied for service, which will likely be sometime in April.

The vessel had previously operated as the OREGON VOYAGER for Chevron. M.E.B.A. engineers crewed up the vessel under our existing contract with OSG.

Along with Tampa Branch Agent Adam Smith, M.E.B.A. President Marshall Ainley visited the M.E.B.A. engineers aboard the KEY WEST while in Tampa during meeting week earlier this month. The vessel’s crew includes C/E Alexander Robinson, 1st A/E Elliot Lewis, 2nd A/E Dominic Kolenda and 3rd A/E Mike Breheny.

MAERSK COMPLETING TWO-SHIP CHANGE-OUT

Maersk Line, Ltd. is completing the change-out of two vessels, both part of the Maritime Security Program, for ships the company says are better suited for their commercial trade routes. The MAERSK DURBAN flagged in last month and supplants the MAERSK KENTUCKY which flagged out to the Maersk international fleet. The DURBAN is part of Maersk's West African Feeder Service. The USCG licensed deck and engine officers on the KENTUCKY along with her unlicensed crew transferred to the DURBAN.

MLL is finalizing the swap-out of the MAERSK MEMPHIS in favor of the SAFMARINE MAFADI. Both vessels were built in 2007, but the company believes the MAFADI is better suited to serve in the company's Trans-Atlantic Northern European Service. The USCG licensed deck and engine officers and unlicensed crew on the MEMPHIS are transitioning to the SAFMARINE MAFADI.

The Maritime Administration approved the transfer of the MSP chits to the vessels flagging in to the Stars and Stripes. The agency considers the incoming vessels to be more viable, both commercially and militarily, than the vessels they are replacing. In addition, the KENTUCKY was built in 1999 and only had a few years left before pushing up against Maritime Security Program dry cargo age restrictions (25 years). Its replacement, the MAERSK DURBAN, was built in 2005.

The replacement vessels are covered by all terms and conditions of our contract with MLL and are being crewed by M.E.B.A. members with no loss of billets.

NMC SEEKS HELP REVIEWING COAST GUARD EXAM QUESTIONS

The National Maritime Center is putting together a working group to help review U.S. Coast Guard examination questions. NMC would like credentialed deck and engineering officers for the review which will concentrate on both new and existing exam questions.

Examination review will take place at the NMC in Martinsburg, WV and at some regional locations. Those who wish to participate should email their résumé and Non-Disclosure Agreement and Confidential Financial Disclosure to NMCEXAMWorkingGroup@uscg.mil Emails must be less than 8 mb and cannot be zipped. More information about submission methods can be learned by calling (304) 433-3720.

The Examinations page of the NMC website (www.uscg.mil/nmc) has been updated to provide an outline of the process for requesting membership in the working group, and includes the required forms and e-mail address for submittal. Once on the Examinations page, click "Working Group" to access this information. Requests may be submitted at any time.

The 2019 schedule is as follows though dates and locations could change according to projected attendance.

Date	Type	Location
April 16-18	Deck	NMC (Martinsburg, WV)
June 4-6	Engine	NMC (Martinsburg, WV)
July 30-August 1	Deck	TBD
September 10-12	Engine	TBD
October 22-24	Deck	TBD

Those who wish to participate should follow the application instructions. If you have questions, contact the NMC Customer Service Center by using the NMC online chat system or by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil. You can also call 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

MATSONIA SIDELINED WITH CRACKED HULL

Vessel crew helped quickly and report a fuel leak 15 feet below the waterline of the 46-year old SS MATSONIA after the hull cracked. The incident occurred a week ago on Thursday shortly after docking in Oakland. After spotting the fuel oil sheen around 8 a.m., the crew immediately initiated the vessel response plan and the Coast Guard and National Response Center were swiftly notified. A containment boom was deployed and Coast Guard inspectors were on the scene within the hour.

The vessel was built in 1973 by Sun Shipbuilding. Matson recently welcomed the newbuild containership DANIEL K. INOUE to its fleet and have three additional newbuilds in various stages of construction that will join their fleet upon completion.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monday, March 4 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**

Tuesday, March 5 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**

Wednesday, March 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**

Thursday, March 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**

Friday, March 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