

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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INITIAL MATSON BARGAINING DATES SET; RANK & FILE SOUGHT FOR MATSON, APL, OSG, HAPAG TALKS

Initial negotiating dates with Matson Navigation have been set up as the Union begins the process for a new contract. Experienced rank and file members are being sought to assist the M.E.B.A. negotiating team that is scheduled to meet with Matson during the weeks of July 16th and July 23rd.

Those interested should contact Oakland Patrolman Max Alper at the hall or email him at malper@mebaunion.org. The Matson contract covering the A3 and CV2600 vessels as well as Port Engineers expires on August 15, 2018. Negotiations will also include terms for the forthcoming newbuild Matson vessels.

Rank & file members are being sought to assist upcoming contract negotiations including a pair of reopeners.

In addition, rank and file members are being sought for talks with American President Lines, though specific dates have not yet been set. The APL contract covering the deep-sea vessels and Port Engineers expires on September 30, 2018. Oakland Patrolman Max Alper can also be contacted by those interested in assisting APL talks.

In addition, M.E.B.A. will have reopener talks this summer covering economic terms with both OSG Ship Management and also with Hapag/MTL. Experienced members sailing with those fleets are being sought to supplement the M.E.B.A. negotiating teams. Those interested should contact Gulf Coast V.P. Erin Bertram at the Houston Union hall or by email at ebertram@mebaunion.org.

ITF BITES BACK ON ACP'S CRITICISM OF PANAMA CANAL TUGBOAT PILOTS

The International Transport Workers' Federation issued a statement blasting the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) and its heavy-handed treatment of tugboat pilots worried about safety on the waterway. The ACP is the agency of the Panamanian Government responsible for the operations of the Panama Canal.

Several weeks back, the ACP announced sanctions involving removal or warnings for captains who lashed out against the Authority's unilateral decision to reduce the number of tug deckhands thus compromising vessel safety. After looking into the issue, the ACP doubled down on its condemnation

of tug captains who refused to escort vessels through the Neopanamax Locks because of personnel shortages. ACP claimed the captains broke the law in an “irresponsible and disrespectful” bid to gain an advantage in a labor dispute.

But their response didn’t sit well with the ITF which issued another release rebutting the “offensive” ACP allegations calling them “misleading” and twisting reality. ITF said, “This is not a labor dispute, as the ACP refers to in its statement, this is a fair request from transport professionals. The captains represented by UCOC must be able to ensure they can work in a safe environment for the prosperity of the Panama Canal.”

Safety concerns have also been pinpointed by the National Transport Safety Board (NTSB) which looked into a collision on the Canal they discovered 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.

ITF pointed out that Canal unions have continually been given the brush-off in their entreaties to address dire safety issues on the waterway. The ACP’s reluctance to meet with unions has reinforced worker belief that ACP’s unblinking dedication to the bottom line has multiplied the risk of an accident.

The ITF statement concluded, “We...urge the ACP to engage in constructive dialogue with Panama maritime unions to demonstrate a serious consideration for safety in one of the shipping industry’s most crucial waterways.”

REP. ROB WITTMAN SALUTED WITH PRESTIGIOUS MARITIME HONOR

Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA) was presented with the prestigious “Salute to Congress” award at a DC area event last night for his years of support to the industry.

The International Propeller Club event drew a generous maritime industry crowd including M.E.B.A. officials and American Maritime Congress representatives. The annual honor is reserved for a Member of Congress who demonstrates consistent support for the U.S.-flag Merchant Marine and American maritime industry. Rep. Wittman strongly supports the Jones Act, Maritime Security Program, cargo preference, and other essential pro-U.S. shipping laws and statutes. Currently in his fifth term in office, he is the Chairman of the House Armed Services Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee and is also an enthusiastic advocate of a robust Navy fleet and American shipbuilding. He spoke off-the-cuff in his official remarks demonstrating his depth of understanding of our often-complex industry. He talked about the need to shore-up efforts to recapitalize the Ready Reserve Force and to boost the U.S. internationally-trading commercial fleet as a means to solidifying sealift efforts and our national security.

OMB WANTS INPUT ON CUTTING BACK MARITIME INDUSTRY OVER-REGULATION

The Office of Management and Budget has put out a request for information on how the Federal government can better manage regulatory costs imposed on the maritime sector. Relating to the multiple Federal agencies that regulate the industry, OMB is asking for comment on how current related agency requirements “can be modified or repealed to increase efficiency, reduce or eliminate

unnecessary or unjustified regulatory burdens, or simplify regulatory compliance while continuing to meet statutory missions.”

The Request for Information appeared in today’s issue of the *Federal Register* and can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/RFIOMB> Written comments and information are requested to be forwarded by July 16, 2018. You can submit comments by any of the following methods: Federal Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments. Email: OMB.DeregulatoryRFI@OMB.eop.gov. Include “Maritime Regulatory Reform RFI” in the subject line of the message.

For further information contact Shannon Joyce, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, 725 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20503. Phone: (202) 395–5897.

66 HOUSE MEMBERS CALL FOR SHIP AMERICAN LAWS

In our highly politicized world, it has become a rarity for Members of Congress to agree on anything. So when a large group of bipartisan lawmakers comes together to take a stand on a single issue, it’s probably a good idea to listen. One of these rare moments happened last week when 66 lawmakers, led by Reps. Duncan Hunter (R-CA), John Garamendi (D-CA), David Joyce (R-OH) and Cedric Richmond (D-LA) stood up for good jobs, a strong U.S. maritime industry, and national security by supporting strong cargo preference — or “Ship American” — laws.

