



MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

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"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
The Official Union Newsletter
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ALLIANCE ST. LOUIS CREW UNHARMED AFTER BLAZE

All crew are safe and uninjured aboard the M/V ALLIANCE ST. LOUIS after engineers extinguished a fire in the ship's engine room on Monday. The blaze occurred in the wee hours of the morning but a rapid and effective response by the crew contained the fire that occurred about 150 miles south of Southwest Pass, Louisiana on its way to Jacksonville, FL.

The fire knocked out main power and the vessel was adrift before a tug finally reached the RO/RO on Tuesday and began assisting the vessel on its return to Port Arthur, TX. The Coast Guard noted that the incident resulted in no pollution.

DECK & ENGINE JOBS ABOARD NEW LIBERTY MSP VESSEL

M.E.B.A. deck and engine officers are flying out to Bahrain to crew up the LIBERTY PASSION, a newbuild Roll-On/Roll-Off vessel that Liberty Maritime Corp. is bringing into the U.S.-flag fleet. Liberty was recently awarded one of the two open Maritime Security Program chits – American Roll-on Roll-off Carrier (ARC) was awarded the other. The MSP slots had previously been assigned to two ISH vessels, but the company's bankruptcy prompted the Maritime Administration to withdraw them and bid out the vacant chits.

The PASSION will operate with the benefit of MSP and M.E.B.A. officers will serve under the same contract terms of our other Liberty MSP vessels – the LIBERTY PROMISE and LIBERTY PRIDE.

ISH BANKRUPTCY, RESTRUCTURING & SEACOR RATIFICATION VOTE

A tentative agreement with SEACOR was ratified by the M.E.B.A. membership on Friday, January 13th.

The effective date of the contract is yet to be determined as the ISH/SEACOR restructuring plan has not yet been finalized and approved by the court. The current contract remains in place until the bankruptcy process is completed.

We will continue to provide updates as appropriate. We appreciate the membership's continued professionalism and support throughout this process.

INAUGURATION SHUTS DOWN DC OFFICE

Our D.C. Headquarters is officially closed although a skeleton crew will be on hand for the Presidential Inauguration tomorrow, which is a D.C. metro area federal holiday. Almost a million people, including protesters, are expected to descend on the city – and security perimeters along with the sheer mass of humanity will jeopardize smooth travel. HQ will be back at full strength on Monday.

OAKLAND PATROLMAN READY TO GO TO WORK

M.E.B.A.'s District Executive Committee has appointed Max Alper as the new Oakland Patrolman. A 2010 Kings Point graduate, Max has sailed with the M.E.B.A. on the Great Lakes with Interlake Steamship Co. as well as various shipping jobs off the board from our hall in New Jersey. He was training with Union officials in Easton, MD today and will arrive in Oakland tomorrow ready to go to work. Good luck Max!

NEW REP./DISPATCHER IN NOLA

Recent retiree Daniel Gifford has been appointed by the M.E.B.A.'s District Executive Committee to be the new Representative/Dispatcher at our hall in New Orleans. A NOLA native, Dan has 45 years of sea experience working his way up from the galley all the way to Chief Engineer. He suited up with the M.E.B.A. in 1989 and is excited to give back to the Union from the administrative side. He'll be in the office bright and early on Monday morning. Congrats Dan!

NEW LOOK M.E.B.A. WEBSITE

The M.E.B.A. website has undergone a facelift and has a clean look that should prove easy to navigate. We'll work out the kinks and content continues to be added so the site will be more fully fleshed out in the coming days and weeks. As a reminder, important documents including By-Laws, application packets and the Union Update Form among other documents can be obtained from the site as well as news and Union information along with back issues of the *Marine Officer*. The electronic chat board (BBS) did not make the move to the new website. The forum had experienced low traffic, few postings and was a liability issue. It was not cost-effective.

Along with the faster, functional and more secure new website, the Union will no longer have to rely on a third party webmaster and will subsequently effect additional cost savings. Check it out!

JAENICHEN LANDS AT HMS GLOBAL MARITIME

Paul "Chip" Jaenichen, Maritime Administrator for the last 2 ½ years whose last day in office was last Friday, begins his new job with HMS Global Maritime. HMS owns and operates the American Queen Steamboat Company along with 85 other vessels. He will serve as the company's Chief Operating Officer (COO).

UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIPS

You only have until the end of the month to apply for college education assistance money through Union Plus. Members, Retirees and their families can submit their applications for scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the fall of 2017. Applications, including essays and a reference letter, must be submitted by Tuesday, January 31 at 12 noon EST. Since 1992, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded over \$4 million to students of union families. M.E.B.A.'s connection with Union Plus

nets our members a range of benefits and discounts. Union Plus programs, which are available to M.E.B.A. members, retirees and our affiliates, provide a vast range of money-saving benefits and services. The Union is enrolled in dozens of moneysaving U.P. programs ranging from life insurance to financing children's educations. Our members have been scholarship recipients quite a few times since the program began. 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. Award recipients will be determined by May 31, 2017. They will be notified by mail by June 2017. Visit UnionPlus.org/Scholarship to get all the scholarship application details including eligibility criteria and to secure the official application.

DOJ REVELS OVER BANNER YEAR FOR VESSEL POLLUTION PROSECUTIONS

The Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division set records in 2016 for prosecuting shipping companies over vessel discharges, a newly released "Accomplishments Report" details.

At the end of fiscal year 2016, criminal penalties imposed totaled more than \$363 million in fines and more than 32 years of confinement. The DOJ division also obtained the largest-ever criminal penalty involving deliberate vessel pollution when it concluded the prosecution of Princess Cruise Lines Ltd. The company pleaded guilty to seven felony charges and will pay a \$40 million penalty.

Overall, the Division counted 2016 as its most successful year in over a century noting enforcement successes such as the record-breaking settlement with BP over the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in which the U.S. and five Gulf Coast states secured payments in excess of \$20 billion to resolve their claims against BP. They also pointed to the resolution of Clean Air Act violations against Volkswagen's use of devices designed to defeat vehicle emissions tests on approximately 580,000 vehicles.

In addition to the BP and Volkswagen litigation, the Division successfully litigated over 790 cases and handled nearly 7,000 cases, matters, and appeals in 2016. Last year the Division achieved over \$14 billion in civil and criminal fines, penalties, and costs recovered.

PIRACY PLUMMETED IN 2016 BUT KIDNAPPINGS ROSE

More crew were kidnapped at sea in 2016 than in any of the previous 10 years, despite global piracy reaching its lowest levels since 1998, the ICC International Maritime Bureau's (IMB) annual piracy report has revealed. In its 2016 report, IMB recorded 191 incidents of piracy and armed robbery on the world's seas.

Worldwide in 2016, 150 vessels were boarded, 12 vessels were fired upon, seven were hijacked, and 22 attacks were thwarted. The number of hostages fell to 151. Maritime kidnappings, however, showed a threefold increase on 2015. Pirates kidnapped 62 people for ransom in 15 separate incidents in 2016. Just over half were captured off West Africa, while 28 were kidnapped from tugs, barges, fishing boats, and more recently merchant ships around Malaysia and Indonesia.

The kidnapping of crew from oceangoing merchant vessels in the Sulu Sea and their transfer to the Southern Philippines represents a notable escalation in attacks. The Gulf of Guinea remained a kidnap hotspot in 2016, with 34 crew taken in nine separate incidents. There was a noticeable

increase in attacks reported off Nigeria: 36 incidents in 2016, up from 14 in 2015. These included nine of the 12 vessels fired upon worldwide in 2016. Some were almost 100 nautical miles from the coastline.

Meanwhile, Indonesian piracy incidents fell from 108 in 2015 to 49 in 2016. Although the overwhelming majority were low-level thefts, vessels were boarded in all but three of the incidents. IMB recorded only two incidents off Somalia but Peru reported 11 incidents – 10 of them at the country's main port of Callao. The number of incidents in Vung Tau, Vietnam dropped from 15 in 2015 to seven in 2016. Bangladesh also witnessed a welcome decrease, down from 11 in 2015 to three in 2016.

SIGN UP FOR M.E.B.A. VACATION PLAN DIRECT DEPOSIT

Designed for convenience, M.E.B.A. members can help themselves by taking advantage of the Vacation Plan Direct Deposit that will help save them time and ease Plans processing costs. Authorization forms are available from the Plans Office, Plans Outport Offices and at the Plans' website – www.mebaplans.org (Forms, Vacation). Complete details are available on the Plans' site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or vacation@mebaplans.org for more info.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, February 6 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, February 7 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, February 8 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, February 9 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, February 10 – Honolulu@1100.

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