

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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NEW THREE-YEAR CONTRACT FOR BOSTON MARINE TRANSPORT

Members working for Boston Marine Transport, Inc., a tug and barge outfit primarily operating in the New York area, have ratified a new three year contract. The agreement, retroactive to July 2021, secures wage increases in each year of the contract as well as a significant increase to medical plan contributions. The Memorandum of Agreement runs until June 30, 2024.

Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan oversaw the new agreement along with Boston Representative Stuart Fay. The MOA is available at the M.E.B.A. Union halls.

TASK FORCE CHARTS COURSE TO GROW UNIONS

Labor interests are applauding the publication of a 43-page report issued by a recently-created White House Task Force that makes recommendations on how the federal government should increase union organizing and collective bargaining for public and private sector employees without pursuing a legislative avenue. The White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment was created via Executive Order in April 2021. Their extremely pro-union report ticks off almost 70 recommendations to "mobilize the federal government's policies, programs, and practices to empower workers to organize and successfully bargain with their employers."

The Commander-in-Chief has often stated his desire to be the "most pro-union President" in history and the new report advances a blueprint to remove impediments to ease the way for workers to join a union. The White House said it "believes that increasing worker organizing and empowerment is critical to growing the middle class, building an economy that puts workers first, and strengthening our democracy."

Among other things, task force recommendations, include the following: Ensuring workers know their organizing and bargaining rights; Protecting workers who face illegal retaliation when they organize and stand up for workplace rights; Establishing a resource center on unions and collective bargaining; Shedding light on employer's use of anti-union consultants; Collecting and reporting more information on unions and their role in the U.S. economy; and Advancing equity across underserved communities by supporting worker organizing and collective bargaining.

“The report’s recommendations put the federal government’s policy of encouraging worker organizing and collective bargaining front and center, and empowers workers to build a stronger economy and better quality of life for them and their families,” said Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh.

The Task Force must issue another report before the year is out to detail how their recommendations have been implemented.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler was pleased that the Administration is using its muscle to support and promote unions and called on Congress to follow suit by passing the PRO Act. The PRO Act would revamp labor laws to beef-up collective bargaining rights and strengthen the hand of workers while weakening so-called right-to-work laws. However, that legislation has not garnered Republican support in the Senate and is currently unable to pass with a filibuster-proof majority.

National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) President Randy Erwin said, “Union organizing among civil servant federal employees has been made needlessly difficult in recent decades. The recommendations in this report, once implemented, will tear down some of the barriers that federal workers currently face in organizing, and it will ultimately empower workers to make the workplace fairer and just. These are common-sense reforms that will have a substantial positive impact on workers.” A copy of the full report can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/uniongrowth>

FMC’s VEKICH CONFIRMED; MARAD NOMINATION ADVANCES TO SENATE FLOOR

Earlier today, the full Senate confirmed Max Vekich as a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a four-year term in a 51-43 vote. The FMC is an independent federal agency responsible for regulating the U.S. international ocean transportation system. M.E.B.A. supported the nomination of Vekich, who is a longtime member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and a former member of the Washington State Legislature.

Last week, the Senate Commerce Committee favorably advanced the nomination of Rear Admiral Ann C. Phillips, USN (Ret) as the next U.S. Maritime Administrator. The nomination will advance to the Senate floor for a full vote, but right now there’s no indication when that will happen. Nominees must be put to a full-Senate confirmation vote before they can take over their respective positions. Lucinda Lessley has been serving in the top spot at MarAd in an Acting capacity until a new Administrator is confirmed.

A statement released by the USA Maritime Coalition, a member organization representing maritime labor unions including M.E.B.A., various U.S. flag shipping companies, and trade associations noted, “We believe Rear Admiral Phillips has a proven track record on issues critically important to the future viability of the U.S.-flag maritime industry. Her expertise on matters relating to climate change is especially important as our industry, already the most energy efficient and environmentally friendly mode of cargo transportation, strives to do more to reduce emissions and to preserve our oceans for future generations.”

