

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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OUTREACH STRENGTHENS M.E.B.A. RECRUITING EFFORTS

M.E.B.A. continues its ongoing mission to infuse the ranks with high-quality marine officers to crew the ships of tomorrow. Union officials, bolstered by rank-and-file members, regularly visit each of the seven maritime academies seeking out the best and brightest. Recruiting at the Academies is just part of M.E.B.A.'s broad-based effort to continue to equip our member companies with exceptional shipboard labor. Visits peppered with an alumni presence make for compelling testimonials and help fresh-faced cadets forge plans for their sea-going futures. It has typically been challenging to lure Academy graduates away from lucrative shoreside opportunities to go to sea. Besides the need to maintain a growing list of required qualifications to ship, the demanding nature of the work, time away from family and absence of a 9 to 5 "normality" require unique individuals and commitment. But the rewards are significant.

Typically, a visit surrounds a presentation by M.E.B.A. representatives regarding the ins and outs of shipping with the Union followed by a discussion/question and answer segment to fully relay a good overview of the Union and continuing education programs to the midshipmen. When possible, M.E.B.A. representatives organize "field trips" for cadets to the Union halls to gain a better sense of a seafarer's domain. Occasionally, a mock "job call" will be staged for cadets eager to learn more about the process.

In late February, Oakland Patrolman Chris Coombs and member Tony Gonzalez worked the Career Fair at Cal Poly Maritime Academy (CMA) in Vallejo, California helping CMA cadets understand the life-changing, rewarding opportunities available from the M.E.B.A. and the U.S. maritime industry. CMA cadets are doing a field trip to the Oakland Union hall next week where M.E.B.A. officials will run a mock job-call and allow budding young mariners an introspective into the shipping life.

Gulf Coast V.P. Adam Smith, member Ethan Barlow and recent retiree Erin Oradesky entertained cadets at Texas A&M Maritime Academy in Galveston, Texas last month during another successful Career Fair and "Union Night." Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan headed up a recent Career Fair visit at Great Lakes Maritime Academy bringing a rank-and-file team to Traverse City, Michigan. With many graduates entering both deep-sea and Great Lakes shipping, Union representatives emphasized the breadth of opportunities available to licensed engineers and deck officers and the advantages of sailing with a Union that has represented maritime professionals for more than 150 years. Along with Jason at the GLMA Career Fair were Ryan Novak, Justin Whitton, Rob Binder and Chew Burke.

On the East Coast, M.E.B.A. representatives have been active at SUNY Maritime College where Union officials and alumni met with cadets to discuss the advantages of sailing under an M.E.B.A. contract. M.E.B.A. NY/NJ Patrolman Capt. Kenny Smith was joined by members Joe Ajar and Michael Brady. Their presentations to the cadets sparked lively discussions about sea time, licensing progression and the long-term career flexibility offered by the Union. They will host SUNY cadets at the hall next week giving them an up-close look at an active union hall while performing a mock job call. ACVP Callahan, along with former Executive V.P. Claudia Cimini, a recent retiree, attended the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy's 37th Annual Battle Standard Dinner earlier this week where they networked with Academy leadership and some of the nation's most promising future mariners. Capt. Kenny will bring a rank-and-file team to Kings Point, NY next week at their Career Fair.

When M.E.B.A. covers a Career Fair or other events at a maritime school, we often send a graduate of that Academy to inform cadets about the superior contracts and benefits our members enjoy. Younger M.E.B.A. members accompanying officials on recruiting missions also help cadets better relate when they emphasize the flexibility and diversity of job opportunities available to our membership.

Outreach efforts also proved successful at the recent Career Fair in Castine for Maine Maritime Academy. ACVP Jason Callahan was complemented by Boston Rep. Sam Berner and sailing members Ben Larrabee and Keith Turcotte. In addition, retiree Bill Duffy, who has been tapped to be the first Representative at the Union's new Portland, Maine hall, took part in recruiting. He was heartened that Maine cadets shared his excitement about our new hall. Several of them will be stopping by for a first-hand look in the coming weeks as the new office opens up.

