

# 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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### **MARITIME LABOR CALLS FOR GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF U.S. MARINERS**

Six major maritime labor unions representing American mariners have jointly issued a call to the U.S. government summoning them to issue clear and enforceable standards to protect the safety and health of our nation's shipboard mariners during this ongoing pandemic. The "Message from Maritime Labor," was issued on July 10 by the M.E.B.A., MM&P, AMO, SIU, SUP and MFOW. The letter is available on the M.E.B.A. homepage at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)

The unions pointed out that their shipboard members they represent "remain in grave danger and the global supply chain is at risk" as mariners toil under differing policies and protocols implemented by the varied shipowners and operators. The unions state that, "In the absence of uniform and government enforced protocol during vessel in-port time with such critical evolutions as cargo operations, vendor/contractor access and shipyard repairs remain essentially unregulated and haphazard. This is an unacceptable situation that is beyond the control of ship's personnel."

The message reiterated that the unions continue to pursue every avenue to protect the health and contract rights of our members as the crisis continues. "Your dedication, professionalism and perseverance is recognized," mariners were told, "and your efforts are best honored by ensuring your own safety and that of others you encounter onboard ship, in your travels, at home or otherwise."

### **NATIONS PLEDGE EASING OF RESTRICTIONS PREVENTING CREW CHANGES**

The governments of over a dozen nations including the U.S. have pledged to work toward easing up the bureaucracy that is preventing mariners around the globe from regular crew changes. As members know, COVID-19 restrictions on international travel have left thousands of seafarers stranded at foreign ports and confined to vessels for many months past their shipping assignments.

The nations agreed to new international measures to open up foreign borders for seafarers and increase the number of commercial flights to expedite repatriation efforts. The commitments to extend enhanced rights to seafarers designating them as "key workers" was won at an international maritime summit hosted online and backed by the International Maritime Organization and other United Nations agencies. Signatories included the U.S., U.K., Denmark, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Indonesia, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and UAE. They agreed to new international measures to open up foreign borders for seafarers and increase the number of commercial flights to expedite repatriation efforts.

UK Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said, “Throughout this pandemic, seafarers have played a crucial, though sometimes unseen, role in keeping vital supplies flowing into the country. It is unacceptable that there remain thousands of people stranded at ports around the world and we owe it to them and their families to change things.”

ITF General Secretary Stephen Cotton said, “We thank those countries who came together today for their commitment, and now call on those ministers and officials who signed the dotted line need to head back to their countries and follow through on these critical pledges by bringing in practical exemptions and waivers that allow seafarers to move freely to enable safe crew changes and repatriation to their home countries.”

### **HOUSE COMMITTEE ADVANCES 2021 FUNDING BILL TO SUPPORT MSP**

On Tuesday, the full House Appropriations Committee approved the 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill by a vote of 30-22. Within the package includes full funding of approximately \$314 million for the Maritime Security Program consistent with the current law and the annual White House Budget Request. In addition, the legislation provides \$75 billion to support the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, by investing in transportation and housing infrastructure. This includes utilizing unspent funds within the Maritime Administration to support MSP vessel operators, recognizing the challenges the U.S.-flag commercial fleet is facing amidst the pandemic.

### **MAHIMAHI CREW RESCUES TRIMARAN MARINERS**

The crew of the Matson C-9 containership M/V MAHIMAHI worked in tandem with the U.S. Coast Guard last week to bring three struggling boaters back to safety 825 miles northeast of Oahu.

The three mariners aboard the 50-foot trimaran *Third Try* had been attempting to sail around the globe non-stop when they ran into trouble and their vessel became disabled. A shoreside friend of the trimaran captain became alarmed on Tuesday after expected contact with the boat was severed and the Coast Guard was alerted. The boat’s last known position was between California and Hawaii and the Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) began to piece together the trimaran’s intended route and contacted commercial vessels that might be sailing in the vicinity.

The MAHIMAHI was nearby and agreed to divert to travel along the *Third Try*’s suspected route. On Thursday, an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) alert was received from the trimaran and its location was updated. A Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules search & rescue aircrew was deployed and the MAHIMAHI was updated with the new position. The aircrew reported the vessel had structural damage and had lost its rudder. The trimaran mariners were requesting to be removed from the vessel. At 3:33 a.m. on Wednesday, the M/V MAHIMAHI crew arrived on scene and successfully evacuated the three mariners from the *Third Try*

The crew of the MAHIMAHI brought the mariners back to Honolulu soon after. There were no reports of injuries. “One of our greatest challenges out here in the Pacific is distance,” said Lt. Diane French, a JRCC duty officer. “First responders are often days away and we regularly rely on merchant vessel crews like the MAHIMAHI’s to assist with search and rescue cases. We are always grateful for their help.”

M.E.B.A. officers onboard the MAHIMAHl on this voyage were Relief C/E George Thanash, 1<sup>st</sup> A/E Michael Caseria, 2<sup>nd</sup> A/E Michael Wojciechowski and 3<sup>rd</sup> A/E David Iacobucci.

