

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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MLL SINGLES OUT M.E.B.A. CHIEF FOR SAFETY AWARD

Maersk Line, Ltd. has honored M.E.B.A.'s Keith Turcotte, Chief Engineer onboard the MAERSK DURBAN, as its 2020 Safety Mariner of the Year. The award is bestowed upon a mariner in the fleet that distinguishes themselves by exceeding the already high-level of safety practices employed by MLL officers and crew. The honor is even more impressive given the additional challenges thrust upon mariners during the pandemic, especially those affecting crews aboard shuttle service vessels. Besides going above-and-beyond to establish a safe working environment, Chief Turcotte was lauded as a consummate professional and credited as a stabilizing force onboard ship during the darkest days of the pandemic. M.E.B.A. Atlantic Coast Vice President Jason Callahan enthusiastically endorsed the selection and pointed out Chief Turcotte's expertise and professionalism. He noted that Keith demonstrated an outstanding ability to keep morale up even when ship voyages and mariner job assignments were prolonged due to COVID-19.

Chief Turcotte has been part of the M.E.B.A. since 2002 following his graduation from Maine Maritime Academy. He has spent his last six years with MLL.

Maersk Line, Ltd. Labor Relations Vice President Ed Hanley said Chief Turcotte is "very well deserving" of the award and said "his great contributions to safety, engineering and leadership onboard is what really counts." Congratulations Keith!

M.E.B.A. TRUSTEES UPDATE PROTOCOL AT M.E.B.A. CLINICS

Trustees meeting last week implemented protocol changes at the M.E.B.A. clinics to better accommodate member visits while encompassing safety precautions in deference to the ongoing pandemic.

Medical Plan participants who are considering clinic visits should make sure they keep up with the latest news and information from the M.E.B.A. Benefit Plans by visiting their website at www.mebaplans.org The latest updates are posted towards the top of the page.

NAUTILUS FEDERATION CONTINUES TO PUSH FOR GLOBAL SEAFARER VACCINATION PROGRAM

The 22 trade unions that are part of the Nautilus Federation are making fresh efforts to appeal to governments and global organizations to coordinate a worldwide vaccination program for seafarers

and inland mariners. M.E.B.A. is an affiliate of the Nautilus Federation that represents international mariners and shipping professionals with the objective of spotlighting officer issues such as criminalization, fatigue, and the impact of automation. The Federation also includes the MM&P as well as M.E.B.A.'s Panamanian affiliate Unión de Ingenieros Marinos (UIM), among the 22 unions.

The Federation unions say the crew change crisis can be mitigated by an international response to vaccination of maritime and shipping professionals. It has been well documented that seafarers have struggled to receive medical attention ashore due to COVID-19 protocols in various countries, and an international response will also assist in resolving such failures. These essential workers have kept global supply chains moving throughout the pandemic, they noted, and they said that mariners need an international solution to make sure they can have access to the vaccine while they are at sea. The federation believes that a series of actions they want implemented, described in the statement, would help ensure a safe return to normal shipping operations. You can read more about it at www.nautilusfederation.org

MARINERS CAN PARTICIPATE IN COVID-19 WEBINAR ON WEDNESDAY

Mariners are invited to take part in a Federal interagency coordinating committee webinar on Wednesday focusing on COVID-19 vaccine distribution to the marine transportation system workforce. The event will take place on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, from 2:00-3:30 PM EST, and is being conducted by the Committee on the Marine Transportation System (CMTS) COVID-19 Working Group. Coast Guard and Maritime Administration officials, among others, will speak at the webinar and a CDC Vaccine Task Force representative will give a presentation.

Topics will include: How currently approved vaccines work; Getting vaccinated – process, safety, side effects; Protection from vaccine vs. illness; Vaccine distribution and administration; Vaccine prioritization for merchant mariners and port workers; and CDC recommendations for the MTS Workforce.

To Access the Webinar: Join at: <https://usdotfedramp.webex.com/meet/nuns.jain> Telcon: 404-443-2170; Access Code: 60061206# Log-in to the link 30 minutes in advance to download any plug-ins and test your system's compatibility with Webex. If you cannot access the computer audio, please call into the conference line. For more information, please contact WG19@cmts.gov

IMO STRESSING ROLE OF MARINERS AS PART OF WORLD MARITIME THEME

The International Maritime Organization is highlighting the central role of seafarers to the future of global shipping as part of its World Maritime Theme for 2021.

IMO called this a year of action for seafarers, who are facing unprecedented hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, despite their vital role as key workers for global supply chains. They said the World Maritime Theme for 2021, "Seafarers: at the core of shipping's future" seeks to increase the visibility of seafarers by drawing attention to the invaluable role they play now and will continue to play in the future.

Throughout the year, the World Maritime Theme will also put the spotlight on other issues related to the human element of shipping, including the safety and security of life on board ships, seafarers' well-being, and the importance of ensuring an appropriately trained and qualified workforce, ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of digitalization and automation.