Earlier this year, M.E.B.A. leadership had an opportunity to meet with Admiral Phillips and discuss the vital service performed by our membership and the critical challenges the maritime industry faces in light of ongoing supply chain issues and a limited mariner pool.

CUTTER CLEARS THE WAY FOR M.E.B.A.-CREWED SHIP'S SOUTH POLE STOP

The 157 crewmembers of the 46-year old Coast Guard Cutter *Polar Star* are on scene at McMurdo Station in Antarctica following an 86-day transit from its Seattle homeport breaking ice along the way. It is the 25th time the Cutter is taking part in Operation Deep Freeze, an annual joint military service mission to resupply the U.S. Antarctic stations in support of the National Science Foundation, lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program. Each year, the crew pilots the 399-foot, 13,000-ton cutter to break a navigable channel through miles of ice, sometimes as much as 21-feet thick, to allow fuel and supply ships to reach McMurdo Station, the U.S. Antarctic Program's logistics hub and largest station.

Polar Star reached the Ross Sea, Antarctica in early January and began cutting through the 37 miles of ice that extended from the ice pier in Winter Quarters Bay at McMurdo Station out to open water. The Cutter spent four weeks breaking ice and grooming the shipping channel. The cleared channel to McMurdo Station will enable two supply vessels, the M.E.B.A.-crewed OCEAN GIANT along with the MAERSK PEARY, to safely offload over 8 million gallons of fuel and 1,000 cargo containers. Together these two ships carry enough fuel, food, and critical supplies to sustain operations throughout the year until the next sealift opportunity in the austral summer of 2023.

SHOP STEWARDS ELECTED AT CMLF

Congratulations to our new M.E.B.A. Shop Stewards serving on the Cape May-Lewes Ferries (CMLF) – “The Best Boat Ride in America.” Overseen by the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA), the ferry system is jointly operated by the States of New Jersey and Delaware. Ferries transit between Cape May, NJ and Lewes, Delaware.

Elected by fellow bargaining unit members as Shop Stewards were John Burke (representing Deck Officers), Travis Worster (Engineers), Mark Genovese (Deck Unlicensed) and Don Miller (Maintenance).

CMLF Shop Stewards serve four-year terms and will represent our members at the unit and help enforce the contract. They will be listening to concerns and collecting input as the Union readies for negotiations with DRBA. Our agreement with the Authority runs through the end of the year and the new Shop Stewards will be heavily involved in bargaining for a successor contract. Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan oversees the contract for the Union and will continue to check in with the new Shop Stewards as we get closer toward negotiations.

TWO FLRA FEDERAL UNION BUSTING DECISIONS OVERTURNED

A federal appeals court recently issued two decisions overturning anti-union policy statements issued by the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) in 2020. Two of the members of the FLRA at the time the policy statements were issued still have their seats.

In a victory for federal workers, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit on Feb. 1 struck down the FLRA's decision that restricted unions' right to bargain over changes affecting conditions of employment. In its attempt to dismantle federal unions, the FLRA in 2020 reversed decades of precedent and sought to narrow the scope of bargaining. Specifically, it sought to eliminate the longstanding “de minimis” standard for bargaining and replace it with a “substantial impact standard” that would have drastically reduced the scope of negotiable agency changes. The court called the FLRA's reasoning for changing the policy “arbitrary and capricious.”

A few days earlier on Jan. 28, the court struck down another FLRA decision that sought to eliminate unions' statutory right to engage in mid-term bargaining, which is used to negotiate over new changes that come up and are not addressed in a bargaining agreement. The decision also made "zipper clauses," which limit negotiations on unforeseen matters during the term of contract, a mandatory subject of bargaining. This would have allowed an agency to prevent mid-term bargaining through the FLRA's component agency – the Federal Service Impasses Panel, which was repeatedly used by the previous administration to impose anti-worker provisions when there's a dispute between the agency and the union. The court questioned the FLRA's motive in issuing the decision and called its line of reasoning illogical.

VALENTINE'S DAY UNION CHECKLIST

Not to alarm you, but Monday is Valentine's Day. As usual, you're probably helpless. Crawling into a fetal position and sobbing your eyes out isn't a real solution, so here's what you can do: Just go with the basics. Use the following list to get you off the hook and help you navigate through another dreaded February 14th, union-style! Unions that help produce these products include BCTGM, UAW, UFCW and IBT.

