

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

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



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

*The Official Union Newsletter*



**Number 13 – March 30, 2017**

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### **MEMBERS TO ELECT FINANCIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE NEXT WEEK**

A six-person rank and file Financial Review Committee will be elected at the regular membership meetings next week at specific Union halls. The FRC, elected annually, will assemble at M.E.B.A. Headquarters on April 18 to spend three days reviewing Union finances from the 2016 calendar year. Committee members will be elected at next week's meetings in New York (New Jersey), Houston, San Francisco (Oakland), Norfolk, Tampa, and Seattle. The FRC will be comprised of five members as well as one member who will serve as an alternate. Rank and file members elected to the Committee must be in good standing to serve and cannot be an official or employee of the Union currently - or for the year being reviewed (2016).

The elected Union members will travel to M.E.B.A. Headquarters in Washington D.C. on Monday, April 17, 2017. The actual meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 18, 2017 in the Conference Room at M.E.B.A. Headquarters. It is anticipated that the business of the FRC will be completed by Thursday, April 20 with travel home scheduled for Friday, April 21. Newly elected FRC members need to contact Ann Holmes at M.E.B.A. Headquarters (202-638-5355) immediately after the Union meeting in order to nail down travel arrangements.

### **CONSTITUTION UPDATED**

Amendments enacted by elected Delegates at the 112<sup>th</sup> National M.E.B.A. Convention that was conducted last week have been incorporated into the M.E.B.A. Constitution. The Constitution, Shipping Rules and District By-Laws as well as application packets and other important documents can be accessed from the M.E.B.A. website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) in the "Documents & Notices" section.

As detailed last week, Delegates updated the Constitution to synchronize District and National officer terms more closely and to put National Conventions on a four-year schedule. In addition, an anomaly that could have potentially allowed two different M.E.B.A. Presidents at once – one National, one District – was corrected. However, if a second District were to join District No. 1 within the National M.E.B.A. umbrella, the old language would prevail. Finally, Delegates also passed language which makes certain Constitutionally-stipulated Convention procedures optional. Some of those procedures – listed in the Convention "Rules of Order" section were deemed "extraneous and archaic."

## **BST REVALIDATION – SPACE STILL AVAILABLE**

Due to membership needs, the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School has added an additional Basic Safety Training Revalidation course to the 2017 schedule. It will run from April 24–28.

The BST Revalidation course is required by mariners renewing their license who **have** 1 year of sea time in the last 5 years. Applications may be sent via the CMES website ([www.mebaschool.org](http://www.mebaschool.org)); by fax at (410) 822-7220, or email to [applications@mebaschool.org](mailto:applications@mebaschool.org).

## **MARINERS KEEPING EYE ON THREATS TO SHIPPING NEAR YEMEN**

Continued tension and tangible threats have prompted the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency to issue an advisory to mariners sailing in the waters near Yemen.

The region has been a bastion of instability with Iran-allied Houthi rebels sporadically causing mayhem. The Government has issued past advisories for U.S.-flag shipping following a series of unpalatable incidents and the latest advisory underscores another layer of dangers faced by mariners.

Of late, Houthi rebels have conducted attacks against a Saudi warship and UAE logistics vessels, as well as an attempted but failed attack against U.S. Navy ships in the southern Red Sea. There has been increased fighting along the Red Sea coast prompting the advisory to U.S.-flag commercial vessels operating in the area. It was recommended that U.S.-flag vessels in the area operate under a heightened state of alert and avoid entering or loitering near Yemen's Red Sea ports. Vessels at anchor or operating in restricted maneuvering environments or at slow speeds were advised to be especially vigilant.

## **HARRY BRIDGES, CESAR CHÁVEZ HONORED ON WEST COAST**

The Honolulu Union hall was closed today for Harry Bridges Memorial Day. Bridges' involvement in the strike 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. Harry led the union for over 40 years. He died on March 30, 1990.

Union halls and offices on the West Coast are closed tomorrow to honor the life of César Chávez, upon the occasion of the labor giant's birthday (March 31, 1927).

In the early 1950s Chávez battled racial and economic discrimination, coordinated voter registration drives and fought for better working conditions. He was known for his use of non-violent tactics and he made the farm workers' struggle a moral cause with nationwide support. He co-founded the National Farm Workers Association in 1962 that was chartered by the AFL-CIO four years later. This would later become the United Farm Workers (UFW). César Chávez gained international notoriety as he led boycotts and fasted to bring attention to wretched labor conditions and unfair contracts. He died in 1993.

