

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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In this issue//Increased NLRB Funding Urged to Assist Unionization//Workers' Memorial Day//AFL-CIO "Death on the Job" Report//Matson Launches New Barge/Updated Passport Renewal Procedures//Friends of Seafarers Honored//Would-Be Tug Boat Pipe Bomber Convicted//Job Call Primer//Payment Options to Iron Out LWOP & Vacation Dues Lapses//

### **LAWMAKERS URGE INCREASED NLRB FUNDING TO BETTER OVERSEE UNIONIZATION DRIVES**

An outpouring of House and Senate lawmakers, mostly Democrats, are urging Congressional appropriators to increase stagnant budgeting for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and better prepare for the uptick in unionization efforts, highlighted by recent Starbucks and Amazon organizing drives. As you know, the NLRB is an independent agency that enforces the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) by protecting the rights of employees and promoting good faith relationships between employers, unions and employees nationwide.

Over 150 lawmakers signed onto letters calling for increased NLRB funding in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, etc. (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill. The Board has had a repeating \$274 million budget for nine straight years. Signatories to the letters said that union election petitions leapt by 57% in the last year and unfair labor practice charges rose by 14% in that time. NLRB has suffered a big staffing level drop in the last two decades and is not prepared to address the ongoing surge of labor activity, lawmakers wrote. They called for the NLRB budget to increase to at least \$368 million for FY '23.

The letter noted, "Additionally, with 60 million non-union workers saying they would join a union if given the chance (including nearly 75% of young workers age 18-24), we only expect union election petitions to further increase. With this skyrocketing workload, the NLRB is now responsible for far more workers than a decade ago yet has been denied the funding to meet these statutory requirements."

### **TODAY IS WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY**

Today, April 28, is Workers' Memorial Day, a day to honor workers who have died on the job, and to recommit to the fight for safe and healthful workplaces. Many job hazards are unregulated and uncontrolled. Some employers cut corners and violate the law, putting workers in serious danger and costing lives. Workers who report job hazards or job injuries are fired or disciplined. Employers contract out dangerous work to try to avoid responsibility. As a result, each year thousands of workers are killed and millions more injured or diseased because of their jobs. Working men and women used the day to call for action on hazards that cause unnecessary injury, illness and death. AFL-CIO said, "We will stand united to strengthen workers' rights and protections, and demand resources and actions needed for job safety enforcement. We will fight for the fundamental right of every worker to a safe job until that promise is fulfilled."

## **LATEST AFL-CIO “DEATH ON THE JOB” REPORT CATALOGS NEED FOR SAFER WORKPLACES**

The AFL-CIO issued its latest “Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect” report, the 31<sup>st</sup> such issuance on the state of safety and health protections for America’s workers. The report is based on Department of Labor injury and fatality data – for which 2020 is the latest available year. The national and state-by-state profile of worker safety and health reveals that in 2020:

- 340 working people died every day because of hazardous working conditions.
- More than 4,764 workers were killed on the job from injuries alone.
- An estimated 120,000 workers died from occupational diseases.
- The job fatality rate was 3.4 per 100,000 workers.
- Latino and Black workers remain at greater risk of dying on the job than all workers.
- Employers reported nearly 3.2 million work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Musculoskeletal disorders continue to make up the largest portion (21%) of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Underreporting is widespread—the true toll of work-related injuries and illnesses is 5.4 million to 8.1 million each year.

“That’s tens of thousands of families losing a parent, a child, a sibling, every single year,” said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. “Latino and Black workers specifically remain at greater risk of dying on the job than all workers. That is, frankly, unacceptable.” AFL-CIO noted that, “Over the last 50 years, there has been significant progress toward improving working conditions and protecting workers from job injuries, illnesses and deaths. Federal job safety agencies have issued many important regulations on safety hazards and silica, coal dust and other health hazards, strengthened enforcement and expanded worker rights. These initiatives have undoubtedly made workplaces safer and saved lives. But much more progress is needed.”

## **MATSON LAUNCHES NEW BARGE**

Matson, Inc. christened and launched a new flat-deck container barge in a ceremony last weekend at the Greenbrier Gunderson Marine shipyard in Portland, Oregon. The new barge, christened ‘*Haleakala*’ in honor of the landmark crater on the island of Maui, will be deployed in Matson’s Neighbor Island service in Hawaii starting this summer, connecting cargo to and from the U.S. West Coast through its hub terminal in Honolulu. With a carrying capacity of 620 TEU and room for 72 refrigerated containers, the new *Haleakala* is double the size of the older barge it is replacing and will increase the efficiency of Matson’s service to the neighbor islands. At 362 feet long, 105 feet wide (beam), with a deep draft of 17.3 feet and capacity of more than 12,000 metric tons, it will be Matson’s largest barge. Matson is expected to take delivery of the barge in late May.

## **UPDATED PASSPORT RENEWAL PROCEDURES FOR MARINERS**

The State Department updated its temporary provisions governing passport renewals for mariners, a document that had not previously been widely distributed. This is part of the effort to expedite passport renewals for mariners who urgently need them for international voyages as COVID delays continue to hamper normal operations. They are applicable to mariners with passports that either have expired or have less than seven months’ validity remaining.

