

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//Richard Trumka has Died//NLRB Officer: Amazon's Improper Tactics in Union-Election Demand Rerun//Pandemic Still Taking a Toll on Seafarer Happiness//Matson Launches New Express Service//Attacks on Ships Near Iran//House 'Minibus' Has Key Maritime Provisions//Disc Golf Tournament at CMES on Sept. 19//NOAA Says Atlantic Hurricane Season will Continue to be Severe//

AFL-CIO LEADER RICHARD TRUMKA HAS DIED AT 72

The labor movement is stunned by the sudden passing of AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka who died today of an apparent heart attack at the age of 72. The Federation's Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler tweeted, "The labor movement, the AFL-CIO and the nation lost a legend today - and I lost a dear friend. Rich Trumka devoted his life to working people, from his early days as president of the UMWA to his unparalleled leadership as the voice of America's labor movement...Rich loved workers. And he knew there was nothing more powerful than workers standing together for a better life...He never forgot who he was working for. He never forgot who he was fighting for. America's working people were his guiding light for more than 50 years."

After 14 years as AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer, Trumka succeeded John Sweeney as President in 2009. He had served as President of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) from 1982 to 1995. A third-generation coal miner, he began working the mines in 1968, before joining the UMWA structure in 1974 as a staff attorney.

An AFL-CIO statement said, "Rich was a relentless champion of workers' rights, and even as we mourn his passing today, we will stand on his shoulders to continue the fight for workers, and for the fair and just society he believed in so passionately. We will honor his legacy with action."

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac lionized Trumka as "a venerated labor champion who passionately poured himself into the fight for working families. Since the time he was a teenager digging coal in Pennsylvania mines, Rich understood the challenges workers face and proved to be an unyielding force for them. He believed in working men and women and the power of solidarity, and he never relented the battle on their behalf."

NO BIG SHOCK: AMAZON INTERFERED WITH UNIONIZING EFFORT, SAYS NLRB

A National Labor Relations Board review of the recent failed labor election at an Amazon fulfillment center in Bessemer, Alabama has found that the company employed union-busting techniques during the vote and recommends a new election.

The report noted that tactics used by the company may have improperly influenced workers to reject representation by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). 6,000 employees at

the plant had the opportunity to participate in the election that culminated in April. Throughout the years, Amazon has remained non-union at all its plants despite subjecting employees to grueling work conditions and low pay.

NLRB Hearing Officer Kerstin Meyers upheld several RWDSU objections to the election stating that Amazon compromised the integrity of the vote in a number of ways including “vote no” paraphernalia at mandatory meetings and the company’s installation of a ballot collection box underneath surveillance cameras. She noted, “Notwithstanding the Union’s substantial margin of defeat, the Employer’s unilateral decision to create, for all intents and purposes, an onsite collection box for NLRB ballots destroyed the laboratory conditions and justifies a second election.”

In the coming weeks, a regional NLRB director will consider the recommendation and decide whether to rerun the election. Amazon says they will appeal.

RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum said, “Throughout the NLRB hearing, we heard compelling evidence how Amazon tried to illegally interfere with and intimidate workers as they sought to exercise their right to form a union. We support the hearing officer’s recommendation that the NLRB set aside the election results and direct a new election. As President Biden reminded us earlier this year, the question of whether or not to have a union is supposed to be the workers’ decision and not the employer’s. Amazon’s behavior throughout the election process was despicable. Amazon cheated, they got caught, and they are being held accountable.”

HARD TO GET HAPPY: PANDEMIC STILL TAKING A TOLL ON SEAFARERS SAYS REPORT

The latest Seafarers Happiness Index report published by the Mission to Seafarers paints a grim picture of seafarer welfare with overall happiness dropping to an all-time low since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among other things, the report reveals that the lack of shore leave due to pandemic restrictions continues to build seafarer frustration.

The report, encapsulating the mood of global seafarers following the second quarter of this year, notes that the absence of freedom of movement, along with extended ship assignments, has exacerbated boredom and irritation about many aspects of life at sea. One seafarer who responded to the survey mentioned having experienced one and a half years without setting foot on land, highlighting the dramatic need for the industry to do more.

Furthermore, the ban of shore leave and being constantly in a ship for a prolonged period has meant that physical wellbeing is being neglected. Seafarers who had been motivated to stay active during the earlier stages of their trips expressed feelings of lethargy, apathy and physical exhaustion months into their assignments.

The maritime industry has started putting its vaccination plans into action with leading flag states and big seafaring nations including Cyprus, Singapore, Philippines, Germany and the U.S. leading the way at their respective seafarer centers. While momentum for designating seafarers as key workers was once the topic of conversation, seafarers feel like this has been put on the backburner and they’re no longer the ‘flavor of the month’. As a result, concerns over wage rises, key worker status and the fact that seafarers have been indispensable to the world economy during the pandemic have been now brought back to the forefront. The latest Seafarers Happiness Index report can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/dm536w2a>

MATSON LAUNCHES NEW EXPRESS SERVICE

Last week, Matson Inc. began a new China-California Express (CCX) service to help address ongoing bottlenecks that have been doubling normal delivery times and leading to stockouts for retailers. The CCX has a 12-day transit time from Shanghai direct to the Port of Oakland, with a Ningbo departure taking 14 days. The new route, Matson's third expedited Transpacific service, is designed to help U.S. importers move stranded shipments from China. The express service also supplements existing capacity Matson provides in Long Beach. The scheduled rotation is Ningbo-Shanghai-Oakland-Long Beach-Honolulu-Ningbo.