## **HIRONO IS NEXT RECIPIENT OF SALUTE TO CONGRESS HONOR**

Senator Mazie Hirono has been selected as the next Salute to Congress recipient, an annual honor reserved for a Member of Congress who demonstrates consistent support for the U.S.-flag Merchant Marine and American maritime industry. The International Propeller Club will present the award on May 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, VA.

Senator Hirono has been a consistent friend of the M.E.B.A. and the industry and has been strong in her support of the Jones Act, Maritime Security Program, cargo preference, and other essential pro-U.S. shipping laws and statutes.

“We are so pleased to be able to honor Senator Hirono with the Salute to Congress,” said the Propeller Club’s International President, Rick Schiappacasse. “We look forward to the opportunity to thank her for her support of a strong domestic maritime industry. We are grateful for her leadership as ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Seapower and her advocacy for the Merchant Marine and the Jones Act.”

Past recipients of the award include then-Speaker of the House Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill, the first honoree in 1985, and then-Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott in 1997. Recent honorees include Rep. Elijah Cummings, Rep. Duncan Hunter, Rep. John Garamendi and Sen. Roger Wicker, last year’s recipient.

### **EXPIRATION OF SPECIAL EARLY RETURNS**

The use of the Special Early Return Form will expire tomorrow, March 31, 2017. A Special Early Return occurs when permission is granted for an officer to return to Covered Employment while on vacation. The officer chooses whether or not to make up the Early Return days before their next vacation period. The “Special Early Return” is put to use when the officer is given the choice to not make up the Early Return days, effectively forfeiting the covered employment earned for the specific Early Return vacation days in question, which would include forfeiting credit earned for the Pension, Medical and Training Plans, etc.

This system was implemented by the Vacation Plan Trustees in 2003 for use in the case of personnel shortages caused by national emergencies and has been reviewed and reapproved by the Board of Trustees on an annual basis since then.

However, as determined by the M.E.B.A. District Executive Committee (DEC), circumstances no longer warrant approval for a Special Early Return. Therefore, after March 31, 2017, all Early Return days will have to be made up before your next vacation period begins.

### **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](http://www.mebaplans.org) (Forms, Vacation). Complete details are available on the Plans’ site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or [vacation@mebaplans.org](mailto:vacation@mebaplans.org) for more info.

### **NOAA RESEARCH SHIP BACK HOME AFTER EPIC DEPLOYMENT**

NOAA’s largest oceanographic research vessel, the RONALD H. BROWN, returned to its Charleston, S.C., home port last week after a 1,347-day deployment – the longest of any NOAA ship ever. During its multiyear voyage, the ship traveled nearly 130,000 miles as it conducted scientific research and serviced buoys that collect a wide variety of environmental data. The 274-ft. vessel is a global-class oceanographic and atmospheric research platform. M.E.B.A. represents the engine officers aboard the vessels in the NOAA fleet.

"My congratulations and thanks to the officers and crew of NOAA Ship RONALD H. BROWN for their hard work, dedication and service during this extended and unprecedented deployment," said Rear Adm. David A. Score, director of NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations. "Working from ocean to ocean and from pole to pole, the ship and her crew have expanded our understanding of some of nature's most powerful forces."

### **MAKE IT TO A MEETING NEXT WEEK**

Members are highly encouraged to attend any of *fourteen* membership meetings scheduled around the country next week. As a Union committed to democratic precepts and safeguards, membership meetings are a great way for members to stay involved, get informed, and deliver input to help advance the business of the Union. There is another full agenda of important communications and information set for discussion as well as the election of a rank and file committee (*at certain halls*) to perform the annual review of Union finances. Take a look at the upcoming April meeting list below and see what fits into your schedule!

### **CLEVELAND HALL WILL HOST INFORMATIONAL MEETING NEXT FRIDAY**

Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan will be on hand next week at the Cleveland hall and will conduct an informational membership meeting for members. The meeting will take place on Friday, April 7 at 12:00 noon. This is a great opportunity, so spread the word and pack the hall on that day! The Cleveland, OH hall address is 1250 Old River Rd. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.

### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS**

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

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

*Wednesday, April 5* – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

*Thursday, April 6* – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

*Friday, April 7* - Honolulu@1100.

*Informational Meeting in Cleveland – Friday, April 7@1200.*

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*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.*

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