The procedures went into effect in February and superseded an earlier update released in January. The updated policy is largely the same as the earlier notice but contains a new address where applications

should be delivered. The notice was sent to the Union halls and has been made available in full on the M.E.B.A. website in the “Documents & Member Notices” section.

### **MIRAIID’S PATTI, ITF’S SMITH HONORED AS FRIENDS OF SEAFARERS**

Jim Patti, who heads up MM&P’s Maritime Institute for Research & Industrial Development (MIRAIID), and ITF Maritime Coordinator Jacqueline Smith were among honorees who were each named as an “Outstanding Friend of Seafarers” – a well-deserved accolade awarded by the Seafarers International House (SIH). The SIH is a charitable organization that provides seafarers and travelers with pastoral care, hospitality, social assistance and advocacy. Their annual “Setting the Course” event in New York City, held last night, honors those who fight on behalf of the maritime community and is dedicated to the welfare of seafarers.

Jim has been an integral part of efforts to intensify support for maritime issues on Capitol Hill since 1970. He also serves as Chairman of USA Maritime, a coalition of maritime interests (including the M.E.B.A. and AMC) that is crucial in the battle to protect and promote U.S.-flag vessels and mariners. Congratulations!

### **MAN WHO DROPPED PIPE BOMBS ON OHIO RIVER TUGS CONVICTED**

A Federal jury found a West Virginia man guilty after connecting him to pipe bombs found on several Ohio River tugboats. 42-year old Nathaniel Becker, an iron worker with past mental health issues, was found guilty in the Southern District Court of West Virginia on two counts of possession of an unregistered destructive device and two counts of placement of a destructive device on a vessel. Authorities believe he purchased the pipe bomb components at a local hardware store then, once assembled, dropped them from a bridge onto three different tugboats in October 2021, where they were later recovered unexploded. Two could have caused harm, but one of the pipes was later discovered to contain non-explosive septic tank cleaner.

Becker was on probation at the time of the offense, following an August 2020 conviction after he brandished a knife at a police officer during a traffic stop and then led officers on a car chase before barricading himself in his residence. In that case, he was arrested after a stand-off that ended when police forced entry into the home. He is scheduled to be sentenced for the pipe bomb incident in August and faces up to 60 years in prison.

### **MAKE SURE YOU’RE READY FOR JOB CALL!**

*It is the responsibility of members and applicants to have all their necessary documentation in-hand ahead of time for job call.*

Those who have recently upgraded their license should make sure their STCW reflects the upgrade. Your license, passport and other important documents should be valid for at least six months from the time you begin working aboard ship. Your drug-free certificates have to be valid at least until the day you join your ship. Check your expiration dates!

If flying with your documents on the way to a hall, double-check that you haven’t left any essential documents at home and make sure to keep your docs with you in your carry-on luggage. *The primary documents you’ll need include your Merchant Mariner Credential with current STCW, VSO or VPDSO endorsement, TWIC, Passport, USCG Medical Certificate, Annual M.E.B.A. physical card, Drug-free Certificate or Drug-Free Letter, Group Card, Fit-for-Duty, Dues Receipt and proof of vaccination(s).* Permanent or relief employees should get their company

clearance to the hall ahead of time. Work with the Military Sealift Command will require security clearances.

As you should know, no one can be dispatched to a job while on vacation or while receiving a paid vacation benefit without a waiver. The Union requires a return to work date when clearing for a vessel so make sure you have your vacation pay and vacation carry over statements, shipping discharge and port relief pay voucher for verification of return to work. It should also be noted that failure to obtain prior Union permission to return to work early, before the return to work date as listed on your carry-over or vacation statement, will subject you to a penalty. Remember, a member or applicant cannot be dispatched for a job requiring STCW credentials if the Coast Guard Medical Certificate is due to expire prior to the completion of the job called. Members are encouraged to have their paperwork for the USCG Medical Certificate completed and to submit it for renewal at every annual physical in order to avoid an issue at job call. Certain jobs require proof of benzene or shot records, MSC Physical and MSC courses, GMDSS, High Voltage/Marine Propulsion, Crowd Control, Welding, or other courses to satisfy company requirements. Mariners are reminded to keep their vaccination records with them when sailing – especially when shipping onboard MSC-contracted vessels. Keep your documents with you at all times when travelling and NEVER leave them in your car. If unsure what is required, it is a good idea to check with an M.E.B.A. clinic. If you have questions about your documents, direct them to your local hall.

#### **USE M.E.B.A. WEBSITE DUES PAYMENT OPTION TO IRON OUT LWOP/VACATION DUES LAPSES**

Some M.E.B.A. bargaining unit members pay dues by automatic Dues Check-Off (DCO). But when DCO members take vacation or (in the case of the Government fleet) Leave without Pay (LWOP), there are lapses in payroll where dues aren't automatically submitted. Those members can iron out the imbalance from a link on the M.E.B.A. homepage ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)). Click the link, select the bargaining unit in the "Check Off, Catch-Up" section and make sure you remain a member in good standing. A "Vacation Pay" option is also available. This is useful for port engineers and Union officials who can make these payments online. Many members and applicants think that paying online is the most efficient and advantageous manner to remain in good standing.

#### **NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS** *(All times are local)*

**Monday, May 2** – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.

**Tuesday, May 3** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

**Wednesday, May 4** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; **Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

**Thursday, May 5** – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

**Friday, May 6** – Honolulu@1100.

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



*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.*