

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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REOPENER TALKS WITH INTERLAKE

M.E.B.A. conducted re-opener negotiations with Interlake Steamship this week in the first of two bargaining sessions that took place on Tuesday at M.E.B.A. Headquarters. The parties are discussing wages and fringe benefits for the next four years of our contract that extends into 2025. Talks will continue in mid-June at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School.

M.E.B.A.'s negotiating team is being headed up by Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan and includes Tampa Branch Agent Nicole Greenway and Contracts Officer Mark Gallagher. Joining them at Tuesday's bargaining session were rank and file members Ryan Novak and Mark Gianferante who sail with Interlake as engineers. Interlake was represented by its V.P., Counsel & Secretary Tom Wynne, V.P. & CFO Bill Thornton and Director of Training & Marine Personnel Jayson Toth. Interlake President Mark W. Barker visited with negotiators and M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac on Monday night to talk shop.

PVSA WORKAROUND BILL SIGNED INTO LAW

On Monday, the President signed a bill passed by Congress last week that will help restart cruise ship traffic to Alaska despite a prohibitive Canadian rule. Legislation headed up by Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Dan Sullivan (R-AK) in the Senate and Rep. Don Young (R-AK) in the House, easily passed and landed on the President's desk late last week. The law temporarily relaxes Passenger Vessel Service Act (PVSA) provisions allowing foreign-flag cruise ships to bypass Canada on Alaska cruises from Washington. The exemption only applies for specified list of cruise ships. The temporary workaround will remain in place only as long as the Canadian ban is in effect.

The Alaska cruise ship industry has been sidelined since the pandemic and appeared to be far away from a restart after Canada issued an Interim Order prohibiting large passenger vessels from operating in Canadian waters until March 2022. Foreign-flagged passenger vessels need to make Canadian stops on their voyages to the Last Frontier to satisfy the PVSA. The Act prohibits foreign-flagged cruise ships from directly operating between two U.S. ports.

Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, which operates NCL, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas hailed the new law and announced that it will allow them restart cruises to Alaska beginning on August 7. Another factor in the restart of cruising to U.S. ports is satisfying the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Conditional Sailing Order. Cruise companies can obtain Conditional Sailing

Certificates if they meet a CDC checklist which includes, among other things, that a passenger vessel must have at least 98% of its crew and 95% of its passengers fully vaccinated. NCL believes it has met the requirement and believes that a certificate will be issued to them very soon clearing the way for resumption of its Alaska cruises.

In addition, the company projected the restart of cruising operations for other vessels in the NCL fleet including the M.E.B.A.-crewed PRIDE OF AMERICA, the only large U.S.-flag passenger vessel and also the only cruise ship operating exclusively between the Hawaiian Islands. NCL-America expects the ship to begin seven-day Hawaii interisland voyages from Honolulu beginning on Nov. 6.

TRANSCOM SUPPORT OF TANKER SECURITY FLEET BODES WELL IN ADVANCE OF BIDEN BUDGET

The Commander of the United States Transportation Command has emphasized his support for the activation of the new Tanker Security Program, a declaration that could suggest that the forthcoming Presidential budget, expected as early as tomorrow, could include proposed funding for the establishment of this new fleet.

TRANSCOM Commander General Stephen Lyons testified before the joint Readiness/Seapower & Projection Forces Subcommittees (part of the House Armed Services Committee) about posture and readiness of the “Mobility Enterprise.”

The proposed Tanker Security Program would be a fleet of 10 commercial U.S.-flag petroleum product tankers modeled after the Maritime Security Program. It would support our nation’s long-term strategic defense needs and reduce the U.S. military’s reliance on foreign-flag commercial vessels while also expanding the qualified mariner pool. M.E.B.A. and U.S.-flag shipping advocates are looking for the inclusion of a \$60 million authorization for the program in the forthcoming FY ‘22 budget request. The program would fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense.

Discussing the Tanker Security Program, General Lyons told the Subcommittees that “it is critical in my view...It’s clear that we need to have a U.S.-flag capability to meet our national defense and national security needs.”

