

## 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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#### **NOTE ON THANKSGIVING CLOSINGS**

All Union halls and offices were closed today and remain shuttered tomorrow, Friday, November 23. We wish our members, applicants and retirees – at sea or ashore - as well as their families and friends – a very safe and happy Thanksgiving weekend. We remain thankful for your contributions that help make this Union great.

#### **TENTATIVE APL AGREEMENT REACHED**

M.E.B.A. negotiators have reached tentative 6-year agreements with American President Lines covering the Licensed Engineering Officers (Deep-Sea) as well as Port Engineers. The tentative Memorandums of Understanding will be put to member ratification votes at the December meetings. Our agreements with the company expired on September 30<sup>th</sup> but were extended, as necessary, to accommodate ongoing negotiations.

M.E.B.A. appreciates all the solidarity from other unions during this process including support from the Maritime Labor Alliance. The tentative MOUs are available for review at each of the Union halls. Check the meeting schedule at the bottom of this issue to see if you can put one of the thirteen upcoming membership meetings on your calendar. Member participation and input was invaluable in the bargaining process and we encourage all members to get involved at the meetings to ensure that your voice is heard. Executive V.P. Adam Vokac led negotiations with the company joined by L.A. Branch Agent Rich Doherty and Oakland Patrolman Maxim Alper. Rank and file members involved in talks included Chief Engineers Torey Zingales and Fred Cuzner, 1<sup>st</sup> A/E Trevor Lapham and Rotary Engineers Lamont Randel, Connor White, Kurt Landwehr and Christian Yuhás. Retiree Duncan Ballenger participated in an early round of talks.

APL recently completed the swap-in of five replacement vessels from the international CMA CGM fleet to assume the Maritime Security Program operating agreements of five aging C-11-class vessels. M.E.B.A. engineers are now sailing aboard the PRESIDENT KENNEDY, PRESIDENT EISENHOWER, PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, PRESIDENT CLEVELAND and PRESIDENT TRUMAN. In addition, the company renamed the APL BELGIUM to the

PRESIDENT WILSON. The APL Fleet also includes the APL GUAM, APL SAIPAN and APL GULF EXPRESS.

### **WSF DUES STRUCTURE UNCHANGED AFTER ONLINE REFERENDUM**

Following a 30-day online vote, members sailing with the Washington State Ferry (WSF) system voted down a referendum that would have changed the bargaining unit's dues structure from a fixed annual cost to a percent of base wage, aligning the unit more equitably with similar bargaining units. The change was sought to reinforce the Union's ability to provide sustainable future representation. The initiative was narrowly defeated. M.E.B.A. leadership is disappointed that the effort failed and therefore will have to continue to allocate available dues revenue and resources as appropriate. Specific costs associated with the WSF bargaining unit will be reviewed to manage future increases and demands on fixed resources, while continuing to provide for representation of unit members.

### **DUES MUST BE CURRENT TO PARTICIPATE IN UPCOMING ONLINE REFERENDUM**

Members should make sure their dues are current so that they can participate in December's District-wide Online Referendum. Members have until midnight on December 17<sup>th</sup> to be current on their dues in order to be eligible to participate. As the M.E.B.A. By-Laws state, "No member's ballot shall be counted unless he is in good standing as of 15 days immediately preceding the closing of the balloting." The online referendum will run from December 1 to 31.

This will be a one-question referendum to consider a possible change to the Shipping Rules to permit a new Group III Applicant to remain on the Port Relief List for one year from the date of their first registration. The Rule change is designed to extend the window for new applicants to seek viable shipping opportunities as they begin their seafaring careers.

### **LAST DAYS FOR APPLICANTS SEEKING MEMBERSHIP TO QUALIFY FOR UPCOMING DIC REPORT**

Qualified applicants wishing to make membership should act quickly so they can ensure their inclusion on the upcoming District Investigating Committee (DIC) report. The DIC meets twice a year to review applicants for membership. To make membership, an applicant needs the required sailing days or specified years of employment with a particular bargaining unit, must be current with service charges and must complete other necessary requirements which may include an initiation fee and/or letters of recommendation.

Applicants should know that they are responsible for providing their local Union hall/Headquarters with the documentation demonstrating their fulfillment of the application requirements. Once they submit the requisite amount of sea time to Headquarters and have otherwise fulfilled the needed requirements as stated in the application packet they signed, they may be eligible for membership.

