

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"
Number 29 – July 25, 2019



In this issue//Successful Cadet Internship Program//IBU is on Strike in Alaska//Energizing American Shipbuilding Act is Re-Introduced//MarAd Symposium Highlights Autonomous Shipping//Continued Opposition to Oakland A's Stadium Proposal//House Approves Coast Guard Bill//Coast Guard Update on Seafarer Port Access//House-Passed Bill would Aid Troubled Multi-Employer Pension Plans//Support M.E.B.A. Memorial with a Brick or Bow Plaque//Shipping Federations Concerned over Strait of Hormuz Turmoil//'Sustainable Shipping' is World Maritime Theme//

CMES HOSTS WAVE OF FUTURE MARINERS FOR CADET INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

58 cadets from maritime academies across the country got a head start on their shipping careers after taking advantage of M.E.B.A.'s three-week Licensed Cadet Internship summer program that concludes with a "graduation" ceremony tomorrow. The annual program helps mold the next generation of M.E.B.A. mariners and will help ease their way toward a shipping career with the Union, if they so choose.

The program ran from July 8 to July 26 at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School in Easton, MD and was made up of recent graduates and incoming seniors representing six of the seven maritime academies, excepting Great Lakes. Many attendees have already made application with the Union.

This year's program participants were split between recent graduates and incoming seniors. They were loaded up with a full itinerary as they learned more about the excellent career opportunities the M.E.B.A. presents. Many took advantage of valuable training courses during their time at the School including Damage Control/CBRD, Small Arms, Tankerman DL and High Voltage Safety.

The School also offered seminars for the cadets to provide exposure to the different types of training offered by the CMES. Seminars offered during their three weeks included Welding, Machine Shop, Diesel Engineering and Electrical Troubleshooting.

M.E.B.A. President Marshall Ainley and Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo addressed cadets last week during the program and were in attendance tonight to greet these promising future mariners, some of who will join our ranks in the next few weeks.

IBU IS ON STRIKE IN ALASKA

M.E.B.A. is showing solidarity with the Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific as IBU mariners sailing for the Alaska Marine Highway System went on strike Wednesday after talks on a new contract with the State broke down. IBU represents about 400 AMHS mariners who have not received wage increases for over 5 years and say they have been subjected to inferior employment policies and lowball contract offers, as well as poor treatment by management. The IBU has been negotiating with the

state for almost 3 years which has included federal mediation. The ferry system recently suffered a huge budget cut which will drastically slash services to Alaskan communities after the summer months.

The vessels will not operate until further notice.

NEW START FOR THE INDUSTRY-SUPPORTED “ENERGIZING AMERICAN SHIPBUILDING ACT”

The maritime industry exerts much energy defending against attacks on the Jones Act, ill-advised proposals to underfund crucial maritime programs and attempted circumventions of cargo preference requirements. So the re-introduction of bold legislation to help kick-start production at American shipyards while broadening U.S.-flag shipping gives the industry the opportunity to play some offense.

Companion bills introduced in the Senate (S. 2167) by Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) and in the House (H.R. 3828) by Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) would guarantee that fixed percentages of all exported LNG and crude oil would travel on U.S.-built, crewed, and flagged vessels. If enacted, the proposal would grow the U.S.-flag fleet and support thousands of new jobs for American mariners, shipyards, and the domestic maritime industry.

Featuring a bi-partisan assortment of co-sponsors, the House version of the “Energizing American Shipbuilding Act” has its strongest chance of advancement since the initial version of the legislation introduced by the Congressman in 2016. The bill, which Rep. Garamendi has re-introduced in each session of Congress, has been manicured in each of its incarnations to better garner Congressional support and improve its chances to manifest into law.

The newly introduced bills would require that vessels built in the U.S. transport 15 percent of total seaborne LNG exports by 2041 and 10 percent of total seaborne crude oil exports by 2033. According to an estimate from the Shipbuilders Council of America, the bill would result in the construction of more than 40 ships: approximately 28 LNG carriers by 2041 and 12 oil tankers by 2033. The bills are strongly supported by maritime labor including the M.E.B.A. and other industry interests.