In addition, the General, as he often does, proclaimed strong support for U.S. shipping and told Readiness Subcommittee Chairman Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) that “you and I are in complete agreement on the essence of having a strong U.S.-flag mariner fleet, both organic and commercial, and in the mariners that sail both of them are a critical component of our national defense and our national security....I think the work this Committee's done on the Tanker Security Program is great. We fully support that. We fully support the Jones Act and the Maritime Security Program.”

General Lyons also made some interesting comments in an online appearance this week with the Hudson Institute, a Washington D.C.-based think tank. He discussed the release of the Defense Department’s Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study (MCRS) expected in June. The MCRS is a critical DOD assessment of the number of tanker aircraft, airlift aircraft and sealift ships needed to meet future combatant commander requirements. The General noted that the study will emphasize heightened reliance on more mobile, shallow-draft vessels such as the Military Sealift Command (Spearhead-class) Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) vessels. The EPFs, that include M.E.B.A. engine room civilian mariners, are high-speed workhorse vessels capable of intra-theater personnel and cargo transport.

Discussing the Tanker Security Program in the online forum, the General noted, “I’m a big advocate...we have to move in that direction to ensure that we have access to U.S.-flag assets in time of crisis.”

The online conversation touches on a variety of other topics including mariner shortages, U.S.-flag shipping and the need to innovate and adapt in response to a changing world. You can check out the 43 minute talk with General Lyons by visiting this link <https://tinyurl.com/fwr8ra9u>

BIDEN’S FIRST MARITIME DAY PROCLAMATION

In 1933, Congress designated May 22nd of each year as “National Maritime Day” and tasked the sitting President to issue a Proclamation “calling for its appropriate observance.” President Biden made his first such Proclamation in a statement that was released on Friday, a day before the official observance of the great day.

The statement lauds mariners for the outsized role they played in World War II as well as the contributions they continue to make every day in times of peace. It points out that seafarers keep our economy moving - supporting businesses, growing jobs and keeping us competitive. It states that U.S. mariners are critical for outreach efforts to other countries that are hit hard by natural disasters and other crises. In addition, the Proclamation marvels that mariners have fulfilled their missions and keep the supply chain moving “even in the midst of a worldwide pandemic.”

It says, “On this National Maritime Day, we honor the brave merchant mariners who provide critical support to our troops stationed in warzones, and who are essential to our Nation’s economic success. Recognizing the contributions of our merchant mariners, my Administration strongly supports protecting the Jones Act — the cornerstone of our domestic maritime industry. We must protect those who protect our country.”

CG SURVEY FOR DECK OFFICERS W/UNLIMITED TONNAGE ENDORSEMENTS

The Coast Guard is seeking input from mariners who hold Merchant Mariner Credential deck officer endorsements for unlimited tonnage vessels to improve the quality of the content of credentialing examinations. The Coast Guard is currently working on a job task analysis (JTA) of deck officer endorsements for unlimited tonnage vessels and needs your input to help validate the information they gathered. This is a unique opportunity for you to provide insight into your job as a deck officer on unlimited tonnage vessels and contribute to Coast Guard examination improvements. The Coast Guard will use the results of the JTAs in consultation with industry to evaluate and update examination content for all the unlimited tonnage deck officer endorsements.

Mariners who hold unlimited tonnage deck officer endorsements will receive an e-mail from JobTaskAnalysis@uscg.mil containing a link to the survey and the dates the survey is open. Your link to the survey will have a unique identifier to record your responses. It is not linked to you personally and the information you provide will remain anonymous. Your participation is encouraged for the benefit of the maritime community and safety of the Marine Transportation System. If you have questions regarding the survey, please contact JobTaskAnalysis@uscg.mil.

ITF UNIONS LOOKING FOR BETTER MARINER VACCINE ACCESS TO STEM CREW CHANGE CRISIS

Mariner unions are calling on governments to prioritize vaccinations to international mariners to prevent another surge in the crew change crisis, which has complicated the lives of seafarers during the pandemic. The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), which includes 700 affiliated trade unions including the M.E.B.A. and many other global seafarer organizations, is pushing world governments to embrace universal access to COVID-19 vaccines to prevent another crew change crisis flare-up. The ITF estimates that about 200,000 international mariners are stuck onboard their ships beyond their assignments because of restrictive border and travel constraints. With unprecedented COVID outbreaks gripping India and other major seafarer labor-providing nations, the maritime industry fears that the number of seafarers trapped working on ships could double within weeks.

