

# 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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### **UNION FINALIZES REOPENER AGREEMENT WITH APL**

The Union concluded one phase of its reopener talks with American President Lines last week as negotiators closed on an agreement covering M.E.B.A. engineers. Talks continue with the company on language covering shoreside port engineers. The overall agreement runs through the end of September 2024. The new language secures raises and increased pension and training benefits among others areas. It also reestablishes penalty rate pay for duty in foreign ports and at sea.

M.E.B.A. Executive V.P. Claudia Cimini headed up negotiations along with L.A. Branch Agent Rich Doherty and Oakland Patrolman Max Alper. Rank and file members participating in talks included Seth Massey, Brannon Massey, Chris Coombs, Ben Parmer and Alex Cerrone. Additional contributions were made by Jessica Scott and Trevor Lapham. Many thanks to them! The agreement has been sent to each of the Union halls.

### **LONG-TERM AGREEMENT WITH HAPAG RATIFIED**

A new 12-year agreement with Marine Personnel & Provisioning (MPP) (Hapag/Crowley) covering the "Express Class" vessels in the MTL/Hapag U.S.-flag fleet was ratified by members at the regular December membership meetings that concluded last week. The new agreement, that goes into effect in the new year, secures substantial raises as well as benefit improvements and strengthens work rules and job security, among other areas. The MOU covers the five A7 6,900 TEU Flex engine Express-class ships which include the DELAWARE EXPRESS, COLORADO EXPRESS, HUDSON EXPRESS, MISSOURI EXPRESS, and POTOMAC EXPRESS.

M.E.B.A. Gulf Coast Vice President Adam Smith led the talks along with Tampa Branch Agent Nicole Greenway and M.E.B.A. Contracts Officer Mark Gallagher. Rank-and-file members attending various bargaining sessions during negotiations included Mark Maloney, Larry Balsamo, Craig LaChance, Sam Leshner, Todd Williams, David Greenway and Rich Lundin.

### **LONGSHORE UNION WILL BARGAIN NEW AGREEMENT IN 2022**

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) will look to negotiate a new agreement next year spurning an offered extension from employer Pacific Maritime Association (PMA). The existing contract had been set to expire in 2019 before longshore workers agreed to a three-year

extension that is currently set to expire in July 2022. PMA had sought another extension but ILWU President Willie Adams rebuffed the offer immediately and supplied the employer with three pages of news headlines detailing the record profits shipping companies have enjoyed during the pandemic as supply chain woes deepen.

President Adams stated, “It is especially ironic to ask labor to pass on collective bargaining when there is an historic labor shortage outside of the ports caused precisely because these other workers (for example, truck drivers and workers at distribution centers) do not have the types of wages and working conditions attained through collective bargaining that persuade people to stay and commit their lives to tough physical labor – the glue of the U.S. economy.”

### **OSG ANNOUNCES ADJUSTMENTS TO FLEET, CHARTER RENEWALS**

Overseas Shipholding Group announced that it has exercised options to extend bareboat charter agreements with American Shipping Company for two vessels but won’t be exercising extension options for three other vessels. Those vessels include the OVERSEAS NEW YORK, OVERSEAS LOS ANGELES and OVERSEAS TEXAS CITY. OSG will operate those three until the end of their current bareboat term in December 2022.

OSG President/CEO Sam Norton said, “Our decision not to exercise some of our options reflects a continued diversification from a relatively high concentration in conventional Jones Act tankers and ATBs to our niche businesses that have enjoyed higher and more stable returns. The Jones Act market for larger conventional tankers has shifted over the last five years as marginal demand drivers domestically have become more volatile in both crude and refined product flows. While we are witnessing a rebound in demand currently, charter periods obtainable in the markets we serve have shortened and the trajectory to increased stability remains uncertain...The decision to redeliver three vessels to AMSC will allow us to redirect resources towards participating in a broader spectrum of opportunities in the existing and emerging markets for energy and liquid bulk commodities of all types.”

### **TUSTAMENA REPLACEMENT, OTHER AMHS UPGRADES PLANNED FOR FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS**

The State of Alaska announced that it will dedicate some of the federal funds in the recently passed Infrastructure bill towards the replacement of the aging ferry TUSTAMENA and other marine highway projects. Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy announced that the State plans to replace the 57-year-old ferry with a new ocean-class vessel that will help “re-energize the Alaska Marine Highway System.” He said, “the Tusty has been plying rough seas for nearly 60 years and is approaching the end of its service life. Annual repairs for the vessel now reach \$2 million. I’ve asked DOT to replace this key piece of infrastructure to ensure connectivity for our coastal communities for another 50 years.”