Finally, Boston Rep. Berner and Capt. Kenny just returned from Massachusetts Maritime Academy after wrapping up another successful recruiting trip there yesterday. They were joined by member John Mahoney and M.E.B.A. Maine hall Rep. Bill Duffy. Of note, two M.E.B.A. retirees who work at Mass Maritime as Instructors, Will Hibbard and Dan Lindberg, stopped by the M.E.B.A. booth and gave their testimonials about the value of the M.E.B.A. to interested young cadets.

One of the other ways we attract high-caliber seafaring talent is through M.E.B.A.'s Licensed Cadet Internship program designed to help mold the next generation of M.E.B.A. mariners. It is targeted toward cadets going into their senior year and helps ease their way toward membership. The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School is set for this summer's Licensed Cadet Internship program that helps young mariners get a head start on their shipping careers. This summer's program will run from July 6 - 24.

The M.E.B.A. is hard at work in securing the sharpest, most skilled mariners to ensure the Union remains the finest source of seagoing labor well into the future. Though the advantages and benefits of membership virtually sell themselves, we still rely on Union officials, Academy alumni and members aboard ship to help make the case to talented young mariners. Young cadets may not be able to fully fathom the ability of our Benefit Plans to offer secure future retirement – but they can certainly comprehend that this Union wins its members the best compensation in the industry for a hard day's work.

MIXED BAG FOR MARITIME & LABOR IN PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST

U.S.-flag shipping interests have a mixed reaction to the President's budget plan for Fiscal Year 2027, released last week, that requests \$2.1 trillion in discretionary spending. The proposal calls for historic cuts to domestic programs and a 40% increase in defense spending, while focusing on agency reorganization and increasing trade enforcement.

The President's proposed budget is an outline that signals the launch of the months-long Congressional budget process. It calls for full funding for both the Maritime Security Program and the Tanker Security Program but drastically reduces Department of Agriculture funding by \$4.9 billion including NO money for the PL-480 Food for Peace (Title II) program that provides cargoes for U.S.-flag shipping. The program's requirement that at least 50% of international food aid cargoes be carried on U.S.-flag ships has been vital for the industry and is important to help maintain a pool of qualified American mariners.

The budget proposal would also cut funding for the U.S. Department of Labor by 26%, reducing its budget to \$9.9 billion despite Congress rejecting similar cuts last year. Key enforcement agencies would face cuts, including the Wage and Hour Division and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Additional changes include restructuring the Office of Foreign Labor Certification to speed decisions and reducing funding for agencies like the National Labor Relations Board and Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The proposal includes a 242% increase in Navy shipbuilding spending, raising the total to \$65.8 billion for battleships, submarines, and other Navy vessels. The plan is part of a broader defense proposal that calls for \$1.5 trillion in total military spending. However, the overall budget request is expected to face changes in Congress.

DFC, CHUBB ANNOUNCE \$40B COVERAGE FOR MARITIME REINSURANCE

The U.S. has increased its commitment to providing reinsurance guarantees for vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz, doubling the program's backing to \$40 billion and bringing in additional insurance partners,

Announced Friday, the expanded initiative is part of the White House's ongoing effort to reassure the shipping industry and restore confidence in the critical maritime corridor. The move is intended to encourage commercial traffic to return to the route despite an effective Iranian blockade and continued fighting during the conflict.

The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and Chubb announced additional insurance partners that will provide reinsurance for DFC's Maritime Reinsurance plan: Travelers, Liberty Mutual Insurance, Berkshire Hathaway, AIG, Starr, and CNA. On top of DFC's \$20 billion in rolling coverage, Chubb and these new partners will provide an additional \$20 billion, bringing the total Maritime Reinsurance facility to \$40 billion.

FLORIDA TAPS AMERICAN VICTORY AS ITS STATE FLAGSHIP

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis recently signed HB 249, designating Florida's official state flagship as the S.S. AMERICAN VICTORY, replacing the schooner WESTERN UNION. Built in 1945, the AMERICAN VICTORY delivered supplies to U.S. forces in World War II and continued service

through the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Today, it is permanently docked in Tampa as a museum and memorial. Many M.E.B.A. retirees still generously volunteer their time to the upkeep of the vessel.