ITF Seafarers Section Chair Dave Heindel warned, "We are on the precipice of a third wave of the crew change crisis. Now is the time for generosity and action from every kind of government. We need to see the home countries of seafarers prioritizing them as key workers for vaccines. We need port States to offer vaccines to seafarers visiting their shores. We need flag States to vaccinate all seafarers on ships which fly their flags."

IMO LOOKS FOR ACTION TO COUNTER GULF OF GUINEA PIRACY

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has called for increased collaboration and action to tackle an escalation in the number and severity of attacks in the Gulf of Guinea region, which threatens the lives and well-being of seafarers and the safety of shipping. Based on reports submitted to IMO, in 2020, the number of incidents taking place in the Gulf of Guinea (West Africa) increased to 90 (up by 20 compared to 2019), with a total of 112 crew members reported as kidnapped/missing.

In a resolution on recommended action to address piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), IMO calls on Member States, national authorities, the United Nations and other relevant organizations to consider strengthening law enforcement to arrest and prosecute pirates, in accordance with international law and national legal frameworks. Coastal States were urged to harmonize criminal penalties.

UNION-STYLE MEMORIAL DAY

On Memorial Day, we remember those in the services, including the Merchant Marine, who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our great nation. The upcoming holiday weekend can be seen as the pre-season for summertime, so it's time to sharpen up our skills with barbecues, picnics, and fun in the sun – and here are some union-style suggestions to help get the party started: **Hot Dogs** - Ball Park (UFCW, IBT); Butterball (UFCW, IBT); Farmer John (IBT); Hebrew National (UFCW, IBT); Hormel (IBT); Oscar Meyer (UFCW, IBT). **Coolers** - Rubbermaid (IBEW); **Ice Cream** - Ben & Jerry's (BCTGM); Breyers (BCTGM, IBT); Good Humor (IBT). **Sunscreen** - Bain de Soleil (AFGE); Coppertone (IBT). **Snacks** - Cheez-It (BCTGM); Doritos (BCTGM, IBT); Fig Newtons (BCTGM); Frito Lay (BCTGM, IBT); Rold Gold Pretzels (BCTGM, IBT); Sun Chips (BCTGM, IBT); Wheat Thins (BCTGM, IBT). **Beverages** - More than 250 varieties of union made beer. Check the list at www.Labor411.org

SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL HOUSE SURVEY ON NEW YORK CITY GUESTHOUSE FOR MARINERS

The Seafarers International House (SIH), a charitable organization that provides mariners and travelers with hospitality, social assistance and advocacy, has a short online survey they'd like you to fill out. The quick one minute survey will help the SIH determine how to best serve the needs of seafarers who want to stay in the New York City area. SIH has partnered with an organization providing transitional housing at their existing guesthouse and they are exploring additional locations for "mission-based" guests.

You can fill out the survey at <https://tinyurl.com/SIHNewYorkPoll>

M.E.B.A. HALLS & OFFICES CLOSED MONDAY FOR MEMORIAL DAY

All M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on Monday, May 31st for Memorial Day. Take a moment to remember and honor those who died for our freedom. The National Moment of Remembrance, established by Congress, asks Americans wherever they are on Memorial Day at 3 p.m. local time to pause for a minute of silence in an act of national unity and reflection. You could also fly the American flag at half-staff until noon, fly the POW/MIA flag (and/or Merchant Marine flag), and perhaps ring a bell eight times to signify the moment.

JUNE MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – ALL *REGULAR* MEETINGS ARE IN-PERSON

(All times are local)

Monday, June 7 – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300.

Tuesday, June 8 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, June 9 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; *Online Headquarters "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No voting) – sign up by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org*

Thursday, June 10 – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, June 11 – *King Kamehameha Day (Honolulu Hall Closed)*

Monday, June 14 – 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 demonstrated 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 (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org. Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.