The replacement vessel is estimated to cost \$200 million to \$250 million and will be competitively bid. The new ship is expected to begin service in 2027. The vessel’s vehicle and passenger capacity would increase by 40 percent over the TUSTAMENA, from 34 to 52 vehicles and from 160 to 250 passengers. Other planned Alaska upgrades include: \$8 million in upgrades to the TUSTAMENA to extend her service life; The ability for passengers to plan trips around a reliable schedule. An 18-month schedule of ferry sailings became available for the first time on AMHS last summer; Crew quarters going in on the M/V HUBBARD in a project estimated to cost \$16 million; A newly established essential ferry service for rural communities with a potential for \$1 billion in funding from the

infrastructure act; Backup ferry service for M/V LeCONTE, while the ship is in annual overhaul maintenance; and a targeted recruitment program for maritime workers, given the global shortage.

### **CAPE MAY-LEWES FERRY WILL BENEFIT FROM MARINE HIGHWAY FUNDS**

The Cape May-Lewes Ferry System is among the beneficiaries of grants awarded by the Maritime Administration (MarAd) for nationwide marine highway projects. MarAd announced nine recipients for \$12.6 million in funding under the America's Marine Highway Program (AMHP) that will help address supply chain disruptions, enhance movement of goods along waterways, and expand waterborne freight services.

The \$600,000 grant will support a comprehensive ferry master plan to develop a new, modern, efficient and cleaner ferryboat design. The master plan will serve as a comprehensive analysis of operations and service needs, and help determine the types, sizes, and number of ferries that are needed in the future. With a nationwide push towards a low carbon economy transition, the ferry system is capable of incorporating technologies within the vessels that can benefit customers as well as the environment, including electric vehicle charging stations.

### **NAME SELECTED FOR NEXT WSF NEWBUILD**

The hybrid-electric vessel being constructed for the Washington State Ferry system will be named WISHKAH, it was announced this week. The Washington State Transportation Commission unanimously voted for the name after accepting public suggestions for months. "Wishkah," a Chehalis native word, is a river that runs from the Olympic foothills southward into Grays Harbor at the town of Aberdeen. The hybrid-electric Olympic Class 144-car ferry is similar in design to SUQUAMISH. It is being built at Seattle Vigor Shipyard and is scheduled to enter service in 2025. WISHKAH will be the first newbuild hybrid-electric ferry in the fleet though the WSF plans to integrate battery power into several existing ferries. Hybrid vessels would be capable of charging at the terminal, and some vessels would be able to operate in fully electric mode on shorter routes.

### **NOMINEE FOR MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR MAKES CASE BEFORE SENATE COMMITTEE**

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation conducted a confirmation hearing for three Transportation Department nominees today including the nominee for the next Maritime Administrator, Rear Adm. Ann Phillips (Ret.). The Committee also examined the nominations of Dr. Steven Cliff as Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and John Putnam as DOT General Counsel.

Phillips spent 31 years on active Navy duty, commanded a Destroyer, Destroyer Squadron and Amphibious Strike Group and served on the Chief of Naval Operations' Climate Change Task Force. She retired from the Navy in 2014 with a slew of commendations and achievement medals and continued to work on climate security issues as an independent consultant. Lucinda Lessley has been serving as the Acting Administrator until her replacement can be confirmed.

At the hearing, Rear Adm. Phillips stressed her support for the Jones Act, stated her intentions to prioritize the strengthening of the U.S. Merchant Marine, continue the recapitalization of the nation's sealift fleet and help implement provisions to improve the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and safeguard cadets. The MarAd nominee's expertise on climate change prompted Sen. Ted Cruz to question her on whether she harbors "hostility" for oil and gas projects. Rear Adm. Phillips stressed

that in any review of such projects under her watch, MarAd would follow the law and work through the process in a fair and equitable manner.

If the Committee votes in favor of advancing the nominations, the full U.S. Senate will put the nominees to a confirmation vote.

### **USMMA SEA YEAR SET TO RESUME NEXT WEEK WITH NEW SAFETY STANDARDS**

The Department of Transportation (DOT) and Maritime Administration issued new safety standards to govern the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy's (USMMA) Sea Year and announced the program is likely to resume next week.(Dec. 22). USMMA's Sea Year training program, which typically consists of a sailing period during a cadet's sophomore year and a longer sailing period during a cadet's junior year, was paused temporarily in early November to ensure the development and implementation of measures to help prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH), and foster a safer, more welcoming and inclusive culture. Sea Year training enables cadets to obtain the training days at sea necessary to become eligible for a U.S. Coast Guard merchant officer license examination.

“The plan we are launching today represents the collective commitment of DOT, MARAD, USMMA, and the six State Maritime Academies to strengthen safety for cadets aboard commercial vessels, and to support an inclusive culture that prioritizes preventing sexual assault and harassment and supporting survivors,” said Acting Maritime Administrator Lucinda Lessley. “The plan is an initial step, and all parties are committed to continuing to review this program frequently, and to make improvements whenever needed to ensure the safety and success of cadets.”

In addition, new policies and procedures will be implemented at USMMA to support cadets while they are at sea.

### **SENATE COMMITTEE ADVANCES BILL TO FIGHT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AT SEA**

Sens. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) hailed the Commerce Committee's passage of their new bill to combat sexual misconduct in the Merchant Marine. The legislation would strengthen Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment (SASH) prevention, response, investigation, and accountability in the maritime industry and provide additional safeguards for the midshipmen at the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA).

