

# 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"*  
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In this issue//Negotiations Commence with Liberty Maritime, Rank & File Requested//Rank & File Requested for Pasha Reopener Talks//MarAd Tri-Partite Meetings Continue//Two More Weeks for WSF Survey Responses//Memorial Service for Former IBU Leader//MLA Statement on Automation//T&I Chairman Updates Industry in Propeller Club Chat//M.E.B.A. Norfolk Welcomes New Maritime Friendly Lawmaker//NMC Mitigation Efforts for Mariners//Eastern Med GPS Interference Continues//Update your Email Address!//

### **TALKS WITH LIBERTY MARITIME**

The Union met with Liberty Maritime on April 26<sup>th</sup> in New York City to exchange and review contract proposals for a new agreement for four Pure Car/Truck Carriers (PC/TCs). Our current agreement with the company runs until June 15, 2019 and covers the LIBERTY PRIDE, LIBERTY PROMISE, LIBERTY PASSION and LIBERTY PEACE. The parties agreed to a subsequent meeting on Thursday May 23<sup>rd</sup> at M.E.B.A. HQ in Washington, D.C.

Rank and file input for negotiations is welcomed, and experienced members are urged to participate in the talks. If you are interested please contact M.E.B.A. Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan at [jcallahan@mebaunion.org](mailto:jcallahan@mebaunion.org).

M.E.B.A members should stay alert and informed as we look for progress in our discussions with the company. Please feel free to contact your local Union hall and/or M.E.B.A Headquarters for the latest information.

### **RANK & FILE REQUESTED FOR UPCOMING PASHA REOPENER**

M.E.B.A. will take advantage of the June 15, 2019 economic reopener with Pasha and the parties will meet to amend the agreements for Deep Sea and Port Engineers. Our contract with Pasha runs through June 2022 and covers the HORIZON ENTERPRISE (C-8), HORIZON PACIFIC (C-8), HORIZON RELIANCE (C-9) and HORIZON SPIRIT (C-9), as well as Port Engineers.

Rank and file members interested in summer negotiations, likely in the Oakland area, should contact Oakland Patrolman Max Alper ([malper@mebaunion.org](mailto:malper@mebaunion.org)). No firm dates have yet been set. All comments and suggestions should be sent to Adam Vokac ([avokac@mebaunion.org](mailto:avokac@mebaunion.org)) and Max making sure they are sent from non-work (private) email addresses.

### **MARAD TRI-PARTITE MEETINGS**

The Maritime Administration contract covering the vessels in the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) is in the last year of the four-year base contract period. The contract provides for two additional two-year option periods which will extend the contract to eight years. The first two-year option period, if exercised by MarAd, will commence on January 27, 2020 and run through January 26, 2022.

In preparation for this first option period, the Tri-Partite Licensed Officer unions (AMO, M.E.B.A. & MM&P) met on May 1, 2019 in Washington, DC to commence preliminary discussions on topics to be included in our Supplemental Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs).

All contracted operators currently participating in the RRF program are required to submit all documentation and signed agreements to MarAd by October 26, 2019.

### **TWO MORE WEEKS FOR WSF MEMBER/APPLICANT SURVEY RESPONSE**

Members and applicants sailing in the Washington State Ferry system who have not yet done so, are encouraged to participate in the ongoing online survey concerning a number of important issues. The Union has asked over 400 M.E.B.A. members and applicants in the WSF to deliver their input during a 30-day online survey concerning representation issues. The survey affords the opportunity for the M.E.B.A. to help capture member and applicant opinions on how the Union can maximize its functionality and better serve the membership. The survey began on Monday, April 22 and continues until 0900 (Pacific Time) on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Survey links were sent to members and applicants in the WSF at their email addresses on file at M.E.B.A. Headquarters. Members and applicants sailing for WSF who did not receive an email should contact M.E.B.A. Headquarters and supply a Membership Database Update Form with the Union to ensure that their correct information is on file. Further information can be sought from M.E.B.A.'s WSF Rep. Eric Winge at [ewinge@mebaunion.org](mailto:ewinge@mebaunion.org). Marco Cannistraro at Headquarters can also be contacted about the online survey at [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) or (202) 257-2825.

