

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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In this issue//Task Force Faults Lack of Support for AMHS//MLA Statement on Support for Racial Justice/Efforts to Reduce CO2 Industry Emissions is Working//Smooth Switch to Cleaner Fuels//Vessel Attacks Have Increased, Says IMB//M.E.B.A. Mainstays Moving On//Update Your Info with HQ// MAHIMAHI Crew Clarified//Update Your Info//West Coast Halls Closed on Tuesday to Honor Harry Bridges//Register for Online August Membership Meetings//

### **GOVERNOR'S SUPPORT FOR AMHS IS NOT ENOUGH, PANEL INDICATES**

A nine-person advisory group tasked with finding a path forward for the beleaguered Alaska Marine Highway System took issue with a lowball subsidy proposal by the state's Governor.

The Alaska Marine Highway Reshaping Work Group, appointed by Governor Mike Dunleavy, has indicated that a \$24 million subsidy to keep the ferry system operational is far too little to realistically support transport needs. The Task Force's report and recommendations are expected in September.

Governor Dunleavy has drastically cut the system's budget the last two years cuts impacting ferry fleet operations leading to diminished service for Alaskans, many who live in remote locations. The ferry fleet serves as a crucial connector for Alaskan communities spread out over 3,100 miles.

Task Force members pointed out that privatizing the system is a dead-end. "None of the dozens of studies have come up with the idea that any private operator could run the system and make a profit," the group's Chairman Tom Barrett said earlier this month.

Task Force member Wanetta Ayers said that the Governor's undersized proposal is unrealistic and counterproductive. "If we drive the system down to a \$24 million subsidy, not only are we critically injuring the system, but we're probably just stepping over dollars to pick up dimes because it's going to cost us so much more as a state to try and sustain these communities that we're crippling," she noted.

The importance of the ferry system was reiterated by State Senator Bart Stedman who pointed out that the AMHS is part of Alaska's emergency supply chain in case of a disaster. "We've been told by the finance committee that it's probably unlikely that they're going to be able to fly in enough food to take care of the population base," he said. "The marine highway becomes an essential corridor for keeping those Alaska citizens fed and watered."

The group pointed out that money alone won't solve all the system's problems noting that mismanagement and waste have created setbacks. Criticism has also been leveled at political meddling involved in the design of vessels that has led to delays and inefficiencies. Sen. Stedman said that each political administration has different ideas, many conflicting with each other. Marine Transportation Advisory Board Chairman Robert Venables has been lobbying to transform the AMHS into a public

corporation and give it more autonomy. “I think the way you get consistency among governors is if you take that decision away from the governor’s office,” he said. “And you put that decision for the design of these vessels into the hands of naval architects and marine engineers.”

### **MLA STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE**

The Maritime Labor Alliance - a five-union coalition made up of the M.E.B.A. ARA, IBU, ILWU and the MM&P - recently issued a statement about labor support for racial justice. In it, they point out that working men and women are outraged about systemic racial violence and demand long overdue action. “As labor unions we must not remain silent,” the statement reads. “It is our purpose to advance economic justice, to protect our members from any form of discrimination. We are committed to continue to push back against corporate greed and to empower our members to fight for a more inclusive nation.”

Labor unions have long been a force for positive change, and are committed to continue the fight for racial justice and root out systemic discrimination in our communities and in the workplace.

The statement notes, “Racism has no place in our government, in civil society, in the labor movement and especially in the police departments that protect and serve our nation. The poison of racism at the heart of our nation must cease.” You can read the full statement on the M.E.B.A. website located at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org).

### **REPORT: WORLD SHIPPING’S EFFORTS TO REDUCE CO2 EMISSIONS IS WORKING**

A new report states that global industry averages of carbon dioxide emissions from container carriers declined 5.6% percent in 2019, as world shipping continues to retool to meet ambitious International Maritime Organization decarbonization targets. Clean Cargo, an organization promoting sustainable shipping, compiled the data after studying statistics from over 3,500 vessels, about 85% of global containerized shipping. The report also notes that world sulfur oxide (SOx) emissions also dramatically decreased (by 10%) during the same time period. However, they note, the methodology used to ascertain that figure did not factor in the increasing use of exhaust gas cleaning systems.

Specifically, the report states that global industry averages for CO2 emissions per container per kilometer decreased by 5.6% in 2019 and 2.5% for Dry and Reefer (refrigerated) indexes, respectively.

Analysis of 10-year trends show that lower emissions correlate with higher transport work, increasing ship size and tradelane length.

### **ING BANK HAILS SMOOTH SWITCH TO NEW FUEL SULFUR LIMITS**

Global shipping’s transition to International Maritime Organization cleaner fuel requirements has gone much smoother than some previously believed, ING Bank said this week. Horror stories about skyrocketing fuel prices and technical issues following the Jan. 1, 2020 implementation of the IMO rules didn’t materialize, they say. Beginning on New Year’s Day 2020, 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 are meeting the requirement by burning costlier low-sulfur fuels.

