

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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M.E.B.A. ELECTION: VOKAC WILL CONTINUE TO HEAD UP A UNION ON THE RISE

Adam Vokac will suit up for a second term as M.E.B.A. President following four strong years racking up gains for the Union and improving the membership experience. The M.E.B.A.'s election period ended on Monday following a 90-day balloting process.

Under Vokac's presidency, the M.E.B.A. has secured strong contracts and partnerships and expanded the range of job opportunities for members. By fostering relationships with maritime employers, he has ensured that the Union adapts to the evolving needs of the industry. He and the Union's executive board – have stepped up efforts to bring next-generation mariners into the fold while continually improving wages, benefits, and working conditions for our existing membership that make the M.E.B.A. even more attractive to maritime professionals. Responding to concerns and feedback from the membership has been central, and the Vokac administration has maintained open lines of communication and demonstrated a commitment to addressing the diverse needs of the Union's engineers, deck officers, and other mariners and shoreside personnel. The modernization of the M.E.B.A. Plans, that will help realize administrative cost savings, improved options, sustainability and efficiencies, has been a cornerstone of his leadership. By improving working conditions, fostering solidarity, and championing the value of unionized labor, President Vokac has continued to elevate the M.E.B.A.'s reputation within the maritime industry. Adam has already served the membership as an official for 14 years and he will head up another ambitious four years overseeing a Union on the rise, that will soon be celebrating its 150th anniversary.

He heads up the Union's governing board – the District Executive Committee (DEC) – that is ripe with experience after returning four of its hardened veterans while adding a familiar face who has spent years relentlessly working on behalf of the membership.

Maxim Alper, who has served as the Oakland hall's Patrolman since 2017, is the Union's new Executive Vice President. Max has been a go-getter and is well prepared to join the DEC by continually demonstrating his dedication and commitment to the membership while proving valuable at the bargaining table. His efforts have helped enhance M.E.B.A.'s reputation as having the best contracts in the industry.

Roland “Rex” Rexha will build on four successful years as the Union’s Secretary-Treasurer with a second term. He has proven tenacious in the position, tirelessly spearheading a variety of forward-thinking projects, expanding the Union’s reach with U.S. and international unions and serving on the AFL-CIO Executive Council. His work on behalf of our Staten Island Ferry mariners helped win a historic contract for those members who went from the lowest paid ferry unit in the country to the highest paid.

Jason Callahan was elected to another four-year term as the Union’s Atlantic Coast V.P. after eight solid years in the position working with the DEC to advance the interests of members, organizing new job opportunities and continually improving working conditions and benefits for our membership.

Adam Smith will serve a second four-year term on the District Executive Committee as the Union’s Gulf Coast V.P./Houston Branch Agent. He has been relentless in improving the benefits of membership with tough negotiating at the bargaining table, prying open new job opportunities and recruiting talented young mariners into the Union.

A five-person rank-and-file Tallying Committee oversaw the collection and tabulation of ballots on Monday (12/2) in M.E.B.A.’s District election. TrueBallot, Inc. served as the Impartial Administrator in charge of vote tabulation. Following the count, both TrueBallot and the Tallying Committee issued reports. Both reports were sent to the Union halls on Tuesday morning following the certification of the vote. The reports are being discussed this week at the remaining December membership meetings and will be part of the January Membership Meeting packet.

The M.E.B.A. Tallying Committee consisted of Chairman Reggie Abrams (Houston), Steve Walker (Seattle), Kieran Youngberg (NY/NJ), Recording Secretary Keith Martin (Norfolk) and John Schaeffer (Tampa).

Following his election, Kevin M. Cross, who has ably served as Seattle Patrolman for the past 11 years, will take over as Branch Agent in the port. The DEC will appoint a member to serve in the vacant Seattle Patrolman position., Torey Zingales, who formerly spent time as the Union’s Representative in Cleveland before going back to sea, makes his return as the L.A. Branch Agent.

Nicole Greenway has been confirmed for a second four-year term as our Branch Agent in Tampa where she continues an impressive track record of accomplishments, strong leadership and inexhaustible dedication to the Union.

Craig Moran will be your new Norfolk Branch Agent/Government Fleet Representative. Craig has over 25 years as a sailing member with the Union including extensive experience with Government vessels.

