

# 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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### **ORGANIZING SUCCESS! M.E.B.A WINS NYC FERRY REPRESENTATION ELECTION**

In a one-day representation election conducted on Thursday, the M.E.B.A. prevailed and has won the right to serve as the collective bargaining agent for approximately 42 Captains sailing in the NYC Ferry fleet. The Hornblower-operated HNY Ferry, doing business as NYC Ferry, has a 23 vessel fleet on six New York City routes connecting locations in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio recently announced that there are plans to expand the unit in 2020 to serve all five boroughs.

The election was held at the Brooklyn Navy Yard where vessel Captains begin and end their shifts. That allowed almost every Captain to vote resulting in a victory for the M.E.B.A. by a two-thirds margin.

In early November, through the efforts of Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan, Patrolman Nico Sermoneta and M.E.B.A. in-house counsel Nils Djusberg, M.E.B.A. collected pledge cards from the majority of the fleet Captains enabling a representation election. But the company argued that captains should be classified as "supervisors" and therefore should not be governed by the National Labor Relations Act. But following two days of mid-November hearings in New York, the NLRB sided with the M.E.B.A. and a one-day representation election was set for January 24.

The Union will seek to complete the process and hopes to schedule talks with Hornblower for a first contract. We look forward to welcoming the Ferry Captains into the M.E.B.A. family to accept the privileges and responsibilities of membership.

### **DEC SETS EFFECTIVE DATE FOR NEW SHIPPING RULE**

M.E.B.A.'s District Executive Committee has set June 1, 2018 as the implementation date for a new Shipping Rule recently approved by members. New Group III applicants who registered on the Port Relief List on or after June 1, 2018 can take advantage of the new Rule that allows them additional time to seek viable Port Relief opportunities as they begin their seafaring careers.

Members overwhelmingly approved the Shipping Rule change after a District-wide online referendum last month. Previously, no member or applicant was permitted to remain on the Port Relief list beyond a six-month period if they did not meet a 70-day sailing requirement. This change allows first-time Group III applicants to remain on the list for 12 consecutive months following the date of their first

registration on the list – provided that they registered on the list on or after June 1, 2018. If that applicant meets the 70-day sailing requirement during that time, they may then re-register on the Port Relief List at the end of the 365 days for an additional six month period.

### **TOM LEAHY, FORMER OFFICIAL IN BALTIMORE, SAILS INTO THE SUNSET**

Tom Leahy, past M.E.B.A. Baltimore Branch Agent who returned to the hall on Eastern Avenue in recent years to serve as its Dispatcher, sailed into the sunset last week at the age of 71. Tom served in the Navy before attending the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and suiting up with the M.E.B.A. He shipped out on a variety of vessels, last serving as 1<sup>st</sup> A/E aboard Matson's LURLINE before coming shoreside to work as the Representative in the old Fort Lauderdale hall after he became concerned with the direction of the Union. He continued efforts to help "right the ship" as part of the MAD Committee which successfully challenged a Gene DeFries administration that was drifting away from democracy. Despite several years of battling through kidney disease which eventually resulted in a successful transplant, Tom's stamina and resolve got him through that period. He was elected Patrolman of the Baltimore hall in 1992 and supplemented that work by assisting President Gordon Ward's administration on various projects and initiatives. In 1998, he was elected to a three-year term as the Branch Agent in Baltimore during the Larry O'Toole administration. He was part of the team that helped organize mariners in the Cape May-Lewes Ferry unit bringing them into membership. He kept active with the M.E.B.A. and worked on behalf of the labor movement even after he left office in 2002. He was one of the founding fathers of the M.E.B.A.'s Merchant Marine Memorial at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School that honors mariners past and present. Over the years, he would fill in at the Baltimore hall as needed and he answered the call when the Union needed a dedicated Dispatcher to work the hall in 2014 after our space on Eastern Avenue was downsized. He continued in that role until late 2017 when he was relieved by current Dispatcher Jamie Butler.

Quite a character, Tom was engaging, affable and unconventional. A real good guy, he had a great sense of humor and he was fun to be around. Tom will be missed. He was buried this week in New Haven, Connecticut in All Saints Cemetery. He is survived by his sister Carole Leahy along with many relatives and friends, including his M.E.B.A. family. In lieu of flowers, consider a donation to the National Kidney Foundation, Inc., 30 East 33rd St., New York, NY 10016. A donation in his honor to the M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation would also be appropriate. Efforts are being made to secure a plaque for Tom on the "bow" area of the Memorial. You can contribute to the cause using the form located at [www.mebaschool.org/pdf/mmmf-bow-plaque-donation-form.pdf](http://www.mebaschool.org/pdf/mmmf-bow-plaque-donation-form.pdf) Make sure to specify that the donation should be applied to that effort. You can also post a message of condolence at [www.northhavenfuneral.com](http://www.northhavenfuneral.com)

### **RETURN-TO-WORK DATE REQUIRED WHEN CLEARING**

To make sure Vacation Plan regulations are adhered to when dispatching jobs and to prevent issues and/or penalties with M.E.B.A. Plans, the Union is requiring a Return-to-Work date when clearing for a vessel. Members and applicants were updated on the new policy in a January 7<sup>th</sup> All Ports Bulletin sent to all halls and emailed to member and applicant addresses on file with Headquarters. The notice was also included in the packet for the regular January membership meetings. The policy goes into effect tomorrow (February 1, 2019) and will be strictly enforced.

