

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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NYC FERRY UNIT VOTING ON M.E.B.A. REPRESENTATION IS SET FOR EXPANSION

NYC Ferry, a 23-vessel commuter ferry system serving six New York City routes, is set for expansion in 2020, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced. The fleet currently connects locations in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens.

Approximately 40 NYC Ferry fleet Captains will be voting this month on whether they wish to be represented by the M.E.B.A. for collective bargaining purposes.

Mayor de Blasio said the fleet will be expanded to begin serving all five boroughs in 2020. "It's official," he announced. "The NYC Ferry will now serve all five boroughs! We're delivering new routes to Staten Island, Coney Island, and new stops in the Bronx and Brooklyn. As New Yorkers take to the water to get around our city more than ever before, we will look forward to improving the NYC Ferry system to make it better than ever."

SOO LOCKS CLOSED FOR THE SEASON FOR GREAT LAKES WINTER LAY-UP

Signaling the official start of Great Lakes shipping's winter lay-up, the Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. is now closed to navigation until March 25. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced it will use the time to perform critical maintenance on the lock structures. With the annual closure, vessel traffic ceases through the Soo Locks for the season. While closed to navigation, both the MacArthur and Poe locks are dewatered and crews are busy with a variety of maintenance projects in preparation of the March reopening.

More than 4,500 vessels carrying up to 80 million tons of cargo maneuver through the locks annually. Iron ore, coal, wheat and limestone are among the most frequently carried commodities. Opened in 1969, the Poe Lock is 1,200 feet long. The MacArthur Lock was opened in 1943 and is 800 feet long.

SENATORS SEEK TO PROTECT SOO LOCKS FROM FUNDING DIVERSION

Following news reports that President Trump is asking the Army Corps of Engineers to identify funds that could be used for construction of a border wall, two U.S. Senators from Michigan, Debbie

Stabenow and Gary Peters, are looking for assurances that funds won't be diverted away from necessary Soo Lock and other infrastructure priorities.

Great Lakes shipping companies recently celebrated the announcement that a second Poe-sized lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan is planned following the Army Corps' allocation of \$32 million for design and construction of the project which could take up to a decade. Michigan Governor Rick Snyder has committed another \$52 million which would be funded through annual appropriations.

Sens. Stabenow and Peters penned a letter to the Army Corps requesting an update. They noted, "It is critical that no funds be diverted from projects essential to Great Lakes navigation and public safety."

SHIPPING RULE AIDING FIRST-TIME APPLICANTS PASSED BY MEMBERSHIP FOLLOWING ONLINE REFERENDUM

A proposed amendment to the M.E.B.A. Shipping Rules to better assist first-time applicants has passed following a membership-wide referendum that was conducted online in the month of December.

The referendum involved a vote on whether to permit new Group III applicants to remain on the Port Relief List for one year from the date of their first registration. It was designed to extend the window for new applicants to seek viable shipping opportunities as they begin their seafaring careers.

90% of those voting favored the Rule change. A three-person rank and file Tallying Committee examined the referendum, ensured the integrity of the vote, and issued a report that will be reviewed by membership at the regular February meetings. The Committee consisted of Christian Yuhas (Oakland) who served as Chairman, Brian Evjen (Houston) and Erik Barton (NY/NJ).

The M.E.B.A. Shipping Rules have been updated and posted to the M.E.B.A. website located at www.mebaunion.org. (See *Rule 14(b)*).

WWII MARINER CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL BILLS RE-INTRODUCED

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA) have re-introduced companion bills in their respective chambers, collectively honoring World War II merchant mariners with the Congressional Gold Medal.

The bills, S. 133 and H.R. 550 would authorize a gold medal of appropriate design to be awarded to U.S. WWII merchant mariners on behalf of Congress. The medal would be placed in the American Merchant Marine Museum and duplicates would then be struck and made available to the public. Sen. Murkowski's bill was co-sponsored by Sens. Dan Sullivan (R-AK), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Angus King (I-ME) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI).

Last week, we reported that Rep. Al Green (D-TX) re-introduced his bill (H.R. 154) to provide surviving WWII merchant mariners with a one-time \$25,000 benefit.

Senator Murkowski said, "WWII was one of the greatest conflicts the world has ever seen. Many Americans proved their loyalty and bravery during this harrowing time, including our Merchant Mariners. Their brave service, no doubt, aided America in her ability to prevail. "I'm proud that my legislation recognizes and honors the brave Merchant Mariners, the unsung heroes of WWII, who

risked their lives to keep the Allied troops armed, fed, and fortified in the defense of America's freedom."

