

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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NEW INTERLAKE VESSEL IS CHRISTENED

The first US-flagged Great Lakes bulk carrier constructed in 36 years was christened today in a ceremony that was broadcast live on Facebook. The M/V MARK W. BARKER, named after Interlake Steamship Company President Mark Barker, is being constructed at the Fincantieri facility in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. The River-class, 639-foot, 28,000 DWT self-unloading bulk carrier is expected to be ready to enter service in time for the 2022 Great Lakes shipping season.

The MARK BARKER incorporates a flap rudder as well as bow and stern thrusters for high-level maneuverability. It has 7,800 shaft horsepower produced by two sixteen-cylinder Electro-Motive Diesel (EMD) diesel engines that are EPA Tier 4 and IMO Tier III certified. It is propelled by a single-screw, 18' diameter, Kongsberg controllable pitch propeller. For its electrical power requirements, it features 940 kW ship service diesel generators, 2500 kW shaft generators and a 274 kW emergency generator.

MARITIME UNIONS EMPHASIZE NECESSITY OF SAFE WORKPLACES

Seven maritime unions, including the M.E.B.A., issued a joint statement earlier this week condemning harassment and assault and reinforcing the necessity for safe and respectful workplaces.

The leaders of the ARA, SUP, AMO, MM&P, MFOU, SIU and M.E.B.A. said that harassment, bullying or discriminatory behavior cannot be tolerated in the workplace and must be stopped. They stated, "Mariners must not be compelled to endure an unsafe workplace for the sake of their paychecks, careers, or reputations...Turning a blind eye is not acceptable. All seafarers must be committed to active opposition to any type of harassment, bullying or discriminatory behavior. It is our collective duty to protect and respect our shipmates. As maritime professionals and decent human beings, we must look out for one another."

The statement was sent to all Union halls as well as all members, applicants and retirees at their email addresses on file. It has also been posted on the M.E.B.A. website at www.mebaunion.org

M.E.B.A. TALKS CYBERSECURITY WITH TWO CABINET SECRETARIES

M.E.B.A. was part of a cybersecurity meeting of maritime leaders this week that featured two White House cabinet secretaries. Among an elite cross-section of industry voices, M.E.B.A. President Adam

Vokac was the lone, yet ardent representative of maritime labor, as attendees deliberated over cybersecurity issues throughout the maritime transportation system. Also in attendance was the Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and Transportation Department Secretary Pete Buttigieg. American Maritime Congress President James Caponiti also attended as part of the group.

Among other items, participants discussed strengths and weaknesses of the current system, the need to become more resilient in various areas, additional efforts to collaborate on solutions and the role of new policies as well as federal regulation.

NEW TRANSCOM COMMANDER LOOKS TOWARDS RRF RECAPITALIZATION

The Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command, in her first week on the job, issued strong words of support for the Maritime Security Program as well as the new Tanker Security Program and called for the strengthening of the country's strategic sealift fleet. USTRANSCOM is responsible for the global, joint movement of combat units and sustainment cargo.

In the keynote address at last week's National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA)-USTRANSCOM Fall Meeting, held at National Harbor, MD, Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost said that capacity across the air and sea is key. She committed to being "laser-focused on emphasizing a responsible 'buy used' strategy with the U.S. Navy," in order to address the looming retirement of 34 of 50 aging Ready Reserve Force vessels. That strategy was embraced by the previous leaders of USTRANSCOM and the Maritime Administration who sought to purchase used commercial ships—subject to finding – to take the place of the oldest RRF vessels.

Gen. Van Ovost also highlighted the need for resilient and agile command and control, calling it "one of my highest areas of interest and frankly, concern." She stressed the need for cooperation and mitigation efforts. "Our ever-growing number of cyber adversaries will be a challenge to all of us," she said. "They have carefully studied our supply chain and transportation operations, and are actively working to disrupt and degrade logistics flows."

M.E.B.A. and AMC Representatives took part in the weeklong NDTA meetings. In addition, AMC Policy Director Fair Kim, along with a MarAd representative, conducted a seminar on cargo preference for attendees.

REP. LURIA LAUDS U.S.-FLAG SHIPPING IN CONGRESSIONAL REMARKS

Congresswoman Elaine Luria (D-VA-2), a proponent of U.S.-flag shipping, made a passionate defense of U.S.-flag shipping in a recent *Congressional Record* – which serves as the official record of debate and proceedings of the U.S. Congress.

Rep. Luria represents the Hampton Roads area including Virginia Beach, Williamsburg and parts of Norfolk, VA, where M.E.B.A. maintains a Union hall. A 20-year veteran of the U.S. Navy, she has been a prominent voice on behalf of our industry in her Congressional career. Rep. Luria is the Vice-Chair on the Armed Services' Seapower Subcommittee and also sits on the Military Personnel Subcommittee. She is a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee as well.

In her statement, which was carried in the Oct. 25th *Congressional Record* in the "Extension of Remarks" section, she thanked U.S. merchant mariners for their service, especially during such challenging times, and noted that U.S.-flag shipping is crucial for national security and contributes mightily to our

economy. She lauded the Maritime Security Program and informed her colleagues that the MSP represents “the single most important program to assist U.S. flag ships in foreign trade and helps ensure that we retain this important military capacity.”

For your convenience, her statement was posted on the M.E.B.A. homepage located at www.mebaunion.org.

REVISED LOU WITH PASHA/SUNRISE PUSHES DATE OF VACCINE REQUIREMENT

A revised Letter of Understanding with Sunrise Operations covering the M.E.B.A.-contracted Pasha fleet has been revised. The new LOU pushes back the effective date a month to December 1, 2021 with bonus eligibility to November 30. The revised LOU was sent to the Union halls earlier today.

