

# 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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## **WAR BONUS MOU WITH MLL**

The Union has reached an agreement on a comprehensive war risk package covering M.E.B.A. officers sailing on Maersk Line, Ltd. vessels transiting through high-risk waters. M.E.B.A. Atlantic Coast Vice President Jason Callahan headed up the talks with MLL resulting in a signed agreement this week.

Certain global shipping lanes have been designated as high-risk areas including the Southern Red Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Israeli territorial waters and parts of the Gulf of Aden. Agreement terms include bonuses for our mariners transiting these areas (with retroactivity) equal to their base wages and generally payable for the duration of the transit.

When one of the covered vessels is in Israeli territorial waters, a minimum of five days will be paid with an additional day each day thereafter. In addition, the agreement includes Harbor Attack and Vessel Attack bonuses as well as Company-paid death and disability insurance.

## **NEW NOLA REP./DISPATCHER**

M.E.B.A. is pleased to announce that it has filled the opening in our New Orleans Union hall. 10-year member Denis Alegría will take over as the hall's new Representative/Dispatcher beginning on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

The new hire became necessary when former Rep. Dan Gifford announced his retirement. The hall has been keeping abbreviated hours (10-4 CST) but will revert to its regular 8-4 CST schedule once Denis starts work.

As a reminder, those who previously utilized the NOLA hall for Plans matters can route their business to the M.E.B.A. Plans office in Baltimore, MD. That office can be contacted at (800) 811-6322 and vacation-specific business can be emailed to [vacation@mebaplans.org](mailto:vacation@mebaplans.org)

## **NEWBUILD WILL REPLACE AGING GREEN LAKE**

Seacor/Waterman has announced its plans to swap out the aging Pure Car/Truck Carrier GREEN LAKE with a newly constructed vessel ahead of Maritime Security Program age restrictions. MSP age limits require that older vessels be replaced in the current program before reaching 25 years of age.

The newbuild GREEN WAVE will replace the GREEN LAKE and vessel crew will join the new ship around April 18 in Japan.

The new vessel will assume the MSP chit from the LAKE. A permanent 1<sup>st</sup> A/E is being sought for the GREEN WAVE. That First Engineer will train on the WAVE's sister ship, the GREEN OCEAN, which is already in service with M.E.B.A. engineers aboard. The 1<sup>st</sup> will join the OCEAN in mid-March when the vessel is on the East Coast and report to the WAVE as permanent 1<sup>st</sup> on that tentative April 18 date.

## **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! M.E.B.A. IS 149 YEARS OLD**

Founded February 23, 1875 on the banks of the Great Lakes, the M.E.B.A. is celebrating its 149th anniversary tomorrow (Friday). The Union's ten founding fathers met in Cleveland, Ohio on that fateful date to form a united front to combat the oppressive and dangerous working conditions of the day. The founders were representatives of three Lakes associations, a river association and an ocean port – and over the course of a few days, they hammered out a cohesive Constitution for a national organization that protected and enhanced their members' interests. This was the beginning of the National Marine Engineers' Association. Eight years later the word "Beneficial" was added to the name.

M.E.B.A.'s 100th Anniversary booklet "Worthy of Our Heritage" called the formation of the union "a bold venture." It noted, "Not only was it the first group of maritime workers to organize nationally, but it was among the earliest crafts of the American wage earners to reach this stage of development. There were few precedents available for the guidance of marine engineers in that period; and in view of the depression conditions of 1874-1875, the seeming odds against its success were great."

Early on, our M.E.B.A. forefathers battled for favorable legislation to certify and license waterborne engineers. They secured U.S. officers – both deck and engine – aboard U.S.-flagships, helped repeal controversial seafarer fees, and raised the standard of living for all mariners. Those early struggles and many others paved the way for the worker protections and benefits we often take for granted today. Let there be rejoicing. Happy 149<sup>th</sup> anniversary to the M.E.B.A.!

## **GREAT LAKES VESSELS GETTING UPGRADES DURING WINTER LAYUPS**

The annual process of maintaining the U.S.-flag fleet of Lakers on the Great Lakes began in mid-January after the navigational locks connecting Lake Superior to the lower lakes closed for repairs. U.S. companies are investing more than \$120 million into their vessels bringing skilled labor to shipyards and repair facilities around the Great Lakes states. The Lake Carriers Association (LCA) announced that the state receiving the largest sum was Wisconsin with \$55 million followed by Ohio with \$39 million, Pennsylvania at \$19 million, and \$7 million in Michigan.

