

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"
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4MF RAFFLE LAUNCHED – TICKETS AVAILABLE AT HALLS

Tickets for the newly-announced 50/50 raffle in support of the M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF) were mailed on Monday to each of the Union halls. They are also available at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School, Headquarters and POID (through April).

Members, applicants, retirees and everyone else are strongly encouraged to support the 4MF which provides upkeep and improvements to the Memorial Park located at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School (CMES). The Memorial honors fallen mariners who helped blaze the proud tradition our members continue today.

The winning raffle ticket (\$2 apiece) will be drawn on October 6, 2020 at the CMES during the monthly membership meeting. You do not need to be present to win. The grand winner will receive 50% of the proceeds from raffle sales – so plan to purchase a thick stack of tickets. The popular swag giveaway promotion will be in effect for this raffle for those who buy at least \$50 worth of tickets. Members are urged to keep M.E.B.A.'s Memorial in mind all year long and support it when they can.

CHEVRON, POID, NCL INPUT & BARGAINING PARTICIPATION SOUGHT

Member participation and contract input is being sought for upcoming negotiations with Chevron, POID and Norwegian Cruise Line-America. M.E.B.A. Executive Vice President Adam Vokac is heading up negotiating teams for each of these contracts that expire this year. Rank and file members who would like to bring their expertise to our bargaining team should contact Adam or Oakland Patrolman Max Alper at the hall (510) 291-4912 or by email (avokac@mebaunion.org or malper@mebaunion.org). Contract input can be forwarded to Adam or Max using the same contact information.

The Chevron contract expires on April 1st of this year. The POID contract runs until May 15th. The NCL contract goes until June 30th. Tentative negotiating dates have already been set in furtherance of a new agreement with NCL. The first bargaining session is set to take place in Miami, FL on April 23-24.

RANK & FILE INPUT FOR UPCOMING OSG TALKS

M.E.B.A.'s is opening negotiations with OSG for a new contract, in advance of the current agreement's expiration in June. The M.E.B.A. District Executive Committee (DEC) is requesting input from OSG officers as our negotiating team prepares for talks.

All comments and suggestions should be sent to M.E.B.A.'s Gulf Coast Vice President Erin Bertram (ebertram@mebaunion.org) and Tampa Branch Agent Adam Smith (asmith@mebaunion.org) making sure they are sent from PRIVATE email addresses.

RETIRED MEMBER HELPS SPARK POLITICAL ACTION FUND PUSH

A retired M.E.B.A. member is headlining a call to get our retiree base more involved in the Union's Political Action Fund (PAF). Former Chief Engineer Mark Engberg is asking M.E.B.A. retirees to take the "2020 M.E.B.A. PAF Retiree Pledge" that will help keep the Union and industry strong for future mariners and guarantee the ongoing viability of the M.E.B.A. Benefit Plans.

Mark is matching \$10,000 of his own money to the Fund if 20 retirees commit to supporting the M.E.B.A. PAF by contributing \$500 per year for the next 5 years. If Mark's challenge is responded to in full, the group would collectively raise \$60,000 by 2025 to advance the interests of our active and retired membership. As you know, contributing to the M.E.B.A. PAF is one of most important things you can do as a member of this Union. The PAF is a vital tool that allows the Union to protect and advance the interests of the U.S. Merchant Marine through the funding of key maritime provisions including the Maritime Security Program, protecting the Jones Act, as well as our health care and pensions.

In a letter sent to retired M.E.B.A. members this week, Mark noted, "As a retiree, I would hope you appreciate the generous pension and medical benefits the Union has provided – very few industries today can offer similar benefits. Supporting the M.E.B.A. PAF helps ensure your benefits are secure and allows the next generation of members to enjoy the quality of life we have been afforded. That is why I am asking all retirees to step up."

Members are encouraged to contribute to the M.E.B.A. Political Action Fund online by visiting the Union homepage at www.mebaunion.org, selecting "Political Action Fund" to support this important cause.

ITF/IMO RESOLUTION TO EXPAND FEMALE PRESENCE IN MARITIME INDUSTRY

A resolution drafted by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), Women's International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA International), and several countries at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has led to an initiative to increase the number of women working in the maritime sector.

WISTA International recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the IMO, on the heels of the resolution, that commits IMO members to creating a barrier-free environment for women in maritime.

WISTA represents female workers in all sectors of the maritime industry, from seafarers to lawyers. The MOU commits IMO members to provide women seafarers with training opportunities, graduate-level education scholarships, more management-level jobs and more jobs at sea.

Gulf Coast Vice President Erin Bertram is the M.E.B.A.'s ITF Women's Officer and has represented the Union at the ITF Women Transport Workers' Conference and at many other events and roundtables promoting women in the industry.

