

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

The Official Union Newsletter



Number 1 – January 4, 2018

In this issue//Matson News// DOD IG to probe MSC PrePo Ship Readiness//Two New Senators Sworn in//PAF Educates Lawmakers on our Issues; You Can Contribute Through Vacation//Rep. Shuster to Focus on Infrastructure//Russian Jones Act to Come into Force//

BIG YEAR FOR MATSON, KAMOKUIKI READIES FOR SERVICE

Matson Navigation is reinvigorating its service for the long haul and 2018 is another big year. The company has already selected Permanents for the C/V KAMOKUIKI, a vessel they recently brought into their fleet for a new direct U.S.-flag service between Honolulu and the Marshall Islands. They'll be calling jobs for the ship in the coming weeks with sea trials penciled in for the end of the month.

The KAMOKUIKI is a 8,740 DWT, 8,448 HP, 707-TEU vessel built in 2000. It was converted into a geared container ship with two 45-ton cranes. As part of a new biweekly service, it will call at three ports in the Marshall Islands - Kwajalein, Ebeye and Majuro.

M.E.B.A. and the company agreed upon a Memorandum of Understanding for the economic terms and conditions of employment onboard this newest addition to the Matson Fleet. The MOU is at each of the M.E.B.A. Union halls and is available for review by members and applicants.

Matson has two Aloha Class ships under construction at Philly Shipyard in Philadelphia, PA with deliveries scheduled for the third quarter of 2018 and first quarter of 2019, respectively. The 850-foot long, 3,600 TEU vessels will be Matson's largest ships and the largest containerships ever built in the U.S. They will also be faster than any of Matson's current vessels, designed to operate at speeds in excess of 23 knots, helping to ensure timely delivery of goods in Hawaii.

Matson has also ordered two Kanaloa Class vessels from General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego with deliveries scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2019 and second quarter of 2020 respectively. These ships will be combination container and roll-on/roll-off (Con-Ro) vessels built on a 3,500 TEU vessel platform 870 feet long and 114 feet wide, with enclosed garage space for up to 800 vehicles.

M.E.B.A. will be negotiating with Matson for a new contract as the current agreement comes to a close this summer. In the coming months, M.E.B.A. Oakland will be accepting input from members that will aid approaching talks.

The company recently replaced one of its three barges dedicated to serving Hawaii's neighbor island ports with a newer, larger barge to help improve service levels. The container barge *Columbia*, to be renamed *Mauna Loa* in honor of the barge it replaces, is now Matson's largest barge. At 360 feet long, with a beam (width) of 100 feet and cargo carrying capacity of 12,600 tons or 500 TEU, it is 12 feet

longer and 40 feet wider than the barge it replaces, with the capacity to carry 180 more TEU or nearly 8,000 tons more cargo.

Matson's barge upgrade comes at a time of heavy investment in its Hawaii service. The company recently announced the purchase of three new gantry cranes and the upgrade of three existing cranes as part of a \$60 million project to expand and improve its Sand Island terminal in Honolulu Harbor in preparation for the arrival of the first of the four new containerships.

"These investments in our Hawaii infrastructure underscore Matson's long-standing commitment to serving our communities with the most reliable, efficient and environmentally friendly operations in the islands for the long-term," said Matt Cox, Matson Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.

DOD IG TO PROBE MSC PREPO SHIP READINESS

The Defense Department's Office of the Inspector General announced that it will take a closer look into issues that have hampered the readiness of the Military Sealift Command surge sealift and combat logistics fleets.

The Government Accountability Office issued a report last year stating that, over the last few years, there have been more mission-limiting equipment casualties—incidents of degraded or out-of-service equipment and maintenance periods are running longer than planned. GAO said this indicates declining materiel readiness across the fleets. These fleets include the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) and Military Sealift Command-contracted vessels as well as the MSC Civilian Mariner-crewed vessels that support Navy ships around the globe.

The DOD IG began a subject audit last month "to determine whether the Military Sealift Command ensured that prepositioning ships received required maintenance."

TWO NEW SENATORS SWORN IN THIS WEEK

The U.S. Senate welcomed two new Senators yesterday as Tina Smith (D-Minn.) and Doug Jones (D-AL) joined the upper chamber. The addition of Jones, who replaces a Republican Senator, narrows the Senate's GOP advantage to 51-49.

59-year old Tina Smith was appointed to replace Sen. Al Franken who resigned after being dogged by claims of past sexual misconduct. Minnesota will conduct a special election on November 6, 2018 to elect a Senator to fill the remainder of Franken's term which expires on January 3, 2021. Sen. Smith had been serving as Minnesota's Lieutenant Governor before her appointment to the Senate.