### **CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE COMPLETES QUALIFICATION REVIEW OF NOMINEES FOR M.E.B.A. OFFICES & JOBS**

A rank-and-file Credentials Committee completed a busy day of work on Monday at M.E.B.A. Headquarters as they qualified candidates for M.E.B.A.'s District election taking place later this year. The hybrid Committee consisting of two in-person members and two who attended by the Zoom online conferencing platform performed an exhaustive and thorough review and issued a report. The Committee was comprised of four rank-and-file members elected at the online July membership meetings. They included Chairman Raymond Collector (Houston), Recording Secretary Chris Ferraro (NY/NJ), Trevor Lapham (S.F./Oakland) and Will Demilio (Norfolk).

Found qualified to stand for election as District President are Marshall Ainley and Adam Vokac. The District President election victor will also become the ex-officio National M.E.B.A. President.

For Secretary-Treasurer, the Committee qualified Roland "Rex" Rexha. Nominees for the Position of Branch Agent of New York (Atlantic Coast V.P.) are Jason Callahan and Michael B. Kovach. Candidates for Houston Branch Agent (Gulf Coast V.P.) include Jeff Frobenius, Lawrence Holbert, Phillip Sistrunk and Adam Smith.

Found qualified to stand for election as Executive Vice President/Branch Agent of San Francisco (Oakland) are Claudia Cimini and Jameson D. Smith.

Certified to run for the Los Angeles Branch Agent position are Russell Bellenfant and Rich Doherty. The race for Norfolk Branch Agent is between Tom Eastwood, Jack S. Menendez, Craig Moran and Eugene Smith. Found qualified for the office of Seattle Branch Agent for the four-year term beginning in January 2021 are Jeff Duncan and Mark Lund. Candidates for Tampa Branch Agent are Nicole Greenway, Michael Martykan and Salvatore "Torey" Zingales Jr.

Julianne Cona and Nico Sermoneta seek the position of Patrolman in the Port of NY/NJ. The Patrolman in the Port of San Francisco (Oakland) will be decided among Max Alper and Jarrod Costopulos. For Patrolman in the Port of Los Angeles, the candidates are Jacob LeBeouf and John McElhone. The position of Seattle Patrolman will be contested by Kevin M. Cross and Christian Konopaski.

The winning candidates for each of the five District Executive Committee positions (President, Secretary-Treasurer, Atlantic Coast V.P., Gulf Coast V.P. and Executive V.P.) along with the Branch Agents in L.A., Norfolk, Seattle and Tampa in the 2020 election, by virtue of their office, will comprise 9 of the 20 Delegates to the National M.E.B.A. Convention that will take place on March 16, 2021. 18 members submitted nominations to fill the 11 additional Delegate positions in the New Year. The candidates for the final 11 National Delegate positions are Max Alper, Erik Barton, Adam Blackwell, Michael Brady, Mark S. Collins, Kevin M. Cross, Nils Djusberg, Michael R. Doherty, Michael P. Donovan, Eric Downer, April Fleischer, Mark S. Gallagher, Andrew Martin, Dan Massoni, John McElhone, Nico Sermoneta, Tom Stenquist and Serena Webber-Bey.

Overall, two members who submitted paperwork but did not meet eligibility requirements at the time of nomination were disqualified, as required by M.E.B.A. governing documents. Those candidates can appeal their disqualification at the August membership meetings, if they so choose.

The Credentials Committee report, in its entirety, was sent to all M.E.B.A. halls and offices earlier today. During the regular August membership meetings it will be read and incorporated into the minutes and posted on the bulletin board in each hall.

The report will also be included in a special election edition of the *Marine Officer*, which will be mailed out to members, applicants and retirees in late August. That issue will also contain statements of the candidates as well as other key information relevant to the election. Ballots will be mailed to the membership on September 1 and they should be returned to the depository by November 30<sup>th</sup>. Ballots not received in the depository when they are collected on December 7, 2020, according to the By-Laws, shall be disqualified and not counted. The Impartial Administrator and an elected tallying committee will collect the ballots and tabulate them on that day.

### **ELECTION “BLACK-OUT” RULES NOW IN EFFECT**

With the onset of the election, the *Telex Times* will adhere to M.E.B.A. election season rules. From this point on, until the tabulation of ballots from the officers’ election on December 7<sup>th</sup>, the newsletter will refer to candidates for M.E.B.A. office only by position, if applicable, and not by name. This policy exceeds regulations stipulated by Section 401(g) of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (“Landrum-Griffin”), 29 U.S.C. 481(g).

### **UPDATE YOUR INFO WITH HQ**

Be sure to keep the Union updated with your current contact information including mailing address. This can be done using the address change form available on the M.E.B.A. website found at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org) under the “Members” tab or in the “Documents & Member Notices” section.

Alternatively, you can send your updated information to Renee Bowman at HQ by mail, fax at (202) 638-5369, or e-mail at [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org) Since the M.E.B.A. Plans office in Baltimore and Headquarters databases are NOT linked, you must also forward a signed change of address form to the Plans Office if you wish to update your information with them.

### **ONLINE AUGUST MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (All times are local) (Registration for Online Meetings takes place between July 23 – 30)**

Monday, August 3 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;  
Tuesday, August 4 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;  
Wednesday, August 5 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;  
Thursday, August 6 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;  
Friday, August 7 – 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 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). 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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*