

# 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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In this issue//12+ Year Tentative Agreement with NCL//White House Re-nominates RAdm. Phillips as Maritime Administrator //Updated Passport Renewal Procedures for Mariners//3-Way Tie for G&W "Swag-Bag"//M.E.B.A. Officers Sailing for the South Pole//TTD Picks Up New Affiliates//USNS COMFORT Readies for Shipyard Stay//Apply for Union Plus Scholarships//Maritime Advisory for Gulf of Guinea//

### **NEW TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH NCL PUT TO RATIFICATION VOTE**

M.E.B.A. negotiators finalized a new 12+ year tentative agreement with Norwegian Cruise Line-America covering our members sailing on the PRIDE OF AMERICA. The vessel is the lone large U.S.-flag passenger vessel and also the only cruise ship operating exclusively between the Hawaiian Islands.

Executive V.P. Claudia Cimini headed up the M.E.B.A. negotiating team along with Oakland Patrolman Max Alper. M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac contributed to the process. Rank and file members Patrick Calder and Ryan Wall assisted the M.E.B.A. team and many members sailing for NCL-America should also be thanked for their input.

The contract had previously been set to expire in 2020 but the effect of COVID on the cruise industry spurred the parties to extend the contract on two separate occasions.

The tentative agreement is being put to a ratification vote by members at the regular January meetings. The new T.A. establishes wage and benefit increases, a number of additional improvements, sets reopener dates and adds a new billet, among other items.

The vessel is currently sidelined because of the ongoing COVID situation but the company is hoping that it can resume its regular schedule in March.

### **WHITE HOUSE RE-NOMINATES RADM. PHILLIPS AS MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR**

The President has re-nominated Rear Adm. Ann Phillips (Ret.) as the next Maritime Administrator, a few days after the nomination expired at the end of the calendar year. Nominees for federal positions not confirmed by the Senate by the end of the year must normally be re-nominated by the White House in the new year. A confirmation vote to consider her nomination stalled along with many others, including a handful of nominees for transportation-related positions.

The White House moved quickly, and re-nominated the same candidates for the positions, including Max Vekich as a Federal Maritime Commissioner.

Because Rear Admiral Phillips has already received a confirmation hearing before the Senate Commerce Committee, an additional scheduled hearing is not expected. Nominees must be put to a full-Senate confirmation vote before they can be confirmed. Right now, there's no indication when a vote will be scheduled. Lucinda Lessley has been serving in the top spot at MarAd in an Acting capacity until a new Administrator is confirmed.

M.E.B.A. expects to meet with Rear Admiral Phillips next week.

### **UPDATED PASSPORT RENEWAL PROCEDURES FOR MARINERS, AS OF 1/10/22**

The State Department has updated its temporary provisions governing passport renewals for mariners. The new procedures go into effect on Monday, January 10, 2022, and are applicable to mariners with passports that either have expired or have fewer than seven months' validity remaining.

The Maritime Administration has been collaborating with the State Department to help expedite passport renewals for mariners, and the agency trumpeted the announcement this week. This is part of their effort to assist mariners who urgently need passports for international voyages as COVID delays continue to hamper normal operations.

The notice has been made available in full on the M.E.B.A. website in the "Documents & Member Notices" section.

### **THREE-WAY TIE FOR G&W "SWAG-BAG" – UNION FACES DILEMMA**

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the M.E.B.A.'s Good & Welfare Fund this year. G&W is a wonderful cause that assists M.E.B.A. families in times of need.

The Union concluded its G&W promotion in which it matched contributions made to the Good & Welfare Fund dollar-for-dollar - up to \$10,000. G&W Chairman Roland "Rex" Rexha is proud to announce that the M.E.B.A. is following through on its promise and is contributing the full \$10,000 to the fund on top of the membership contributions.

Members were given an additional incentive to contribute to the G&W when an M.E.B.A. "Swag Bag" – a bag stuffed to the gills with fabulous M.E.B.A. prizes worth an estimated \$200 – was offered to the top contributor. Incredibly, three extremely generous members contributed identical amounts to the G&W and landed in a three-way tie for the top spot. Had any one of them given one penny more, they would have reigned supreme alone.

The amazing trio are Anthony Aiello, Ken Buck and Carol Curtiss – all who are issued heartfelt thanks. With the unexpected tie, the Union must decide whether the three will split the coveted Swag-Bag or each of the three will enjoy their own bag of goodies. Stay tuned!

All contributions to the G&W are tax deductible as approved by law under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributed funds go directly to supporting M.E.B.A. families in need. Your contributions to the fund are tax deductible so please give liberally in order to help a Union brother or sister.

## **M.E.B.A. OFFICERS SAILING FOR THE SOUTH POLE IN RESUPPLY MISSION**

Following a loadout in Port Hueneme, CA that began a day after Christmas, the Waterman-managed heavylift vessel M/V OCEAN GIANT, with expert M.E.B.A. engineers aboard, headed toward the end of the earth this week on the annual South Pole resupply mission.

The Military Sealift Command contracted the ship for Operation Deep Freeze, the Joint Task Force Antarctica mission, to reprovision scientists at McMurdo Station. MSC has supported the mission since 1955, the year the Station was established.