“I was proud to sign HB 249 to designate Florida’s new state flagship, the S.S. AMERICAN VICTORY,” said Governor DeSantis. “This historic steamship is one of just a few surviving Victory Class ships built during World War II. As we commemorate the 250th anniversary of our nation’s founding this year, it’s a great time to visit our new state flagship in Tampa.”

ITF WELCOMES TEMPORARY CEASEFIRE BUT DEMANDS PROTECTIONS FOR SEAFARERS

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) welcomed the announcement of a ceasefire in the Middle East and the tenuous plan to allow safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

“For the hundreds of seafarers of all nationalities caught in the middle of this crisis, this announcement will bring real and immediate relief, that must now be translated into safe, orderly and guaranteed transit through the Strait. That has to be the priority,” said Stephen Cotton, ITF General Secretary. “Civilian seafarers should never have been exposed to the risks of warfare, nor should commercial vessels ever be considered targets.”

However, a temporary ceasefire is not enough, they said. It must be the start of a permanent de-escalation. “We call on all parties to make this ceasefire permanent and to uphold their responsibilities under international law to protect civilian shipping and the seafarers who keep it moving.”

To guarantee the safety of seafarers and the integrity of global supply chains, the ITF called for “an absolute commitment from all parties that civilian vessels will not be targeted and a coordinated management of vessel movements through the Strait with phased transits to ensure safe and orderly transit.”

34,000 SHIP ROUTE DIVERSIONS SINCE START OF WAR

Project44’s latest Supply Chain Insights report shows more than 34,000 route diversions have been recorded in the four weeks since the disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, with no sign of normalization as global shipping networks continue to adjust. Week 4 produced the highest total diversion volume of the period, signaling that rerouting activity remains sustained rather than returning to pre-disruption patterns. The disruption has moved beyond short-term response and is now driving structural changes in how cargo moves across the region, with cargo flows being redistributed into new routing structures across the Indian Ocean and Asia. Read the full Supply Chain Insights report [here](#).

NMC ISSUES e-MEDICAL CERTIFICATE GUIDANCE

The National Maritime Center (NMC) recently began issuing medical certificates electronically via e-mail. This week, they issued guidance to help make the process more seamless.

New medical certificates that do not include a medical waiver will now be delivered electronically via e-mail. Certificates are issued as a standard 8.5-inch x 11-inch (letter size) PDF documents. Certificates must be signed to be valid. It is also recommended that mariners print and maintain a signed certificate for their use. When printed, it will be a standard 8.5-inch x 11-inch document.

Certificates with medical waivers will continue to be mailed. New medical certificates include a QR code as a built-in security feature. Once the code is scanned, users will be directed to their credential verification tool to confirm validity of the certificate.

If you want your medical certificate delivered by e-mail, make sure you provide a valid e-mail address with your 719 K or K/E, otherwise your certificate will be mailed in accordance with standard procedures. With the right electronic signature app, you can digitally sign your certificate on a mobile device (iPhone or Android) easily, legally, and securely. Several free electronic signature services exist that offer legally binding e-signatures for documents. Examples include OpenSign (unlimited free), SignWell (limited free docs), DigiSigner, and Adobe Acrobat Fill & Sign.

They noted that you should allow time for e-mail delivery and check your spam/junk folder before contacting the NMC's Customer Service Center. If you didn't receive the e-mail, you should check your spam/junk folder. If there is a missing attachments, take note that firewalls may block PDFs. You should try a personal device/e-mail. If you can't open the file, try using a PDF app like Adobe Acrobat Reader. Some organizational e-mail systems may block attachments. Accessing from a personal device may resolve the issue.

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

Friday, April 10 – **Honolulu@1100**

Monday, May 4 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, May 5 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**

Wednesday, May 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, May 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, May 8 – **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.***

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. Website: www.mebaunion.org 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. The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or www.mebaschool.org. M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or www.mebaplans.org