By requiring government agencies to ship cargo on U.S. flagged, owned, and crewed vessels, Ship American laws play an important role in keeping the United States safe and its economy strong. That’s because every day, highly trained, highly skilled civilian mariners transport cargo and passengers, and stand ready to meet the military sealift needs of our nation. They facilitate the delivery of foreign aid, provide a waterborne response for domestic and international disaster recovery missions, and, in times of war, transport military personnel and cargoes.

Without civilian mariners, America would be forced to turn these responsibilities over to foreign flagged, foreign-crewed vessels, owned and operated by those who may not share our interests. And without strong cargo preference laws, American mariners would lose good middle-class jobs to unfair foreign competition. Yet, under the guise of keeping transportation costs low, some government agencies have, for years, been skirting strict cargo preference laws, instead choosing to ship government cargo on foreign vessels. At a time when government budgets are strapped and cost cutting is akin to an Olympic sport, this may seem like a viable solution — but there’s a problem: The true costs of shipping government-impelled cargo boil down to more than just dollars and cents.

For starters, the cost savings agencies earn from using foreign vessels to ship government cargo is minimal at best, and avoiding these laws means taxpayer dollars are being used to support foreign shipping services. Moreover, this practice ignores the very real reason Congress implemented Ship American laws in the first place. The same crews that carry government cargo are the same men and women who stand ready to move U.S. military and humanitarian cargo as needed. In other words, retaining a pool of highly trained, qualified, and loyal mariners who can meet the military and humanitarian needs of our country is contingent upon government agencies abiding by strong cargo preference laws.

The failure to do so is contributing to a significant strain on the strength and readiness of America's civilian mariners. At present, the Merchant Marine is short of the minimum requirements needed to support our country's sealift capabilities. Since 2010, more than 900 U.S. mariners have left the industry and, if things don't change, more are expected to choose this path. The pool of highly skilled, highly qualified civilian mariners needed to meet this country's tactical objectives isn't created out of thin air. It is built and sustained through smart, strategic policies that have strong bipartisan support — including strict cargo preference laws.

The alarm bells have been rung. Ignoring the distress signals could spell disaster for America's maritime industry, the good jobs it supports, and jeopardize our national security. It is now up to our executive branch to heed the advice of lawmakers and take action by enforcing common-sense Ship American laws.

JOHN W. BROWN GETS FEDERAL GRANT FOR HULL WORK AS PART OF MARITIME HERITAGE AWARDS

A cooperation between the Maritime Administration and National Park Service has awarded \$2.6 million in maritime heritage grants to worthy recipients including Project Liberty Ship which will use the much-needed funds for the upkeep of the WWII vessel SS JOHN W. BROWN. The grants are funded through the recycling of vessels from MarAd's National Defense Reserve Fleet.

The grants were awarded to over 30 projects that teach about and preserve sites and objects related to our nation's maritime history. "Since 2014, MarAd has provided more than \$7 million in funding to support our nation's maritime heritage projects," said Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby. "These ships, lighthouses and other strategic maritime vessels have played an integral role in our nation's success at sea. By preserving these maritime artifacts, we hope to inspire future generations with America's maritime legacy."

The \$200,000 grant for the JOHN W. BROWN will be used for the preservation of the hull and underwater portions of the vessel. Other projects of note receiving grant money include funds for the preservation of certain classic Navy vessels, several maritime exhibits at museums around the country and money to help preserve the excursion steamship SS COLUMBIA which was launched in 1902.

MSC HOSPITAL SHIPS ON THE MOVE IN GLOBAL MISSIONS

M.E.B.A. mariners continue their participation in high-level global exercises as part of the Military Sealift Command fleet including onboard two MSC hospital ships. M.E.B.A. represents the engineers in MSC's Civilian Mariner fleet. MSC hospital ship USNS MERCY participated in a passing exercise (PASSEX) this week with the expeditionary fast transport ship USNS BRUNSWICK (also crewed by M.E.B.A.) and Her Majesty's Canadian ship HMCS VANCOUVER. PASSEX is an exercise in which multiple naval ships operate in close proximity of one another to help strengthen the ship's abilities to perform in complex maneuvering, logistics, and humanitarian relief operations.

MERCY and BRUNSWICK are also participating in Pacific Partnership 2018 (PP18), the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. PP18's objective is to enhance regional coordination in areas such as medical readiness and preparedness for man-made and natural disasters.

MSC's other hospital ship, the USNS COMFORT, is taking part in Comfort Exercise (COMFEX) 2018. COMFEX is an advanced-phase training exercise designed to prepare and test the capabilities of the ship's U.S. Navy medical professionals and civil service mariners, ensuring readiness to rapidly answer any emergent crisis.

PAYMENT PORTAL FOR DUES, P.A.F., G&W

The payment portal accessed from M.E.B.A.'s homepage (www.mebaunion.org) allows members and applicants ease when making a dues or service charge payment and to assist the P.A.F. and Good & Welfare funds. Payments can be made by credit card, debit card or through a checking account. A recurring payment option is also available on the portal enabling automatic quarterly payments so members can "set it and forget it" and always stay current. You simply check the "Recurring Billing" box that appears at the top of the page when you're filling out your information to enable automatic quarterly payments. This feature is also available to support the Good & Welfare and the Political Action Fund on a monthly basis. P.A.F. is crucial for keeping U.S. shipping and the Union's interests viable in the halls of Congress.

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 MEETINGS

Monday, June 4 – Boston@1200; [Seattle \(Fife\)@1300](mailto: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.

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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. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; 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