

# 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 19 – May 10, 2018

In this issue // Continue Forwarding LIBERTY PEACE Résumés // M.E.B.A. Urges Canal Authority Dialog with Mariners // Construction Milestones for Matson Newbuilds // SUNY News – Graduation, Cadet Program, Puerto Rico Relief // Options for Paying CG User Fees // Mariners Still Dealing with GPS Interference //

### **LIBERTY PEACE TURNOVER: CONTINUE FORWARDING RÉSUMÉS**

As members know by now, M.E.B.A. is scheduled to crew up the LIBERTY PEACE on or about June 9<sup>th</sup> in Beaumont, TX. Contract wages and benefits will be the same as the other three Liberty PC/TC vessels (LIBERTY PRIDE, PROMISE and PASSION).

The Union is asking for résumés from members and applicants interested in employment on the LIBERTY PEACE to be forwarded as soon as possible to the NY/NJ Union hall. Those candidate résumés received before May 15<sup>th</sup> will get priority consideration. *Please note: if you have previously forwarded a résumé to Liberty for consideration but were not hired, this should not preclude you from submitting your résumé again.*

Forward all résumés to M.E.B.A. Atlantic Coast VP Jason Callahan ([jcallahan@mebaunion.org](mailto:jcallahan@mebaunion.org)) or NY Patrolman Nico Sermoneta ([nsermoneta@mebaunion.org](mailto:nsermoneta@mebaunion.org)) at the NY/NJ M.E.B.A. Union hall so they can ensure the Company receives them. Our members and applicants should consider these new job opportunities and your assistance with this transition and turnover are appreciated.

### **M.E.B.A. URGES CANAL AUTHORITY DIALOG WITH MARINERS**

M.E.B.A. is urging the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) to dispense with antagonistic disciplinary tactics and instead meet with concerned mariners over improving Canal safety. Mirroring a communication sent by Nautilus International to the Panamanian Consulate in London, M.E.B.A. dispatched a strongly worded letter to the Panamanian Embassy in Washington D.C. calling for cooperative efforts between ACP and the Canal unions in furtherance of safety initiatives. Nautilus International is a trade union and professional organization serving, supporting and protecting the interests of more than 22,000 maritime professionals around the world.

Some weeks back, the ACP announced sanctions involving removal or warnings for captains who balked at “business as usual” after the Authority reduced the number of tug deckhands thus compromising vessel safety. ACP made the decision unilaterally without consultation from mariners. The Union of Canal Tugboat Captains and Deck Officers said the ACP decision “to eliminate a tugboat [crewmember] from the bow endangers the safety of customers, workers and the Canal’s own facilities.” This is compounded by concerns they raised about excessive overtime required of tugboat Captains, leading to fatigue. The same concerns were also raised by the National Transport Safety Board (NTSB) after they found that a recent collision was caused by fatigue stemming from excessive working hours. The ACP has continued to ignore Canal unions, including M.E.B.A. affiliate Union de

Ingenieros Marinos (UIM), which have pointed out serious concerns about Panama Canal Authority cost-saving shortcuts that compromise worker safety.

Along with Nautilus, M.E.B.A. called for the Panamanian government to ensure that ACP enters into a 'constructive dialogue' with maritime unions. The letter noted, "For the safety of all ships and all seafarers passing through the Canal, it is essential that operational standards are maintained at the highest levels."

## **CONSTRUCTION MILESTONES FOR MATSON NEWBUILDS**

San Diego's NASSCO Shipyard held a keel-laying ceremony on Friday for the future Matson vessel LURLINE, scheduled for completion in late 2019. The Kanaloa-class ship is one of two combination container and roll-on/roll-off (Con-Ro) vessels being built by NASSCO that will join Matson's Hawaii fleet. The yard has also started work on the MATSONIA which is scheduled for delivery in the second quarter of 2020. Both ships will transport containers, automobiles and rolling stock between the West Coast of the United States and Hawaii. The company plans to use the two ships to replace three of its diesel-powered vessels in the Hawaii service and aims to maintain nine active ships in the trade.

Matson also has two Aloha Class vessels under construction at Philly Shipyard in Philadelphia, PA with deliveries scheduled for the third quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019, respectively. The yard has a christening scheduled for June 30 for the first of the two ship, the DANIEL K. INOUYE. The name of the second ship, "Hull 30" has not yet been announced. These 850-foot long, 3,600 TEU vessels will be Matson's largest ships and are said to be the largest containerships ever built in the U.S.

## **YOUR INPUT CAN HELP REDUCE MARITIME GENDER GAP**

Seafaring careers are highly essential because more than 80% of world cargo is transported by sea. But in parts of the world, many women seafarers are refused employment onboard ships. The following research questionnaire will help probe effective solutions for such concerns. International researchers have put together a study on "Gender Equality and Cultural Awareness in Maritime Education and Training" (GECAMET). Maritime stakeholders are invited to fill out the 10-question survey which should take no more than three minutes. Your participation can help reduce the gender gap in the maritime sector and update the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) with gender requirements.