The LOU ensures that our members are properly incentivized to support the new policy while also confirming that the execution of these mandates don't encroach on specific circumstances of our mariner force. Members already serving on a Pasha vessel on December 1 will be allowed to complete their assignments regardless of vaccination status. Members currently on a company vessel will be allowed time off in port during their work day to go to a COVID-19 vaccination appointment.

The LOU also secures an avenue for medical and religious exemptions and enacts a monetary incentive program for permanent, rotary, or relief crewmembers in the company's fleet who get vaccinated or who are already fully inoculated against COVID-19. The LOU has been sent to each of the M.E.B.A. Union halls and offices.

TTD CALLS ON CONGRESS TO FUND TANKER SECURITY PROGRAM

The leaders of 33 transportation unions that are part of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department called on Congress to follow through on the appropriations process and fully fund the authorized Tanker Security Program. If funded, the 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. The President's budget plan for Fiscal Year 2022 includes full funding for the TSP (\$60 million).

The Government is currently being funded through a Continuing Resolution (CR) through early December that provides ongoing appropriations for the fiscal year. However, the CR cannot provide any new funding which must be secured via a regular spending bill. The importance for Congress to work together and pass a regular funding bill that would appropriate - and finally launch the Tanker Program - is further magnified by current events. A top official on the Joint Chiefs of Staff called China's recent tests of a hypersonic weapons system very close to a “Sputnik moment.” Sputnik refers to the Soviet Union's 1957 launch of a satellite that signaled Russia's early edge in the space race which alarmed U.S. officials. The TSP is a needed resource for the U.S. to help diminish our reliance on foreign-flag ships and control our own supply lines while creating jobs.

TTD held their fall meeting online last Thursday and met with AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, among others, to help promote worker-first strategies. In a series of unanimously adopted policy statements that included the call for TSP funding, TTD, which includes the M.E.B.A., is also pushing for the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure package and

pro-labor measures to address supply chain disruptions, and solutions to mitigate the scourge of assaults against frontline transportation workers.

The TTD Policy Statement has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website located at www.mebaunion.org.

M/V NEW JERSEY REJOINS CAPE MAY-LEWES FERRY FLEET; DRBA VACCINATION UPDATE

Following an almost year-long overhaul at a Staten Island, NY drydock, the repowered and more environmentally friendly M/V NEW JERSEY rejoined the Cape May-Lewes ferry fleet this week. Caddell's Drydock and Repair Company in Staten Island, New York handled the work which involved replacement of the outdated Fairbanks-Morse engines with EMD (Electro-Motive Division) engines that are expected to reduce emissions by approximately 40%. Ferry Operations Director Heath Gehrle said that the \$20 million project, that included a \$3 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration, will drastically reduce the amount of pollutants emitted by old engines while saving "approximately \$130,000 per year in maintenance costs."

Overseen by the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA), the ferry system is jointly operated by the States of New Jersey and Delaware. Ferries transit between Cape May, NJ and Lewes, Delaware.

In addition to installing new engines, reduction gears and generators during this drydocking, other significant elements of the project included water blasting and repainting the entire exterior of the vessel; replacing steel bulkheads; replacing exterior windows; renovating and modernizing the passenger galley area; sandblasting and painting the underwater hull; fabricating new smokestacks; and performing void space maintenance.

In other DRBA news, the unit is implementing a "vaccination or testing" protocol that will go into effect on Monday (11/1). Unvaccinated employees will have access to test kits that will allow them to self-administer a quick nasal swab test that can be certified and forwarded to the Authority. Vaccinated mariners will receive a bonus. The DRBA will keep mariners updated with new developments.

REPORT: MARINER MORALE HAS REBOUNDED BUT RETENTION IS CONCERN

The latest Seafarers Happiness Index report published by the Mission to Seafarers, summarizing results from global seafarers up until the end of September, notes that job satisfaction has returned to pre-pandemic levels. The survey suggests that COVID-19 related strains on seafarers are beginning to ease, and support measures for seafarer welfare have now had a chance to take effect, yet challenges with shore leave and ship-shore connectivity remain.

Shore leave and extended contracts have been a huge challenge since the start of the pandemic. 5% of seafarers responding said that they have been away at sea for over a year and a further 13% of respondents have served at sea for over 9 months, with the remainder reporting less than 9 months – so far. The challenges of balancing home life with the uncertainties that the crew change crisis have led to many who were tentatively considering a move ashore accelerating their career change plans. The report emphasizes that many seafarers are not intending to return to sea once they eventually get home.

The issue of retention on an already stressed workforce is a major concern. The report noted there is likely to be a growing shortfall in seafarers in the coming years, with seemingly little or no coherent

mechanism to manage the problems coming over the horizon. They said the seafaring experience and expertise that is potentially going to be lost should serve as a warning to all.

The feedback also raises stark concerns over the affordability and rationing of internet access on board, which is such a priority for so many seafarers from a welfare perspective. Owners and managers were encouraged to look into steps that can be taken to improve this.

JUNEAU HALL AT NEW LOCATION NEXT WEEK

M.E.B.A.'s Union hall in Juneau will be at its new location on Monday with new contact numbers. As of Monday, the hall will be located at 130 Seward St. Suite 304 in the Goldstein Building. The email addresses will remain unchanged but the new phone number will be (907) 331-3123 and the fax number changes to (907) 202-5322.

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*

Monday, November 8 – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300;

Tuesday, November 9 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, November 10 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online Headquarters “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – **Register now at mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, November 11 – Veterans’ Day – *All Halls Closed*

Friday, November 12 – Honolulu@1100; L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

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***M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.***

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.