Chris Coombs, a 10-year member who has sailed out of the Oakland hall and has been involved in successful contract negotiations as part of rank-and-file committees, is the newly elected Oakland Patrolman. Kenny Smith won his election as NY/NJ Patrolman and brings over 30 years of experience in the Ports of NY/NJ to the job, including years of sailing as a Deck Officer in the Staten Island Ferry fleet as well as serving as Shop Steward. Jacob LeBouef, a 20+ year member, is excited to showcase his dedication and hard work to support the membership as the new L.A.

Patrolman. All three are ready on Day 1 to defend contracts, expand the Union's reach and make sure member needs are met.

The five members of the DEC and each of the Branch Agents, by virtue of their offices, will also serve as Delegates to the National M.E.B.A. Convention which will take place at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School on March 18, 2025. In addition, 11 other Delegates were elected including all three M.E.B.A. Patrolmen that stood for election. The 20 Delegates representing the District at the National M.E.B.A. Convention will be Adam Vokac, Roland "Rex" Rexha, Jason Callahan, Adam Smith, Maxim Alper, Torey Zingales, Craig Moran, Kevin M. Cross, Nicole Greenway, Kenny Smith, Chris Coombs, Jacob LeBeouf, Doug Berdel, Mark Collins, Terence Cooper, April Fleischer, Mark S. Gallagher, Conor Golden, Jack S. Menendez and Christopher Nardone.

M.E.B.A.'s newly-elected officials will be sworn into new four-year terms on January 1, 2025. Congratulations all!

Congratulations are also in order for a handful of M.E.B.A. hall officials who are winding down stellar service with the Union. L.A. Branch Agent Rich Doherty is retiring after over 40 great years with the M.E.B.A. with the last 15 as an official in the L.A. hall – the last 12 as Branch Agent. In Norfolk, Jack Menendez begins winding down a 40+ year career with the Union after he chose not to run for re-election. He will assist the incoming Craig Moran at the hall, as needed, for the first part of the New Year and serve at the National Convention before filing for retirement. Claudia Cimini, who kept her nose to the grindstone during four strong years as the Union's Executive V.P. decided not to stand for re-election though she is keeping her options open. She has been with the Union since 1990. Jeff Duncan is another stalwart that chose not to run for re-election. He is finishing up 14 strong years working out of the Seattle hall as an M.E.B.A. official, the last 11 as Branch Agent. This summer, Nico Sermoneta announced that his 11th year as New York/New Jersey Patrolman would be his last. He plans to go back to sea taking advantage of M.E.B.A. Deck officer opportunities. President Vokac and Secretary-Treasurer Rexha extended their heartfelt gratitude to these officials for their unwavering dedication and commitment to the membership over the years. They have made an indelible mark in advancing the mission of the M.E.B.A.

ELECTION "BLACK-OUT" RULES RELAXED

The election season policy in which the *Telex Times* does not mention candidates for M.E.B.A. office by name has concluded, following the tabulation of ballots. The policy did not extend to candidates who were unopposed. Since July, the newsletter adhered to – and exceeded regulations stated in Section 401(g) of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 ("Landrum-Griffin"), 29 U.S.C. 481(g).

BOSTON REPRESENTATIVE SOUGHT

M.E.B.A. is accepting résumés from an energetic and supportive member interested in serving as the next Representative at our Boston Union hall. This is a rare and exceptional opportunity. Those who wish to be considered for this position should send a cover letter and résumé to our Atlantic Coast Vice President Jason Callahan at jcallahan@mebaunion.org as well as Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha at rrexha@mebaunion.org. The selected candidate will assume the role in Boston in early 2025.

MORE HOUSHI ATTACKS ON US-FLAG SHIPS

Two Navy Destroyers shielded three U.S.-flag vessels from a barrage of anti-ballistic missiles fired by Houthi forces on Saturday. The USS STOCKDALE and USS O’KANE successfully defended the U.S. owned, operated, flagged merchant vessels they were escorting in the Gulf of Aden. The U.S. vessels were said to be the STENA IMPECCABLE, MAERSK SARATOGA and the LIBERTY GRACE.

The Navy said there were no injuries and no damage to any of the vessels.