### **MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR FORMER IBU LEADER ALAN COTÉ**

An upcoming memorial service has been scheduled in Seattle to honor the life of maritime stalwart and former President of the Inlandboatman's Union of the Pacific (IBU) Alan Coté. He had led the IBU for a dozen years from 2005 and finally handed the keys to Marina Secchitano who succeeded him in 2018. Coté was a founding principal of the six-union Maritime Labor Alliance and spent a lifetime battling on behalf of working families. He died this past April at the age of 61.

The celebration of his life will take place on Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at the Seattle Labor Temple (2800 1st Ave.) in Seattle on the Main Floor Hall from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. If you're in the area, try to attend. In lieu of flowers, consider a contribution in Alan Coté's name to The Seattle Seafarers' Center (3568 W Marginal Way SW, Seattle WA 98106) or the University of Washington Foundation (Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies/Community Outreach & Events Fund, University of WA, Box 353530, Seattle WA 98195-3530)

### **MLA STATEMENT ON AUTOMATION**

The Maritime Labor Alliance recently issued a statement on the hot topic of automation as terminals and shipping companies eye cost-cutting new technologies. The MLA is a six-union cooperation between the ARA, IBU, ILA, ILWU, M.E.B.A. and the MM&P. The business of shipping has become increasingly sophisticated and modern vessels and seaports are aided by technological advances that aid productivity and enhance efficiencies. But the MLA warns against an unwise overreach into automation in the name of profit. Notwithstanding the obvious decimation of thousands of good-paying American jobs, a move toward full automation ignores sober realities and invites potential disaster from nefarious forces eager to take advantage of a diminished human presence. The MLA statement follows:

“As automation is being deployed in the transportation industry, proposals to fully automate port terminal operations are currently being considered while efforts to operate unmanned vessels are not far behind. The U.S. maritime industry employs more than approximately 260,000 Americans and provides more than \$29 billion in annual wages. However, the maritime workforce will be faced with dramatic job cuts and loss of wages if the unchecked move to automation is fully realized. These efforts are continually being forced upon workers as management seeks to do more with less in an effort to eliminate one thing: American workers.

The expansion of full automation in our coastal harbors is being promoted with claims of reducing human error while improving the safety and efficiency of our ports. These claims are shortsighted and misleading. In fact, a recent survey by McKinsey & Company found that fully automated ports were generally less productive than their conventional counterparts while the return on investments produced far less than original projections. Additionally, recent incidents involving cyber-attacks on our ports and shipping companies expose the vulnerability of technologies in the maritime industry, and the subsequent loss of productivity and cargo movement due to technical failures. For example, ransomware attacks on the Port of San Diego and A.P. Moller-Maersk have resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in losses and major service disruptions. What will happen when there are no people available to override these threats or protect our databases in a fully automated workplace?

Our elected officials must also consider the long-term impact automation will have on jobs, working families, and quality of life. If dockworkers and mariners are ultimately replaced by robotics and artificial intelligence, who will pay taxes to finance our local schools, roads, and hospitals? Where will displaced workers find employment when their skills are nontransferable elsewhere? And most importantly, who will vote for a candidate who did not speak up and fight for the thousands of workers’ jobs that will be decimated by a fully autonomous industry. These are the important questions policymakers must be prepared to answer as we are faced with one of the toughest issues that impact the future of our families and livelihoods.

The Maritime Labor Alliance stands in solidarity to oppose any effort to implement automated technologies in the workplace that will seek to increase profits at the expense of our jobs.”

### **T&I CHAIRMAN UPDATES INDUSTRY ON ISSUES OF INTEREST AT MARITIME BREAKFAST**

The Chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee hit on a number of issues important to the maritime industry at a Washington DC breakfast this morning around the corner from M.E.B.A. Headquarters. The Propeller Club-sponsored event featured Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) the House T&I Chairman since January, who has a long and excellent record of support for U.S. shipping and the American Merchant Marine. His committee has jurisdiction over issues involving the Department of Transportation, Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Maritime Commission and others. He talked about efforts to educate those in the highest office about the importance of the Jones Act pointing out that some of President Trump’s closest advisers share anti-Jones Act sentiments.