The 63-year old Jones claims the seat vacated by Jeff Sessions who left to take the U.S. Attorney General post. Luther Strange filled the position in the interim as an appointee until voters could elect a candidate to finish up the balance of Sessions' term in office (until January 2021). Sen. Jones is a lawyer who briefly worked on the U.S. Senate's Judiciary Committee as a young man, before successfully heading up a series of high-profile cases as the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Alabama.

The new Senators have not yet received their Committee assignments. M.E.B.A. will be looking to reach out to both new Senators and schedule meetings to discuss the importance of American mariners and the U.S. maritime industry.

M.E.B.A. PAF EDUCATES LAWMAKERS; CONTRIBUTE THROUGH VACATION

Members, applicants and retirees can help ensure the integrity of important maritime statutes by supporting the M.E.B.A.'s Political Action Fund. The PAF is a key tool to educate lawmakers about the importance of U.S. shipping. It fortifies the M.E.B.A.'s political relationships in Congress, the White House and in State Capitols. The Fund helps our Union succeed in Washington and is crucial in helping to uphold the maritime policies and programs that are frequently under attack by uneducated lawmakers and interest groups. See your local Union hall for more details or make a contribution online via the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org) (select "M.E.B.A. Payment Portal").

M.E.B.A. Benefit Plans has a new option for participants to contribute to the PAF from vacation checks. You can choose any amount as a one-time contribution to be deducted from your vacation check. This can be in addition to your monthly contribution, or alone as a one-time deduction. There is a space to fill in the amount on the front of the Application for Vacation Pay. A PAF receipt will mailed to you with your vacation check. Two new vacation applications have been posted on the M.E.B.A. Benefit Plans' website (www.mebaplans.org) - the first for Cleveland/Interlake. The other is the general Application for Vacation Pay.

If you have any questions, please contact the Vacation Plan in Baltimore or one of the Representatives in the Outport offices.

SHUSTER TO CONCENTRATE ON INFRASTRUCTURE IN FINAL YEAR; AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL PRIVATIZATION PROSPECTS ARE MURKY

Congressman Bill Shuster (R-PA), Chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, will spend his final year in office dedicated to forwarding a massive new infrastructure package to rebuild America. Earlier this week he announced he wouldn't be seeking a 10th term in office as the Representative of Pennsylvania's 9th District, an office he has held since 2001 when he succeeded his father, Bud Shuster. His retirement from Congress was not wholly unexpected as his Chairmanship of the Committee was term-limited.

On a positive note, his announcement that his remaining year will be focused on infrastructure possibly signals his acknowledgment that he is unlikely to prevail on his initiative to privatize the nation's air traffic control system while removing the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) from its oversight role. Over 35,000 government employees would be directly affected by privatization. The Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS) – an M.E.B.A. affiliate - is vehemently opposed to privatization. PASS, led by President Mike Perrone, represents 11,000 FAA and Defense Department workers throughout the air traffic control system.

Rep. Shuster admitted he has been disappointed that privatization efforts face an uphill battle, but he didn't rule out that such provisions could be pushed in the future infrastructure bill. "Who knows?" he said. "We'll wait and see what happens."

TAKE FIVE MINUTES TO SUPPORT THE JONES ACT

Tens of thousands of letters have been sent to Members of Congress to help counteract the wave of anti-Jones Act B.S. that flooded social media following Hurricane Maria and its devastation of Puerto Rico. We need to send more letters! Don't let the Average Joe (or Jane) be influenced by the lies. Take five minutes and tell your Congressional delegation how critical the Jones Act is for U.S.-flag shipping. Click on this link for a ready-made (modifiable) pro-Jones Act letter –

<https://tinyurl.com/JonesActLetter> Fill in your info and a few clicks later, your entire Congressional representation will take note their constituent is urging them to support the Jones Act. With all the lies and misinformed anti-Jones Act nonsense that has fouled the waters in the wake of Hurricane Maria, five minutes of your time can really make a difference.

RUSSIAN JONES ACT TO COME INTO FORCE

Global Trade Magazine reports that Russia has approved its own version of the Jones Act to come into force on February 1st. The new statute was said to be more limited than the American law in that it only affects energy commodities loaded up along Russia's Arctic Northern Sea route – though that covers almost 4,000 miles of coastline. However in addition, the new Russian law requires the use of Russian-flag vessels with Russian crews carrying those commodities on *international* as well as domestic runs. The report notes that a grandfather clause allows foreign-flag companies with contracts in place to continue operations.

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 & Documents, Vacation Plan Forms). 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, January 8 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;
Tuesday, January 9 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;
Wednesday, January 10 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;
Thursday, January 11 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;
Friday, January 12 – Honolulu@1100.

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven 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 contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org