TTD SOLIDARITY WITH WSF ENGINEERS & OILERS

America’s largest transportation labor federation, the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO (TTD), recently welcomed dozens of U.S. labor union leaders, including M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha, at an Executive Committee Meeting in Washington, D.C. Looking toward the next Congress and incoming Trump-Vance Administration, the leaders outlined policy goals to support frontline transportation workers. They unanimously adopted policy statements including one that urged state officials to resolve the Washington State Ferry crisis by offering competitive wages and full collective bargaining rights to ferry workers. The system’s pay disparity has whittled away the once-hefty pool of experienced and qualified mariners that had already been stretched thin by a wave of retirements, many during the COVID era. The TTD statement noted, “While TTD applauds the much-deserved recent increase in wages for WSF’s above-deck crew, this has resulted in a 20 percent wage gap between the above-deck crew and engine crew – an inexplicable disparity in light of the comparable training and respective skills necessary to operate the ferries safely. Considering that the above-deck and engine crews are mutually dependent on one another for safe and reliable operations, WSF’s tolerance of a 20 percent wage gap between departments does the system no favors. The state’s interest-arbitration proceedings’ preservation of this disparity will continue to fail to attract much-needed qualified workers to the WSF system.”

The M.E.B.A. is committed to rectifying the pay disparity and is actively implementing a range of initiatives to ensure fair compensation for the hardworking Engineers and Oilers.

The complete TTD statement can be read in full on the M.E.B.A. homepage (www.mebaunion.org)

NATIONAL CONVENTION & NOTICE OF NMEBA ELECTION

The National M.E.B.A. will hold its 114th National Convention on March 18, 2025. Pursuant to the National M.E.B.A. Constitution, an election of National Officers and National Executive Committee Members of the N.M.E.B.A will be held at this Convention. The National M.E.B.A. is an administrative umbrella organization of M.E.B.A. Districts. Currently there is only one District under the N.M.E.B.A. (District No. 1-PCD, M.E.B.A.). The District holds and controls all the assets of the M.E.B.A. membership whereas the National holds the charter with the AFL-CIO. From 1875 until the mid-1960s, National Conventions were held every year. For the next 35 years, Conventions were scaled back to once every two years with National Officers being elected every four. This system worked well with multiple Districts. But after 2000, only one District remained within the National so Conventions were then aligned to take place shortly after the District election every three years. Convention Delegates at the 2017 Convention aligned the National Convention schedule with the four-year District cycle.

The Convention Delegates elected during the 2024 District election will meet on March 18, 2025 at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School to conduct the business of the N.M.E.B.A. These Delegates will also elect four of the five National Executive Committee (NEC) positions. The NEC consists of a National President, National Secretary-Treasurer, National Vice President and two NEC Members. By virtue of his position, the District President (elected in the 2024 District election) will serve on the NEC as the National M.E.B.A. President. Any member in good standing may submit their name or the name of another member in good standing for nomination to the NEC aside from the National President position.

To be timely, nominations must be received at National Headquarters *during the month of February 2025*. Nominations received after February 28, 2025 (or before February 1, 2025) will not be considered valid nominations. Nominations must contain the information specified in Article Five, Section 4(b) of the National M.E.B.A. Constitution. Nomination qualifications and procedures are outlined in the Constitution, particularly in Article Five, Sections 1-9 as well as in Article Seven.

UPCOMING M.E.B.A. HOLIDAY PARTIES

December 6 - **M.E.B.A. Oakland** - 12:30-3:30 pm at the hall.

December 11 – **M.E.B.A. Baltimore** - 12-5 pm at the hall.

December 12 - **M.E.B.A. Headquarters & the American Maritime Congress** – Beginning at 5:30 on the HQ Rooftop.

December 13 - **M.E.B.A. Jacksonville** – 2-5 pm – at Pat’s Lounge, 4870 Highway Avenue.

December 13 - **M.E.B.A. Seattle** – 12:30 – at the hall.

December 16 - **M.E.B.A. Honolulu** - 10 am–2 pm - at the hall.

December 19 – **M.E.B.A. Houston** – 4-7 pm - at the new hall (6604 South Loop E.)

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

Friday, December 6 – **Honolulu@1100**

Monday, January 6 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, January 7 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, January 8 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, January 9 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300** (Tampa meeting to be held at Coppertail Brewing Company - 2601 E 2nd Ave, Tampa, FL)

Friday, January 10 – **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. 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