Among other things, S. 3196, “The Improving Protections for Midshipmen Act,” would give the Coast Guard authority to suspend or revoke a mariner's license if the individual is found to have committed sexual harassment or sexual assault; Include commission of sexual assault as an independent and explicit ground for suspension or revocation, and add sexual harassment as a new form of misconduct on which a license could be lost; require the USMMA to create a training program specifically designed for midshipmen going onboard ships; Set up a framework to improve the USMMA's SASH policies and procedures; and establish a Sexual Assault Advisory Council to provide feedback to the USMMA for improvements on SASH policy and implementation.

### **INTERNATIONAL ACTION GROUP FORMED TO PROTECT TRANSPORT WORKERS FROM COVID**

UN agencies and other international organizations have established a joint action group to protect transportation workers and secure supply chains during the COVID-19 pandemic. The group will

focus on promoting COVID-19 vaccination of transport workers and ensuring the application of internationally agreed protocols and standards.

Group partners include the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO), International Maritime Organization (IMO) International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) among others. The Joint Action Group will meet regularly to discuss the evolving situation, assess the progress made, and agree on future actions to overcome remaining challenges.

### **VACATION BENEFITS – 2021 YEAR-END CLOSING**

Apply for Vacation and Port Relief Benefits early to avoid the year-end rush.

- **FILING DEADLINE:** The deadline for issuing checks dated in 2021 in the Outports *and* the Plan Office is **today** - Thursday, December 16, 2021.
- **DIRECT DEPOSIT:** The final Direct Deposit Transfer for 2021 will be made on 12/17/2021 and the funds will be deposited into bank accounts on 12/21/2021.
- Any requests for Port Relief and Vacation checks received after 12/16/21 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid in the order received beginning 1/3/2022.

Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2021 must file before this deadline. Remember, Friday December 24, 2021 and Friday December 31, 2021 are holidays and the Outports and the Plan Office will be closed. It is always wise to plan ahead, so you should verify the specific holiday schedule with the Plan Office Representative.

### **SPLIT YOUR VACATION PAYMENTS BETWEEN 2021 AND 2022**

You can submit an Application for Vacation Pay prior to the end of the year and request that the payment of your vacation benefits be split. Two checks will be issued to you, one in 2021 and a second in 2022. The 12/16/2021 deadline applies to split claims also. The vacation benefits paid in this manner **MUST** be a **continuous vacation period**. Please contact the Vacation Plan staff in Baltimore at 800-811-6322 or 410-547-9111 if you have any questions.

### **FMC OVERHAUL BILL PASSES HOUSE**

A bill introduced by Reps. John Garamendi and Dusty Johnson (R-SD) that aims to make the Federal Maritime Commission a more effective regulating agency has gained approval in the House of Representatives. The Congressmen said the “Ocean Shipping Reform Act” (H.R. 4996) will ensure a more competitive global ocean shipping industry, protect American businesses and consumers from price gouging, and establish reciprocal trade opportunities to reduce the United States’ longstanding trade imbalance with export-driven countries like mainland China. The bipartisan legislation was passed by the House in a 364-60 vote and heads to the Senate for consideration.

Among other things, the bill would establish reciprocal trade to promote U.S. exports as part of the FMC mission; Require ocean carriers to adhere to minimum service standards that meet the public interest, reflecting best practices in the global shipping industry; and prohibit ocean carriers from declining opportunities for U.S. exports unreasonably, as determined by the FMC in new required federal rulemaking.

## **LAST TWO WEEKS TO VIE FOR THE G&W “SWAG BAG”**

M.E.B.A.’s homegrown fund that helps members in times of need gets an added boost from every donation made this year as the Union is matching contributions made to the Good & Welfare Fund dollar-for-dollar - up to \$10,000. The top G&W contributor through December 31<sup>st</sup> will earn the coveted M.E.B.A. “Swag Bag” – a bag stuffed to the gills with fabulous M.E.B.A. prizes worth an estimated \$200.

The Good & Welfare Fund assists active and retired members and their families in times of crisis. It helps remove some of the sting and burden of unexpected tragedy and lends a hand to those within the M.E.B.A. family. This is a wonderful cause, but we must constantly strengthen the fund to allow additional assistance to members and retirees in times of hardship.

*All donations are tax deductible as approved by law under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and all contributed funds go directly to supporting M.E.B.A. families in need.* Your contributions to the fund are tax deductible so please give liberally in order to help a Union brother or sister.

You can contribute to the G&W Fund anytime. But right now is the best time now that the Union has pledged to make your generous contribution really pack a punch. You can make a contribution at a Union hall or support the Fund through an electronic payment made using the link on the M.E.B.A. website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)).

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

**Monday, January 3** – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300.

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

**Wednesday, January 5** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online Headquarters “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register now at [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)

**Thursday, January 6** – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

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

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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](mailto:mebahq@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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org). Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*