“Rising U.S. exports of America’s strategic LNG and crude oil present a unique opportunity to create new middle-class jobs by strengthening our nation’s crucial domestic shipbuilding, advanced manufacturing, and maritime industries—which are key to national security and our ability to project American military power abroad,” said Rep. Garamendi.

“Maintaining a strong domestic maritime industry is essential for our national defense,” Sen. Wicker said. “This legislation would strengthen our shipbuilding industry, support American maritime jobs, and ensure the United States has enough American-flagged, crewed, and built ships to transport its growing oil and natural gas exports in times of conflict. Our geopolitical rivals have invested heavily in their shipbuilding capacity, and the U.S. should keep pace.”

MARAD SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS AUTONOMOUS SHIPPING

M.E.B.A. took part in a Maritime Administration-sponsored symposium this week that cast a spotlight on the future of autonomous shipping. Absent were proclamations that the advent of “robots” would extinguish the need for the maritime workforce. Instead, prevailing wisdom indicates that the industry’s integration of vessel automation can signal the way toward a symbiotic relationship between man and machine.

Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby presided over the two-day affair staged on the outskirts of Baltimore in Linthicum, MD. Although widespread apprehension prevails over the perceived displacement of the human element with automated systems, several speakers speculated that embrace of new technologies would create new positions for skilled maritime workers in an evolved and more efficient industry. However, it appears a sustainable model for autonomous deep-sea shipping is still many years away as a series of obstacles have yet to be navigated, among them regulation and ship development. Challenges such as piracy and cybersecurity - as well as provisions for overcoming at-sea system failures - must also be addressed. In the near-term, we are much more likely to see shoreside applications or implementation of such technologies to occur on smaller vessels in the inland and coastal waterways.

One tangible nugget of news announced at this week's symposium involves an agreement between MarAd and Boston-based Sea Machines Robotics to outline and demonstrate the application of autonomous technology in efficient marine oil spill response operations.

CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO PROBLEMATIC OAKLAND BASEBALL STADIUM PROPOSAL

City officials are still pushing ahead on plans for a new Oakland A's stadium on the waterfront by the Port of Oakland despite a growing list of concerns. Under the plan, the proposed 35,000-seat stadium, along with a hotel and housing developments, would be sandwiched into the old Charles P. Howard Terminal near Jack London Square. Labor unions including the M.E.B.A., business interests and environmentalists are among those who oppose the plan. Maritime interests believe the new stadium, built in an already overworked traffic area, would inhibit harbor trucking and smooth vessel operation, among other things. Serious access issues for attending fans have not been satisfactorily resolved as the nearest rail system stop is a mile away while the space would only afford limited parking. Hundreds of millions in additional tax dollars would need to be commandeered for clean-up of the site and to meet infrastructure needs.

In its past incarnations, the site had previously served as a manufactured gas plant, a coal tramway, an asphalt paving plant and as an oil tank storage area among other uses.

The city is already facing a massive funding shortfall that would be exacerbated by the stadium. The stadium's construction would reprioritize city spending away from the desperate immediate funding needs of the city such as transportation issues and neglected, crumbling roads.

In addition, statistics show that there will be a significant shortfall of active terminal space as cargo growth continues and the stadium placement will further hamper economic progress and the Port of Oakland.

HOUSE APPROVES COAST GUARD BILL

In a decisive, bipartisan vote yesterday, the full House approved a bill that reauthorizes appropriations for the Coast Guard and Federal Maritime Commission through Fiscal Year 2021. Importantly for U.S.-flag shipping interests, the bill passed by the House contains a provision that will audit Government agency compliance with cargo preference requirements. Existing requirements stipulate that U.S.-flag vessels must be utilized for at least 50% of Government-impelled cargo and 100% of military shipments. However, a provision present in an earlier version of the bill to keep the Coast Guard funded during any future Government shutdowns was pared out of the final House version.