Flowers – Albertsons; Vons; Pavilions; Gelson's; Costco; Kroger; Ralph's; Safeway. Also, Union Plus members receive a 30% discount on flowers from Teleflora – go to <https://unionplus.co/vday2022>
Chocolates – Ghirardelli; Hershey; Nestle USA; Russell Stover; See's Candies. **Wine & Champagne** – André; Arbor Mist; C.K. Mondavi; Charles Krug; Chateau St. Michelle; Cook's California Champagne; Gallo Estate; J. Roget; Peter Vella; Sheffield Cellars; Turning Leaf; Wycliff.

AVOID DELAYS GETTING YOUR MMC

The National Maritime Center (NMC) receives more than 50,000 applications annually from mariners applying for Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMCs). On average, more than 50 percent of those applications are incomplete or missing information, which causes delays in processing and frustration for mariners. **Who can help?** The Coast Guard has 17 Regional Exam Centers (REC) and several Monitoring Units (MU) with qualified staff that can assist with your application review prior to submission. These RECs and MUs work directly with the National Maritime Center to pre-screen applications, administer examinations, conduct oversight of Coast Guard approved courses and support community outreach programs. The RECs and MUs are open to the public for in-person or over-the-phone consultation. Appointments are required. To find the REC nearest you or for other REC info visit www.dco.uscg.mil/nmc/recs/

What can you do to prevent delays in credential issuance? Start by viewing the five most common reasons applications are delayed, a document posted on the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org) in the Documents & Member Notices section. Remember:

- Apply at least 90 days in advance. For renewals you can apply up to 8 months early and your credential will be postdated to preserve your original expiration and renewal dates.
- Use the Regional Exam Centers and Monitoring Units to review your application before submission. They are available by appointment for in-person or over-the-phone consultation.
- Use the tools and resources on the NMC website. The application acceptance checklist and evaluator checklists are valuable tools.

For general questions, contact the NMC Customer Service Center by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil or calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

SATURDAY IS THE MARINE ELECTRIC ANNIVERSARY

It was 39 years ago on Saturday, that the coal carrier SS MARINE ELECTRIC capsized and sank in heavy weather off Chincoteague, Virginia (February 12, 1983). 31 crewmembers perished including six M.E.B.A. engineers. M.E.B.A. lost Chief Engineer Richard Powers, 1st A/E Michael Price, 2nd A/E Howard Scott, 3rd A/E Steve Browning, 3rd A/E Charles Giddens and M.E.B.A. Cadet George Wickboldt. Three other crewmembers were saved in a helicopter rescue.

Author Robert Frump wrote a great book about the incident and its aftermath called *Until the Sea Shall Free Them*. It details the tragedy and talks about how M.E.B.A. President Jesse Calhoon and retired Coast Guard Capt. Dominic Calicchio helped reform the inspection process of decrepit vessels.

LINCOLN'S B-DAY (OBSERVED) - HALLS CLOSED ON FRIDAY

Halls will be closed on Friday, February 11 to honor the “Great Emancipator” Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was born near Hodgenville, Kentucky on February 12, 1809 and began a dramatic and inspirational Presidency in March of 1861. The tallest-ever U.S. President (6’4”), Abraham Lincoln was a licensed bartender, lost eight elections during his 56 years, practiced law without a degree and invented a device to free steamboats stuck on sandbars. Honest Abe also briefly worked as a ferry operator and flatboat pilot, was beaten only once in 300 wrestling matches and frequently allowed his cat to eat on the table at the White House. The night before his assassination in 1865, Lincoln had a dream about “a fine ship entering harbor under full sail.” Walt Whitman used that image and wrote the famous poem “O Captain! My Captain!” about the death of our 16th President.

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*

Monday, February 14 – Honolulu@1100.

Monday, March 7 – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300.

Tuesday, March 8 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

Wednesday, March 9 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – **Register now at mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, March 10 – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, March 11 – 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. 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.