GREAT LAKES FLEET INVESTS IN THE FUTURE

This year alone, U.S. Great Lakes shipping companies, including M.E.B.A.-contracted Interlake Steamship Company, will invest nearly \$87 million in their vessels at shipyards and facilities across the Great Lakes. Such work includes replacing steel plating, engine overhauls, navigation equipment updates, and conveyor belt repairs and replacements.

The U.S. Great Lakes fleet of ships are unique in their ability to unload massive amounts of bulk cargo without shoreside assistance. The innovative self-unloading technology allows a 1,000-foot ship to unload 70,000 tons of cargo in eight hours. “A ship can arrive in the middle of the night with cargo at any number of Great Lakes port facilities, unload before sunrise, and shoreside workers awake to a huge stockpile of raw material critical to their operations positioned perfectly on the dock,” said Jim Weakley, President of the Lake Carriers’ Association which represents 13 companies that operate vessels on the Lakes.

Ships that are 40 and 50 years old, or even older, continue to sail the Great Lakes efficiently because of annual maintenance work performed by Great Lakes shipyards paid for by the U.S.-owned, U.S.-operated and U.S.-crewed vessel operators. The freshwater of the Great Lakes allows vessels to sail for decades while ocean carriers must completely replace their vessels frequently due to the corrosive nature of saltwater and a system built around disposal and replacement over maintenance, unlike the Great Lakes fleet.

MAKE SURE YOUR DOCUMENTS ARE IN ORDER FOR JOB CALL

It is the responsibility of members and applicants to have all their necessary documentation in-hand ahead of time for job call.

Those who have recently upgraded their license should make sure their STCW reflects the upgrade. Your license, passport and other important documents should be valid for at least six months from the time you begin working aboard ship. Your drug-free certificates have to be valid at least until the day you join your ship.

If flying with your documents on the way to a hall, double-check that you haven’t left any essential documents at home and make sure to keep your docs with you in your carry-on luggage. The primary documents you’ll need include your Merchant Mariner Credential with current STCW, VSO or VPDSO endorsement, TWIC, Passport, USCG Medical Certificate, Annual M.E.B.A. physical card, Drug-free Certificate, Group Card and Dues Receipt. Permanent or relief employees should get their company clearance to the hall ahead of time. Work with the Military Sealift Command will require security clearances.

As you should know, no one can be dispatched to a job while on vacation or while receiving a paid vacation benefit without a waiver. The Union requires a return to work date when clearing for a vessel so make sure you have your vacation pay and vacation carry over statements, shipping discharge and port relief pay voucher for verification of Return to Work. It should also be noted that failure to obtain prior Union permission to return to work early, before the return to work date as listed on your carry-over or vacation statement, will subject you to a penalty.

Remember, a member or applicant cannot be dispatched for a job requiring STCW credentials if the Coast Guard Medical Certificate is due to expire prior to the completion of the job called. Members

are encouraged to have their paperwork for the USCG Medical Certificate completed and to submit it for renewal at every annual physical in order to avoid an issue at job call. Certain jobs require proof of benzene or shot records, MSC Physical and MSC courses, GMDSS, High Voltage/Marine Propulsion, Crowd Control, Welding, or other courses to satisfy company requirements.

Mariners are reminded to keep their vaccination records with them when sailing – especially when shipping onboard MSC-contracted vessels. Keep your documents with you at all times when travelling and NEVER leave them in your car. If unsure what is required, it is a good idea to check with an M.E.B.A. clinic. If you have questions about your documents, direct them to your local hall.

HOUSTON HALL BACK IN BUSINESS; NOTE ON UPCOMING HOLIDAY

The Houston Union hall is back in full operation after a chaotic week where the burdens of a winter storm on the State's power grid created chaos. The hall was without power and water for several days as Texans endured an extremely challenging week. At one point, power was restored to the hall and business resumed only to grind to a halt when the grid went down for another day.

In other news, the Houston Union hall will be closed for a good reason next week – Texas Independence Day which will be observed on Tuesday, March 2nd. Texas declared its independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836 as the Mexican army laid siege to the Alamo, which fell four days later. It wasn't until April of that year when Sam Houston's 910-man army defeated Mexican General Santa Anna in a surprise attack at the San Jacinto River that Texans turned the tide. Soon after, Sam Houston was sworn in as President of the Republic of Texas. Various skirmishes with the Mexicans continued until a truce was finally signed in June 1843. Texas was actually an independent nation for several years until December of 1845 when President James Polk signed an annexation act allowing Texas to join the union.

ONLINE FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (*All times are local*)

(Registration Period Begins week of 3/1)

Monday, March 8 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, March 9 – CMES@1430 (*CMES Meeting will be conducted in-person*);
Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, March 10 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, March 11 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, March 12 – Honolulu@1100

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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. Visit us on Facebook. 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.