HAPAG TESTING BIOFUEL TO MEET EMISSION STANDARDS

Hapag-Lloyd is using the new, eco-friendly “biofuel” in one of its international fleet ships to test if the so-called B-20 fuel can prove to be a long-term solution to meeting rigid new emission standards that recently went into effect. Since the New Year, the sulfur content of fuel oil used by internationally-trading vessels operating outside designated emission control areas cannot exceed 0.50% - representing an 80% cut from the former 3.50% limit. Ships without scrubbers meet the requirement by burning costlier low-sulfur fuels.

Hapag’s MONTREAL EXPRESS is now being powered by B-20 which consists of 80 percent low-sulfur fuel oil and 20 percent biodiesel based on cooking oils and fats that had previously been used in the food service/catering industry. The biodiesel generates up to 90 percent less CO2 emissions than conventional fuels.

Hapag-Lloyd intends to use the test run with the vessel, which operates between Europe and Canada, to gain experience and information on the properties of the fuel in real-world use. “We are checking to see whether the share of biodiesel has any adverse effects on the equipment and the fuel processing on board the vessel. If the test is successful, more ships from Hapag-Lloyd’s fleet could operate using the B-20 fuel in future,” Hapag’s Purchasing Director Jan Christensen noted.

HISTORIC WWII SHIP SAILING BACK TO TEMPORARY BALTIMORE BERTH

The SS JOHN W. BROWN is returning to Baltimore this week to begin a planned two-year stay at a temporary berth while preparations for a permanent home continue. Along with the JEREMIAH O’BRIEN, which is homeported in San Francisco, California, the JOHN W. BROWN is the last of the operational WWII Liberty ships.

The BROWN, returning this week from a scheduled maintenance visit to a Virginia shipyard, is relocating to a new mooring site at Baltimore’s Pier 13 after an expired lease at its previous Charm City berth cast the future of the 78-year-old museum ship in doubt. Project Liberty Ship, the Foundation that oversees the vessel, recently announced an agreement that will provide a more permanent home for the BROWN - at a refurbished site in the former Bethlehem Steel Fairfield shipyard in South Baltimore, the location where the ship was built and launched in 1942. The agreement is contingent on finding the necessary funding to accommodate the move. Under the plan, the BROWN must still secure interim dockage for two years until the new Fairfield berth is ready.

At its current, temporary berth, the BROWN will be co-located with the NS SAVANNAH, the world’s first nuclear-powered combination cargo and passenger ship, built in the late 1950s.

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST FOR HALL VISITS

Members are encouraged to have their documents in order before showing up at their Union hall. Those who have recently upgraded their license should make sure their STCW reflects the upgrade. Your license, passport and other important documents should be valid for at least six months from the time you begin working aboard ship. Your drug-free certificates have to be valid at least until the day you join your ship.

If flying with your documents on the way to a hall, double-check that you haven’t left any essential documents at home and make sure to keep your docs with you in your carry-on luggage. The primary documents you’ll need include your Merchant Mariner Credential with current STCW, VSO or

VPDSD endorsement, TWIC, Passport, USCG Medical Certificate, Annual M.E.B.A. physical card, Drug-free Certificate, Group Card and Dues Receipt. Permanent or relief employees should get their company clearance to the hall ahead of time. As you should know, no one can be dispatched to a job while on vacation or while receiving a paid vacation benefit without a waiver. The Union requires a return to work date when clearing for a vessel so make sure you have your vacation pay and vacation carry over statements, shipping discharge and port relief pay voucher for verification of Return to Work. It should also be noted that failure to obtain prior Union permission to return to work early, before the return to work date as listed on your carry-over or vacation statement, will subject you to a penalty.

Remember, a member or applicant cannot be dispatched for a job requiring STCW credentials if the Coast Guard Medical Certificate is due to expire prior to the completion of the job called. Members are encouraged to have their paperwork for the USCG Medical Certificate completed and to submit it for renewal at every annual physical in order to avoid an issue at job call. Certain jobs require proof of benzene or shot records, MSC Physical and MSC courses, GMDSS, High Voltage/Marine Propulsion, Crowd Control, Welding, or other courses to satisfy company requirements. Mariners are reminded to keep their vaccination records with them when sailing – especially when shipping onboard MSC-contracted vessels. Keep your documents with you at all times when travelling and NEVER leave them in your car. If unsure what is required, it is a good idea to check with an M.E.B.A. clinic. If you have questions about your documents, direct them to your local hall.

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 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monday, March 2 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;
Tuesday, March 3 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;
Wednesday, March 4 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;
Thursday, March 5 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;
Friday, March 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. Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.