"The Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act" was introduced simultaneously in the House by Rep. Garamendi and was co-sponsored by Reps. Don Young (R-AK) and Susan Brooks (R-IN).

Rep. Garamendi noted, "Last year, I got the chance to meet with three World War II Merchant Mariners: Charles Mills of Texas, age 97; Eugene Barner from Kansas, age 92; and Robert Weagant from Illinois, age 92. These mariners put their lives on the line for this country, braving German and Japanese submarines in their Liberty Ships as they delivered critical supplies to our service members in the European and Pacific theaters. Unfortunately, their sacrifice is commonly overlooked. A Congressional Gold Medal would give them the recognition they deserve, and that's why I've introduced this bill: to give these veterans and their families the honor and respect they are owed."

M.E.B.A. Chief Engineer Christian Yuhas, who serves as Vice President of the American Merchant Marine Veterans, said "The time has come for our nation to provide a well-deserved thank you and honor the remaining Merchant Marine Veterans of WWII with a Congressional Gold Medal. This group of unsung heroes nobly served our country by operating the ships that transported critical supplies to front lines of the war, and in doing so suffered a casualty rate higher than any other branch of the military. In fact, one out of every 26 casualties during WWII was a volunteer merchant mariner. America would not be the great nation it is today without their valiant service of yesterday. I urge Congress to support this important bill and recognize this dwindling group of Merchant Marine Veterans from WWII that have served our nation so admirably."

CMES ADDS PORT ENGINEER/MARINE MAINTENANCE COURSE

The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School added a new Port Engineer/Marine Maintenance course to its list of offerings for the year and scheduled three installments of the three-week course this year. The course has an intended audience of those individuals at the technical-management level with responsibilities for marine maintenance and/or port engineering duties. It is designed to prepare those working as port engineers, or those looking to pursue a port engineer position. The initial course offerings will take place from April 1–19; August 5–23; and November 4–22.

It offers the following instructional topics: Engineering; Contracting and Shipyard Organizations; Preparing for a Maintenance period; Engineering Administration for an Availability Period; Fundamentals of Project Management; Weld Process/Procedures and Inspection; Dry Docking; Propulsion System Alignment; Corrosion, Surface Prep, Coatings, and Inspection; Contract Closeout; and Shipyard Safety.

Applications may be sent via the CMES website, fax (410) 822-7220, or email to applications@mebaschool.org

RECORD-BREAKING OCEAN TEMPERATURES

Recently compiled ocean heat content observations indicate that 2018 was the hottest year ever recorded for oceans globally. *Advances in Atmospheric Sciences*, was released this week from the Institute of Atmospheric Physics (IAP) at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Researchers also highlight that increases in ocean water heat, which they prognosticate will continue to rise, are causes for additional concern to both the scientific community and the public at large. Higher temperatures result in an increase of sea level that would lead to salt water contaminating fresh water wells which impacts the quality of drinking water and a compromised coastal infrastructure. Increases in ocean heat also have severe consequences for the global weather system since they result in much more intense storms and heavy rains. Other consequences include bleaching and death of corals, melting sea ice, increase of marine heat waves and declining ocean oxygen, among other effects. Ocean heating has also been connected to increased drought intensity, heatwaves as well as risk to wildlife.

YOU HAVE UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH TO APPLY FOR UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIPS

M.E.B.A. families have until January 31, 2019 to apply for college education assistance money through Union Plus. M.E.B.A. members, retirees and their families - as well as members of affiliated M.E.B.A. unions - are eligible courtesy of the Union's enrollment in dozens of moneysaving U.P. programs ranging from life insurance to financing children's educations. Visit <http://unionplus.deals/scholar19>

Families of M.E.B.A. members or affiliated members have been scholarship money recipients several times in the last few years. Union Plus Scholarship are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school or a recognized technical or trade school. Recipients are selected based on academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor.

Applications can be submitted up until Thursday, January 31, 2019, at noon (EST). Those arriving after the deadline will not be considered. The award date is May 31, 2019. During the first week of June 2019, award recipients will be notified by postal mail, and all applicants will be sent email notification. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended. The required essays can account for up to half your total score. Scholarship applicants are judged by a committee of impartial post-secondary educators. Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2019. Students may re-apply each year. Get the official application and all the details including eligibility criteria by visiting www.unionplus.org/benefits/money/union-plus-scholarships. Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$4.3 million to students of union families. Over 2,900 union families have benefited from our commitment to higher education.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monday, February 4 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**
Tuesday, February 5 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**
Wednesday, February 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**
Thursday, February 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**
Friday, February 8 – **Honolulu@1100.**

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