LCA represents 13 companies that operate vessels on the Great Lakes including M.E.B.A.-contracted Interlake Steamship Company,

LCA President Jim Weakley noted that, “the work is not only vital to maintaining the U.S. fleet but also to the communities where it is performed bringing excellent paying, hardworking jobs to everyday Americans.”

Engineers carefully inspect each vessel and execute any needed repairs while also upgrading systems and crew quarters. Major investments have been made to improve habitability onboard the vessels including wireless communications. State-of-the-art electronics will be refreshed including navigational computers and propulsion control systems. Hull plating will be replaced with steel made from iron ore that was shipped by the vessels to steel mills during the season.

Following an agreement secured two years ago with Interlake, our members are continuing to work aboard company vessels as needed under M.E.B.A. contract during the winter layup at various shipyards & docks in and around the Great Lakes. Winter work previously was not part of the Union’s collective bargaining agreement with the company. Such maintenance and repair work had previously been conducted by a mixture of direct employees, contractors, and shipyard/ship repair companies of skilled workers, typically non-union.

Thanks to milder winter temperatures across the Great Lakes region the work will be a little less daunting this year. LCA noted that the U.S.-flag shipping companies have the most talented mariners in the world and Great Lakes shipyards and repair facilities have the absolute best skilled workers to tackle any task to keep the vessels sailing another year.

### **NEW MMC FORMAT**

The U.S. Coast Guard announced it will begin issuing Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMCs) using a new format next week (Friday, March 1). This new mariner credential will replace the legacy passport-style red book and associated endorsement labels.

They note that the complexity and degraded reliability of the custom printers used to print the MMC books prompted the change to the credential printing process. The new mariner credential is formatted on 8.5” x 11” waterproof and tear-resistant synthetic paper. It contains numerous security features including micro-printing, foiling, and intricate patterns. It can be printed on readily available commercial desktop laser jet printers and will vastly improve print services and availability. To learn more about the new MMC, please visit the National Maritime Center (NMC) website ([https://www.dco.uscg.mil/national\\_maritime\\_center/](https://www.dco.uscg.mil/national_maritime_center/))

The new MMC document will be issued for all approved applications, to include credential endorsements, beginning March 1, 2024. You will no longer receive separate endorsement labels (i.e., stickers), but rather a new MMC document with the endorsements incorporated. The new credential will be issued on a day-forward basis, and all legacy credentials will remain valid until the indicated expiration date.

To validate a new MMC, use the Coast Guard’s credential verification tool at MMLD Credential Verification ([uscg.mil](https://uscg.mil)). For a document search, select “MMC” as the document type and enter the document number. On the new MMC, the document number can be found on the red cover section beneath the corresponding barcode and will have the prefix “Z”.

If you have any questions, contact the NMC Customer Service Center by e-mailing [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil) or calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

### **CMES INCLUDED IN MARAD CENTER OF EXCELLENCE DESIGNATIONS**

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School was included as one of the “Centers of Excellence (CoE) for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education” designated by the Maritime Administration.

The MarAd designations recognize the “demonstrably successful” post-secondary maritime training programs that prepare students for careers in the maritime industry.

“Our country depends on a highly-skilled mariner workforce to strengthen both our economy and our national security,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. “The 32 Centers of Excellence we're designating today will promote training opportunities outside of traditional four-year degree programs and will bring more Americans into these great maritime careers.”

“Our Centers of Excellence designations recognize the high standards of maritime education and training provided by these organizations,” said Maritime Administrator Ann Phillips. “These institutions play a critical role in providing domestic mariners with the expertise needed to best serve the maritime industry.”

For additional information and a full list of designees, please visit the Center of Excellence homepage by clicking [here](#).

### **AMC PHOTO CONTEST – LAST CHANCE**

It's your last chance to get your entries in for the American Maritime Congress Photo Contest which ends on Thursday, February 29 (one week from now). Photos must have been taken after January 1 of last year. You can win up to \$1,000 so take advantage! Contestants must be the sole creator and copyright owner of the submitted photo. Entrants agree that submitted photos can be used by AMC for advertising purposes, with proper attribution. Multiple submissions (up to five photos) are allowed. Photos must be in their original state, without alterations. Images should be no smaller than 1MB and no larger than 5MB. Winners will be contacted via the provided email address and must respond within three business days. Submissions will not be accepted after the February 29, 2024 deadline. Visit <https://americanmaritime.org/> for full rules and additional details.

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

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

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

Wednesday, March 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

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

Friday, March 8 – **Honolulu@1100**

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