Your opinions will remain anonymous. After completion, please share the link of the questionnaire with your colleagues and with other stakeholders of the maritime sector to obtain effective results and a social responsible impact: <https://goo.gl/forms/eAWeTEaABamJB1t13>

## **SUNY NEWS - BIGGEST EVER GRADUATION; M.E.B.A. CADET PROGRAM; CADETS TO ASSIST PUERTO RICO RELIEF**

SUNY Maritime College graduated 269 students this last Friday, the largest graduating class in the School's 144-year history. The graduates included more than 150 who received a U.S. Coast Guard license, qualifying them to work onboard commercial vessels; more than 30 graduate students; 19 newly commissioned officers into the Navy and Marine Corps and dozens of student-athletes.

Captain Robert Johnston, former President and CEO of M.E.B.A.-contracted Overseas Shipholding Group, Inc. (OSG), gave the commencement's keynote speech. He was a 1969 SUNY graduate.

M.E.B.A. was a presence at SUNY's recent Career Fair and has already signed up many talented cadets as new applicants. In addition, a fair share of SUNY cadets will take part in M.E.B.A.'s Licensed Cadet Internship summer program this July at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. Not long after registration for the popular three-week M.E.B.A. program opened up, all 80 spots were filled along with an overflow list. The program is designed to help mold the next generation of M.E.B.A. mariners. It is targeted toward cadets going into their senior year and helps ease their way toward a shipping career with the Union.

In other SUNY news, more than 400 SUNY Maritime College students and others this summer will spend three days assisting ongoing hurricane recovery efforts in San Juan, Puerto Rico, during the college's annual summer sea term onboard Training Ship EMPIRE STATE VI. The ship left the college campus this week, bound for San Juan. The voyage to Puerto Rico is the first stop on the college's annual summer sea term, which gives students the hands-on education and training they need to sail onboard commercial vessels after graduation. The ship will arrive in San Juan on May 20. While on the island, the students will assist with three projects: restoring trade-based agriculture, including assisting farmers plant pineapples, mangoes and coconuts; preparing roofs for construction by removing tarps and other temporary materials; and removing debris.

A recent spending bill signed into law includes federal funding for a new multi-mission vessel to replace the 57-year old EMPIRE STATE VI. The new vessel is expected to be ready for the 2022 summer sea term.

### **OPTIONS FOR PAYING COAST GUARD USER FEES**

For mariners who need to submit payments for services and documents associated with merchant mariner credentialing, inspections, and vessel documentation, the Coast Guard is encouraging online payments by credit card or from a checking account. Coast Guard forms for payments of fees for merchant mariner and vessel documentation services, as well as, forms for vessel inspection user fee payments are available at [www.pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov). Once on the site, find Coast Guard forms for online payments by entering 'USCG' in the search field at the top of the page. The results will list Coast Guard forms for available online payments.

*New addresses for paying Coast Guard vessel inspection user fees by check*

The addresses for submitting payments by check to the Coast Guard, including for vessel inspection user fees, have changed. Payments sent to the old addresses will not be forwarded to the Coast Guard. Payments received after the due date will result in late fees and penalties.

To ensure the Coast Guard receives payments sent by check through the U.S. Postal Service, use the following address: US Coast Guard Vessel Inspection; P.O. Box 979118; St. Louis, MO 63197-9000

If using a delivery service that requires a street address, use the following address: U. S. Bank Government Lockbox; Lockbox Number 979118 (COI); 1005 Convention Plaza; ATTN: Gov't Lockbox, SL-MOC1 GL; St. Louis, MO 63101

Don't forget to include the invoice number or the vessel name and identification number on the check. Additional information is available on the Coast Guard Finance Center's website.

## **MARINERS STILL DEALING WITH GPS INTERFERENCE IN EASTERN MED**

Continued global positioning systems (GPS) interference in the Eastern Mediterranean has prompted the Maritime Administration to issue a second alert warning mariners to stay vigilant and wary of such activity. An earlier alert was prompted by a series of vessel and aircraft reports, as far back as March 18, 2018, involving GPS interference in the vicinity of Port Said, Egypt and the Suez Canal, and south of the Republic of Cyprus. This interference reportedly has resulted in lost or otherwise altered GPS signals affecting bridge navigation, GPS-based timing and communications equipment. The alert did not point to a cyber-attack as the cause of the GPS interference but history suggests that it is certainly a possibility. Last year, “spoofing” by hackers was blamed for a series of GPS problems experienced by over 20 vessels transiting the Black Sea south of Ukraine. In those cases, vessel GPS coordinates indicated falsified vessel locations thus escalating the possibility for an at-sea incident.

Mariners are urged to exercise caution when transiting those areas. GPS disruptions or anomalies should be immediately reported to the U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Center (NAVCEN) online (<https://go.usa.gov/xQBaU>) or via phone at (703) 313-5900, 24 hours a day.

## **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 & Documents, Vacation Plan Forms). 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.

## **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS**

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

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

Wednesday, June 6 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, June 7 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, June 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](mailto: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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org)*