SHIP ATTACKS NEAR IRAN FURTHER CLOUD SMOOTH SHIP OPERATIONS

Commercial shipping in waters near Iran continues amidst a new wave of trepidation following a pair of incidents that have ratcheted up tensions in the region. At the end of July, two crewmembers of a petroleum tanker were killed in an apparent drone attack in the Arabian Sea, 152 nautical miles northeast of the Omani port of Duqm. The vessel, the M/T MERCER STREET, is a Japanese-owned, Liberian-flagged vessel with an Israeli ship manager. Both the U.S. and UK blamed Iran for the attack which killed the ship's Romanian Captain and a British security guard. Iran denied responsibility and made countercharges and threats. Back in April, Iran blamed Israel for a cyber-attack on one of its underground nuclear sites and vowed revenge. Following last week's incident, U.S. officials issued a maritime alert warning of threats to commercial shipping in the area.

In another incident this week, an investigation is underway concerning an attempted hijacking of a Panamanian-flagged vessel, the ASPHALT PRINCESS. Authorities believe Iranian-backed forces stormed the ship in the Arabian Sea near the Straits of Hormuz but fled after US and Omani warships sailed into the area. No injuries were reported. Iran has denied any responsibility in the incident.

Multiple maritime threats have been reported in waters near Iran over the last few years – in the Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, where vessels have been attacked and suffered explosions. The Maritime Administration has issued alerts at various points through the last few years cautioning mariners in those areas as well as in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

HOUSE 'MINIBUS' INCLUDES KEY MARITIME PROVISIONS

On July 29, the House of Representatives passed a 'minibus' spending package - a comprehensive appropriations bill – that includes full funding for both the Maritime Security Program (MSP) at \$318 million and the newly established Tanker Security Program (TSP) at \$60 million for Fiscal Year 2022. The M.E.B.A. has played an active role engaging bipartisan lawmakers about the importance of growing a viable U.S.-flag international fleet.

Full funding for MSP and TSP were included in the President's recent White House budget request to Congress, and a recently released unclassified report by the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) also identifies the implementation of the Tanker Security Program as a key solution to "mitigate risk and uncertainty [and to] reduce the US-flag tanker gap and the risk of reliance on foreign-flag tankers." The Senate is not expected to take action on their appropriations package until after the August break.

CMES DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT SEPT. 19

On the heels of a successful Fundraiser and Disc (Frisbee) Golf Tournament in mid-June to benefit the Memorial Park at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School, another (smaller) event has been scheduled for September.

June's frisbee golf tournament was wildly popular and will be reprised on Sunday, September 19th (at 1300) in what is being called "The M MMMF Invitational Jamie Butler Memorial Disc Golf Tournament." Jamie was a 1983 CMES cadet school graduate who shipped as an M.E.B.A. Chief Engineer for years and served as the Baltimore hall dispatcher before he sailed into the sunset late last year at the age of 59.

The September 19 date has just been finalized – an earlier date was proposed and listed in the August membership meeting packet. The Disc Golf Invitational will be open only to Members, Applicants, Retirees, staff and employers. The \$25 entry fee will benefit the 4MF and the Memorial Park. As you know, the Memorial was created to honor fallen seafarers who have delivered the goods and answered the call of this country since 1775. The tournament winner will have his or her name engraved on the M MMMF Maritime Heritage Cup proudly displayed at the CMES Lounge. You can contact 4MF Chairman Bill Van Loo for additional information. He can be reached at bvanloo@bvlworks.org

NOAA SAYS ATLANTIC HURRICANE SEASON WILL CONTINUE TO BE HARSH

Further updating its forecast originally released in May, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reinforced its conclusions that the 2021 Atlantic hurricane season will be severe and noted that there could be 15-21 named storms and up to 5 major hurricanes (Category 3, 4, or 5 with winds 111 mph or greater). "After a record-setting start, the 2021 Atlantic hurricane season does not show any signs of relenting as it enters the peak months ahead," said NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad. Atlantic sea surface temperatures are not expected to be as warm as they were during the record-breaking 2020 season; however, reduced vertical wind shear and an enhanced west Africa monsoon all contribute to the current conditions that can increase seasonal hurricane activity. These conditions are set against the backdrop of the ongoing warm phase of the Atlantic Multi-Decadal Oscillation, which has been favoring more active hurricane seasons since 1995. NOAA's update to the 2021 outlook covers the entire six-month hurricane season, which ends Nov. 30.

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*

Friday, August 6 – Honolulu@1100

Monday, September 6 – Labor Day – *All Halls Closed*

Tuesday, September 7 – Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle-Fife@1300;

Wednesday, September 8 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online Headquarters "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting)

Thursday, September 9 – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, September 10 – Honolulu@1100

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