The DIC is set to meet next week and will review candidates for membership at that time. *Applicants who have fulfilled the necessary requirements need to get their information into Headquarters immediately so they can be included on the upcoming DIC Report and make membership in early December.* The DIC will put their report that lists qualified applicants before the membership at the regular meetings in December. If the report is passed, listed applicants will be accepted into membership.

M.E.B.A. Headquarters does not, and cannot, update an Applicant's record with sailing time unless that Applicant submits the required paperwork, i.e. discharges, sea service letters, documentation of employment, to HQ, by e-mail, fax, or mail or via your local Union hall. For further information you can visit your local Union hall or contact the Membership Department (202-638-5355 or [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org)) at M.E.B.A. Headquarters.

### **THOSE IN DUES ARREARS SET TO BE DROPPED IN DECEMBER**

Members or applicants two or more years in arrears on their dues or service charges will be DROPPED from the membership or applicant rolls. The District Investigating Committee (DIC) is making its review and will issue their drop list in early December. If you are in arrears and desire to retain your membership or applicant status, you must contact Headquarters immediately to make payment on your arrearage and return to good standing. Members and applicants can make payments online in a secure manner. Visit the M.E.B.A. homepage at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org).

### **MARINE POLLUTION TASK FORCE HIGHLIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

An international law enforcement operation against maritime pollution has revealed hundreds of violations and exposed serious cases of contamination worldwide. Codenamed "30 Days at Sea," the month-long (1-31 October) operation saw some 276 law enforcement and environmental agencies across 58 countries detect more than 500 offences, including illegal discharges of oil and garbage from vessels, shipbreaking, breaches of ship emissions regulations, and pollution on rivers and land-based runoff to the sea. Steered by a global network of 122 national coordinators, 30 Days at Sea involved environmental, maritime and border agencies, national police forces, customs, and port authorities. More than 5200 inspections have resulted in at least 185 investigations, with arrests and prosecutions anticipated. "Criminals believe marine pollution is a low-risk crime with no real victims. This is a mistake and one which INTERPOL and our partners are addressing as demonstrated by this operation," said INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock.

### **AGREEMENT TO RAISE INTERNATIONAL SEAFARER MINIMUM WAGE**

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) have worked out a raise to the international minimum wage for seafarers. As a result, the minimum wage for an able seafarer will be updated by \$27 over the next three years, to provide an overall increase of 4.5% on the current rate of \$614. There will be an increase of \$4 as of July 1, 2019, followed by an increase of \$7 as of January 1, 2020 and a final increase of \$16 as of January 1, 2021. Shipowners' group spokesperson Max Johns commented: "Following active discussions on the current difficult challenges facing our industry, and the importance of preserving future employment for seafarers, I am very pleased to advise that we were able to work together to come to an acceptable result for both parties."

### **SOLIDARITY THROUGH TRAGEDY**

The fires that have devastated Northern and Southern California have claimed over 80 lives. Hundreds are still unaccounted for, and thousands have lost their homes. More than 240,000 acres have burned, and full containment of the fires could take until the end of the month. As always, the labor movement is doing its part to help families and communities in need. Working people are mobilizing and offering whatever we can to those affected. You can act now and donate to the union members and communities affected by the California wildfires by visiting the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/yd5xqebm>

## **RETIREEES AIDING PAF PUSH**

M.E.B.A. retirees know the value of a strong Political Action Fund and many of them are showing their support for U.S. shipping and to keeping the M.E.B.A. strong. There has been an excellent response from our retired members after the Union reached out and asked them to become more involved in our fight for the U.S. Merchant Marine on Capitol Hill. In a letter, M.E.B.A. Retirees' Group Representative Duncan Ballenger told retired members that, "The Union's legislative efforts are not limited to the interests of active members - the PAF helps protect retiree benefits. By maintaining a robust job base within the union, the M.E.B.A. political program ensures the ongoing availability of the Benefit Plans. The M.E.B.A. Benefit Plans depend on active members whose jobs rely on the Jones Act, the MSP, and Cargo Preference. In addition, the political team is continuously fighting for the security of M.E.B.A. retirees on other fronts. The attacks on "cadillac" medical plans and union pensions seem never-ending and pose a direct threat to everyone covered."