ING researchers note that the global health crisis has helped ease the burden of compliance with the seven-month old rules as lockdowns have led to lower demand keeping fuel prices down. That could

change though, they say, as countries begin to open back up. ING found that most vessels are complying with the new requirements by utilizing very low sulfur fuel oil (VLSFO). Analyzing purchases of bunker fuel in Singapore, ING found that VLSFO comprised “70% of total fuel oil sales in the first six months of the year” compared to 11% marine gasoil and 18% of high sulfur fuel oil (HSFO) purchased for vessels with scrubbers. You can check out the ING Bank statement here: <https://think.ing.com/articles/marine-fuels-imo-2020-so-much-for-all-the-hype/>

### **VESSEL ATTACKS INCREASED IN 2020, SAYS IMB**

The number of attacks on ships and crews increased by 20% in the first half of 2020, the International Maritime Bureau reported. IMB's Piracy Reporting Center recorded 98 incidents of piracy and armed robbery in the first half of 2020, up from 78 in the first half of 2019. It said 77 seafarers had been taken hostage or kidnapped for ransom since January, with the Gulf of Guinea accounting for over 90 percent of maritime kidnappings worldwide. “Violence against crews is a growing risk in a workforce already under immense pressure,” IMB director Michael Howlett said. “In the Gulf of Guinea, attackers armed with knives and guns now target crews on every type of vessel. Everyone's vulnerable.”

The IMB report says vessels were boarded a total of 81 times; there were 10 attempted attacks; six instances in which a vessel was fired upon; but only one successful hijacking. Attackers were indiscriminate in their choice of targets: the report cited 36 attacks against tankers, 21 against bulk carriers and 17 against container ships. In most cases, the vessels were at anchor when attacked. In 23 cases, crewmembers were taken hostage.

### **M.E.B.A. MAINSTAYS MOVING ON**

Noticeably absent from the list of candidates for M.E.B.A. office named in last week's *Telex Times* were three M.E.B.A. mainstays who have announced they are sailing off in a different direction. Third-generation member Bill Van Loo, the Union's Secretary-Treasurer since 2006 will retire at the end of December after 36 great years with the Union. He has been a Delegate at every National M.E.B.A. Convention since 1995 and first became an official in 2002 when he was elected as Baltimore Branch Agent. Among many other duties and responsibilities, Bill has championed the M.E.B.A.'s Political Action and Good & Welfare Funds as Chairman and headed up the M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation which he spearheaded back at the turn of the century in 2000. Politically active on behalf of the M.E.B.A., he typically continued to advance the Union's interests on Capitol Hill at the end of a long day at our D.C. Headquarters. He is a Calhoun M.E.B.A. graduate of the old cadet school – not many are still sailing. Bill plans to remain active in the D.C. political scene and will continue to advocate for our members and the U.S. maritime industry as well as assisting labor groups and charities.

In addition, Erin Bertram, the Union's Gulf Coast Vice President, will stand down at the end of the year after 21 years of service at the Houston Union hall. She has been a part of the M.E.B.A. since 1991 after graduating from Texas A&M Maritime Academy. Erin began working at the hall in 2000 as Dispatcher, became the Houston Representative in 2012 and the Branch Agent two years later in 2014. In 2017 she began service as M.E.B.A.'s Gulf Coast V.P. which she has served with distinction. She plans to keep battling on behalf of women in the transportation industry and for many other issues important to labor and the M.E.B.A.

Also Tracy Burke, M.E.B.A. Branch Agent in Norfolk who serves as the Union's Government Fleet Representative as well, will be wrapping up his service in that capacity at the end of the year. Tracy is

a Maine Maritime graduate and Chief Engineer who sailed for Interlake Steamship Company for 20 years before spending another 6 years sailing deep-sea. Tracy has headed up the Norfolk hall since early 2014 and has done a great job representing the Government Fleet and improving the Union in many ways. He still has a lot to give and is not quite ready to hang up his boiler suit. Fair winds and following seas to all three and thank you!

### **MAHIMAHI CREW CLARIFIED**

The *Telex Times* was a little too up-to-date when we listed the crew of the Matson vessel M/V MAHIMAHI last week following the recent rescue of the crew of a floundering trimaran. The engine officers we detailed last week included a mix of members present during the rescue and a pair of members who would join the ship later, but were not there for all the excitement. M.E.B.A. officers onboard the MAHIMAHI during the rescue were actually Relief C/E George Thanash, 1st A/E Michael Caseria, 2nd A/E Michael Wojciechowski and 3rd A/E David Iacobucci.

Taking a cue from the Coast Guard, the crew diverted the ship from its run and raced to the trimaran's remote location - 825 miles northeast of Oahu – where they effected the rescue. Great work all!

### **UPDATE YOUR INFO WITH HQ**

Be sure to keep the Union updated with your current contact information including mailing address. This can be achieved by using the address change form available on the M.E.B.A. website found at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org) under the “Members” tab or in the “Documents & Member Notices” section. Alternatively, you can send your updated information to Renee Bowman at HQ by mail, fax at (202) 638-5369, or e-mail at [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org) Since the M.E.B.A. Plans office in Baltimore and Headquarters databases are NOT linked, you must also forward a signed change of address form to the Plans Office if you wish to update your information with them.

### **WEST COAST HALLS CLOSED ON TUESDAY TO HONOR HARRY BRIDGES**

M.E.B.A. halls and offices on the West Coast will be closed on Tuesday, July 28 to honor labor giant Harry Bridges on the 119<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birthday. Bridges' involvement in the crisis on the San Francisco waterfront during the events of Bloody Thursday in 1934 led to vastly improved labor conditions. He helped establish the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) in 1937 and led the union for over 40 years. Harry Bridges was born in Australia and the U.S. Government spent almost twenty years trying to send him back there following his battles on behalf of working men and women. He died in 1990.

### **ONLINE AUGUST MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (*All times are local*)**

**(*Registration for Online Meetings takes place between July 23 – 30*) –**

**(*Refer to the notice on the M.E.B.A. website*)**

Monday, August 3 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, August 4 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, August 5 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, August 6 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, August 7 – Honolulu@1100.

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