It is the member's/applicant's responsibility to provide the proof/documentation to the Union dispatcher or representative that is required to determine the RTW date. In order to bid on work, members/applicants should maintain, along with all other required shipping documents, their most

recent vacation pay statement, vacation carry over statement, shipping discharge and port relief pay voucher for verification of RTW.

### **NMC ISSUES UPDATE AS IT GETS BACK TO SPEED FOLLOWING SHUTDOWN**

The National Maritime Center reopened on Monday following the 35-day partial shutdown that threw its operations into low gear. The NMC issued updates several times during the shutdown announcing mitigation efforts to aid mariners in need of important credentials that were unable to be processed by the NMC since the shutdown began in late December. During that time, NMC extended the dates of expiring Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC) (National Endorsements only) as well as Medical Certificates. Additional Information (AI) and Approval to Test (ATT) letters were similarly extended as were expiring mariner training course certificates. Now, NMC has issued a new update implementing measures to address increased levels of application inventory. They note:

- Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC) and Medical Certifications (National Endorsements only) set to expire in December 2018, January 2019, or February 2019 remain valid until May 31, 2019. (*See Update 3 – Mitigation Efforts Due to Lapse in Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations and Partial Government Shutdown – Available on the NMC & M.E.B.A. websites.*)
- Additional Information (AI) letters, Qualified Assessor (QA) letters, Designated Examiner (DE) letters, Proctor Approval letters, Approval to Test (ATT) letters, and mariner training completion certificates set to expire in December 2018, January 2019, or February 2019 remain valid until April 30, 2019. (*See Update 3.*)
- Mariners seeking to operate on STCW endorsements that expired on or after December 1, 2018, may request continued service STCW dispensations via e-mail at [STCWDispensations@uscg.mil](mailto:STCWDispensations@uscg.mil). (*For application details, see STCW Mitigation Efforts Due to Lapse in Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations and Partial Government Shutdown.*)
- All RECs [are] fully operational and open to the public [as of] Wednesday, January 30, 2019.
- The scheduling system for REC examinations, application drop off, and other credentialing business [is] active [as of] Thursday, January 31, 2019.

The NMC is working to minimize the negative impact to the maritime industry and will publish additional information regarding furlough recovery operations as needed. For updates, please monitor the NMC website. If you have questions, contact the NMC Customer Service Center by e-mailing [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil) or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

### **A BRIEF DEBRIEFING ON THE END OF THE PARTIAL SHUTDOWN**

Despite the recent cold-snap that has affected most of the country, federal workers are settling back into their jobs after a 35-day hiatus that resulted in little more than fruitless partisan bickering. The President has threatened another shutdown after Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> if he doesn't get his way on his demand for a \$5.7 billion down payment to build a wall on the southern border.

Not only was the shutdown counterproductive for mariners who couldn't get important shipping documents processed, many of the M.E.B.A. mariners sailing for NOAA were locked out of their jobs and others in that unit had to work without a paycheck.

The Coast Guard suffered through the shutdown as the nation's only unfunded military service. National Transportation Safety Board workers are back on the job now but were unable to investigate 97 accidents during the shutdown because of furloughed workers. The Maritime Administration was able to maintain during the shutdown but as the weeks wore on, concerns began to bubble up about their ability to keep Maritime Security Program payments stabilized after January.

The stress of the shutdown was also prominently felt at airports as TSA employees felt the pinch while being expected to keep our aviation system impenetrable from nefarious forces. M.E.B.A. affiliates like the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS) know first-hand how a shutdown hurts workers and creates safety challenges. PASS National President Mike Perrone noted that his members are responsible for the oversight, certification and surveillance of the entire American aviation system and furloughs for this critical workforce were "neither in the best interest of the nation's economy nor the oversight of the U.S. aviation system."

The AFL-CIO credited the end of the shutdown to the collective action of workers. President Richard Trumka said, "By standing together, working people got each other through this shutdown. We mobilized, organized and proved the indispensable value of our labor to those who have tried to ignore us. Now we will fight for a long-term government funding bill and legislation to guarantee that all workers are made whole."

#### **RÉSUMÉS BEING ACCEPTED FOR ASST. GOVT. FLEET REP. AT NORFOLK HALL**

M.E.B.A. is seeking a full time Assistant Government Fleet Representative/Dispatcher position at our Norfolk Union hall - 6325 N. Center Dr., Suite 100 Norfolk, VA 23502. The working hours for this position are Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Job applicants should be highly organized, quick learners with strong clerical and interactive personal skills. Primary duties include assisting the Norfolk Union Branch Agent/Government Fleet Representative with providing Union representation to the M.E.B.A. Government Fleet consisting of the Military Sealift Command (MSC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE). Additional duties include dispatching commercial shipping jobs, port relief officer assignments and coordinating the necessary paperwork, for members/applicants of the Union. Qualified applicants must be eligible to obtain Norfolk & Little Creek Navy Base Waterfront access passes. Ideal candidates should have good understanding of MSC Civilian Marine Personnel Instructions (CMPIS). Salary and benefits will be commensurate with experience. Additional info can be sought from M.E.B.A. Norfolk Branch Agent Tracy Burke at the hall (757) 440-1820; cell (804) 614-8717; or by email [tburke@mebaunion.org](mailto:tburke@mebaunion.org)

#### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

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

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

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

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

Friday, February 8 – **Honolulu@1100.**

*Informational Meeting in Cleveland – Friday, February 8@1230.*

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