He talked about efforts to increase sources of cargo for the nation’s deep water fleet and to spark short sea shipping growth as a means to alleviate congestion, maximize efficiency, and reduce our carbon footprint. The Congressman has been a champion of U.S.-flag shipping since his election to Congress in 1986 and is seeking to use his newly acquired gavel to make the U.S. Merchant Marine more robust. Among many other issues discussed, he ruminated about the dire need for an

infrastructure bill in this session of Congress and pointed out the disastrous costs of “doing nothing.” He reasserted his support for Rep. John Garamendi’s “Energizing American Shipbuilding Act” which would boost American shipyards and U.S.-flag shipping with the export of LNG and crude oil. The House bill and its Senate companion have been promised to be re-introduced in this session of Congress.

### **M.E.B.A. NORFOLK WELCOMES NEW MARITIME FRIENDLY LEGISLATOR**

M.E.B.A. and MM&P members at our Norfolk Union hall gave a hearty welcome to new Member of Congress Elaine Luria who began her first term in office earlier this year. The Democrat represents Virginia’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District which comprises the Hampton Roads area including Virginia Beach, Williamsburg and parts of Norfolk, VA. Along with her impressive grasp of our complicated industry, she has already shown herself to be a strong proponent of the U.S. Merchant Marine. Members in attendance appreciated her knowledge on the issues which are aided by her own experiences at sea. Rep. Luria served as an officer in the U.S. Navy for 20 years and commanded combat ships. She is the Vice-Chair on the Armed Services’ Seapower Subcommittee and also sits on the Military Personnel Subcommittee.

M.E.B.A. President Marshall Ainley attended the Congresswoman’s visit at the Norfolk hall which is headed up by Branch Agent/Govt. Fleet Rep. Tracy Burke. The roundtable chat at the hall on Friday proved valuable and also allowed members to forward their concerns about our industry to the Congresswoman who can be relied on as a friend of U.S.-flag shipping.

You can see the freshman Congresswoman at work by visiting this link - <https://tinyurl.com/y5kqohwl> - at a recent sealift logistics hearing with the Maritime Administration and U.S. Transportation Command.

### **NMC UPDATE ON MITIGATION EFFORTS TO ASSIST MARINERS**

The fall-out continues from the partial government shutdown earlier this year. The National Maritime Center has issued a new update discussing its continued efforts to mitigate the shutdown’s impact on mariners. NMC notes:

“Due to a continued backlog of credential applications and increased net processing time of both mariner credential applications and medical certificate applications caused by the lapse in appropriations and shutdown of National Maritime Center operations, the following updated actions are being taken:

- Merchant mariner credentials and medical certificates (national endorsements only) that expire in December 2018, January 2019, February 2019, March 2019, April 2019, May 2019 or June 2019, are extended as valid until July 31, 2019. Mariners who are actively working on expired credentials that meet the expiration criteria must carry the expired credential with a copy of the attached letter.
- This extension does not change the time frame during which a credential may be renewed. A credential may be renewed at any time during its validity and for one year after expiration based on the expiration date printed on the credential.

If you have questions, visit the NMC website or contact the NMC Customer Service Center by using the NMC online chat system, by emailing [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil) or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).”

## **EASTERN MED GPS INTERFERENCE CONTINUES**

A revised Maritime Advisory warns maritime interests that “significant” GPS interference continues to plague vessels and aircraft operating in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. The reports of interference have primarily stemmed from incidents near Port Said, Egypt, the Suez Canal, and in the vicinity of the Republic of Cyprus. Instances of similar interference were also reported between Hadera, Israel and Beirut, Lebanon and near Jeddah Port, Saudi Arabia. This interference is resulting in lost or otherwise altered GPS signals affecting bridge navigation, GPS-based timing and communications equipment. Caution was urged for those transiting these areas.

## **MAKE SURE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS ON FILE!!!**

Members and applicants should ensure that Headquarters has your e-mail address along with your other contact information. If you haven’t filled out an M.E.B.A. Database Update Form – or if your information has changed – grab the form off the M.E.B.A. website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) located in the “Documents & Member Notices” section. Email addresses are also collected at membership meetings on the sign-in sheet, but *members must write clearly* as many addresses are typically scribbled illegibly.

Update Forms should be sent to the HQ Membership Dept. 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 should not assume that info forwarded to Plans is updated in the Union database and vice versa.

## **REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

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

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

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

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

Friday, June 7 – **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](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)*