PAF Chairman Bill Van Loo was heartened by the excellent response of our knowledgeable retirees who are contributing to the cause. Many of those retirees expressed their gratefulness to the Union for supporting their own seafaring careers while expressing their urge to help protect the future of the industry and the next generation of American mariners. Even our shoreside members working for American President Lines understand the value of the PAF. POID Representative April Fleischer announced that our M.E.B.A. POID members recently chipped in a nice contribution for the cause. As most know, the M.E.B.A. uses the Fund to educate Members of Congress about the importance of our industry, broaden our relationship with labor and maritime-friendly politicians and to help elect those who recognize the significance of unions and the U.S. Merchant Marine.

It's a great idea for applicants, members and retirees to contribute to the M.E.B.A. PAF. You can stop by a local union hall or visit the M.E.B.A. website to sign up for regular contributions. From the "Members" tab on the M.E.B.A. Homepage ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) select "Political Action Fund."

## **UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO WITH HQ**

Be sure to inform Headquarters if you have changed your contact information. There is an address change form on our website to help expedite the process. It can be found at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org) under the "Members" tab or in the "Documents & Notices" section. Alternatively, you can send your updated information to Doris Fitzgerald at HQ 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 must also forward a signed change of address form to the Plans Office if you wish to update your information with them.

## **THE LOWDOWN ON THE THROWDOWNS: M.E.B.A. HOLIDAY PARTIES**

Like the man said, "You gotta fight for your right...to parrrrrrty!" The holidays are here. Work be damned, it's time to bust loose and make merry – M.E.B.A.-style. Here's your key to enjoying the M.E.B.A.-sanctioned festivities:

Members at the Boston hall get funky first immediately after the membership meeting on Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. It promises to be a scintillating soiree. In Charleston, participants will rush through their membership meeting on Tuesday December 4<sup>th</sup> so they can let the good times roll and begin shoveling food into their faces. Jacksonville-area members will raise the roof at the hall after their meeting on Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> for a few diversionary hours of high-charged merriment.

The New York/New Jersey hall will go full force on a free-form fiesta on Thursday, December the 6<sup>th</sup> immediately following the Union meeting. The party pace gets frenetic and members let it all hang out in Norfolk on Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup> right after their meeting. M.E.B.A. Tampa gets into the act on Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup>. Members will have to find a way to maintain themselves during the membership meeting knowing that an infinite amount of food, spirits and revelry awaits as soon as the gavel falls. Members will be whooping it up at the hall in Oakland on Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup> after job call. They estimate the holiday hubbub will light off at around 1 pm.

The L.A./Wilmington Union hall will live it up on Tuesday, December 11 at their old stomping grounds – the recently vacated hall located at 533 North Marine Avenue around noon time. Don't go to the new hall that day. There will be crickets there with no bus service over to the party place! Our shoreside unit at POID will converge on Thursday, December 13 at the Conference Center on 26 Century Blvd. in Nashville to celebrate the season. POID turns on the power at 11 a.m. and gets groovy for the next four hours. Officers and staff at M.E.B.A. Headquarters will take a hiatus from being such dismal killjoys on Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup> - at least for a few hours. The unfamiliar fun gets going at 2 p.m.

The Baltimore Union hall revs up in Charm City and kicks it into high gear at 1 p.m. on December 14<sup>th</sup>. High-falutin' holiday hullabaloo will happen in Houston at 1 pm on Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup> where there will be heaps of hootin' and hollerin'. A whole lotta shakin' will be goin' on! Lamentably there will be no great shakes on the Lakes - the Cleveland hall won't have an official party. But the cookie tray will be loaded with goodies, so stop by anytime during the holiday season to get your paws on some sweet treats. Seattle members cut loose, paint the town red and tear down the roof on Friday, December 14 at the hall in Fife at high noon. In the Aloha State, the "Big Kahuna" of parties will take place on Tuesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at the Honolulu hall. The muumuu-sized revelry begins at 10 a.m. on Hawaiian time. The Cajuns will be ragin' at our New Orleans Union hall on Thursday, December 20 beginning at 1 pm.

Don't be tardy for the party, Marty! Stop on by. Catch up with old shipmates, meet new friends and raise a glass to those who can't attend. Make it a safe and joyful holiday season!

#### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

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

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

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

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

Friday, December 7 – **Honolulu@1100.**

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----