M.E.B.A. Chief Engineer Rodney Kittelson is heading up the engine room in Operation Deep Freeze 2022. 1<sup>st</sup> A/E Devin Savoie, 2<sup>nd</sup> A/E Adam Belson and Crane Technician Andrey Pakhomov are joining him as are MM&P deck officers and an SIU unlicensed crew.

MSC said the cargo being shipped to the Pole includes food, mechanical parts, vehicles, construction materials, office supplies, electronics equipment, a mobile home, and much more. It totals about 80% of the supplies needed for the year by scientists at McMurdo.

Following a stop in Christchurch, New Zealand, where the ship will load additional cargo, it will travel to the ice-pier at McMurdo Station, where members of Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One will conduct the offload. Before departing McMurdo station, OCEAN GIANT will be loaded with ice core samples that will be stored on the ship in sub-zero freezer containers. The ice core samples will be delivered to the United States for scientific study. In addition, retrograde cargo will be loaded onto the ship for transportation off the continent. These include trash and recyclable materials for disposal and equipment no longer required on the station.

On the other side of the world, MSC chartered tanker ship MAERSK PERRY has departed a fuel pier in Greece with diesel and jet fuel; 100 percent of the fuel needed for the year. Like Ocean Giant, MAERSK PERRY will deliver its cargo to the ice pier at McMurdo station.

Operation Deep Freeze 2022 marks MSC's return to support of ODF which was paused in 2021 due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

## **TTD PICKS UP NEW AFFILIATES**

Transportation Trades Dept. (AFL-CIO) President Greg Regan announced that the TTD has started the new year off in an even stronger position as they have picked up three new transportation-related unions as affiliates. M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which now represents 36 unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries.

The new affiliates are the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT), the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, IBT (BLET), and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division, IBT (BMWED). Yes "Employees" is the correct spelling.

President Regan noted, "As some of you may know, the BLET and BMWED left TTD in 2005 when the Teamsters left the AFL-CIO and for years have expressed interest in rejoining TTD...Significantly, their re-affiliation means that all of Rail Labor is now unified in TTD and the Rail Labor Division."

“IUPAT is new to TTD, but given the recent legislative and administrative focus on infrastructure investment, decided that this is the ideal time to affiliate. IUPAT’s members perform a significant amount of work on the infrastructure that we all care about, and their presence makes TTD’s collective voice stronger and more diverse.”

### **USNS COMFORT READIES FOR 150-DAY SHIPYARD STAY**

The USNS COMFORT, the Norfolk-based hospital ship will get some necessary vessel maintenance beginning in March.

Alabama Shipyard was recently awarded a \$25.9 million contract for the dry-docking and regular overhaul of the Military Sealift Command vessel. The 150-day work will be performed at the yard’s Mobile, AL facility from March 1, 2022 until July 28. If options are exercised on the contract, its value would rise to \$28.5 million.

Civilian Mariners onboard the USNS COMFORT are represented by the M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU.

### **APPLY FOR UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIPS**

M.E.B.A. families have until January 31, 2022 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 [unionplus.org/scholarship](http://unionplus.org/scholarship) for more. Families of M.E.B.A. members or affiliated members are among past scholarship money recipients. 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 Monday, January 31, 2022, at noon (EST). Those arriving after the deadline will not be considered. The award date is May 31, 2022. During the first week of June 2022, award recipients will be notified. 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 2022. Students may re-apply each year. Get the official application and all the details including eligibility criteria by visiting [unionplus.org/scholarship](http://unionplus.org/scholarship) Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$5 million to students of union families. Over 3,500 union families have benefited from the program.

### **ADVISORY FOR GULF OF GUINEA**

Global Piracy fell to its lowest level in over 25 years in 2021, but it’s a new year.

The Maritime Administration has issued an advisory for commercial vessels transiting in waters near the Gulf of Guinea, warning of potential piracy, armed robbery and kidnapping for ransom (KFR).

The MSCI – Maritime Security Communications with Industry – issues guidance to mariners saying that “pirates, armed robbers, and KFR groups continue to operate off Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon,

Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Sao Tome and Principe, and Gabon, targeting a variety of vessels to include tankers, container ships, general cargo vessels, fishing vessels, passenger vessels, and vessels supporting oil drilling/production. These groups have used motherships to support operations up to 200 nautical miles from shore, and it is not uncommon for these groups to fire upon vessels during boardings and attempted boardings. KFR groups generally kidnap senior crew members to include the master, chief engineer, and any Western or foreign crew members. Kidnapped crew members are normally taken ashore in the Niger Delta region where KFR groups demand ransom payments in exchange for the safe return of the crew members.”

All suspicious activities and events involving U.S. vessels or persons need to be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center at 800-424-8802.

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

**Friday, January 7** – Honolulu@1100.

**Monday, February 7** – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300.

**Tuesday, February 8** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

**Wednesday, February 9** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – **Register now at [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

**Thursday, February 10** – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

**Friday, February 11** – Honolulu@1100.

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



***M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.  
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline  
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.***

*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](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). 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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*