The bill also includes regulatory improvements to promote the U.S. maritime industry and offshore renewable energy development, ongoing authorization of funding to build new polar security cutters (heavy ice breakers), new requirements for the Coast Guard to assess and evaluate unmanned technologies for potential use in Coast Guard operations, provisions to increase diversity at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and new maritime safety enhancements. The Senate is expected to work on their own version of the bill in the coming weeks.

COAST GUARD UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SEAFARER PORT ACCESS

The Coast Guard has summarized its efforts and provided a timeline for the implementation of a national policy easing cumbersome, inflexible marine terminal access issues for seafarers - at no cost to the mariner. The regulation became effective in May. The rule ensures that no facility owner or operator denies or makes it impractical for seafarers or other individuals to transit through a facility. Compliance with the rule begins on June 1, 2020. Previously, marine terminals and individual states dictated their own rules of access creating unnecessary barriers at some of them essentially limiting terminal access for many individuals. Approximately 2,500 facilities nationwide are affected by these requirements.

Marine Safety Information Bulletin 06-19 on "Seafarers' Access to Maritime Facilities" has been placed on the M.E.B.A. website and can be accessed at www.mebaunion.org.

HOUSE-PASSED BILL WOULD AID TROUBLED MULTI-EMPLOYER PENSION PLANS

House Members approved legislation today (H.R. 397) that would create provisions aimed at stabilizing at-risk multi-employer pension plans as lawmakers try to head off a looming pension crisis. In a 264-169 vote that included all Democrats and 29 Republicans, House Members approved the bill that establishes a Pension Rehabilitation Administration within the Treasury Department to help finance low-interest loans to troubled multiemployer pension plans.

Currently, there are about 1,400 multiemployer plans covering about 10 million people across the country.

House Ways & Means Chairman Rep. Richard Neal (D-Mass.) introduced the bill along with 209 co-sponsors and stated that if such plans with funding problems run out of money, "retirees, workers, and their families would lose benefits earned over a lifetime of work, through no fault of their own."

A comparable measure exists in the Senate but its chances there are unclear as some vocal members in the Republican majority view the bill as a bailout that sets a bad precedent.

SUPPORT THE M.E.B.A. MARINER MEMORIAL WITH A BRICK OR BOW PLAQUE

The M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF) continues to accept orders for memorial bricks and plaques that will further beautify the Park at our School in Easton, MD that pays tribute to mariners past and present. Memorial bricks can be engraved with names of loved ones and are part of the retreat at the Memorial Park. The park is shaped like a 600-foot merchant vessel complete with 5-ton anchors, a ship's bell, bow section with plaques memorializing mariners of the past and a stern section with a six-bladed, 22-foot diameter bronze propeller.

Memorial benches have been maxed out in the park, but you might be interested in purchasing a memorial bow plaque to honor a departed loved one. Start up a collection and pay tribute to a

shipmate, instructor or friend who deserves a place in the park. Anyone wishing to purchase a brick or bow plaque must complete and return a donation form and monies. Please continue to help the cause - donations are greatly needed for the maintenance of the park!

For more information and to obtain the form please visit the School's website at www.mebaschool.org and click on the Memorial link on the far right side of the home page. You can email memorial@mebaschool.org to get any related questions answered.

SHIPPING FEDERATIONS EXPRESS CONCERNS FOR KIDNAPPED CREWS, STRAIT OF HORMUZ TURMOIL

International shipping federations expressed alarm over the disruption of smooth shipping operations in the Strait of Hormuz and called for the safe return of crews abducted as Iran continues to complicate its relationship with the U.S. and American allied nations. The International Maritime Organization condemned recent attacks against commercial shipping in that region which have been blamed on Iran. In May and early June, six commercial vessels in or near the Strait were damaged in what U.S. authorities believe to be limpet mine attacks. Recently, British Marines seized a Singaporean-owned, Panamanian-flagged vessel laden with Iranian oil that was accused of violating sanctions by secretly transporting oil to Syria. Iran harassed a British vessel the next week then subsequently kidnapped the UK-flagged STENA IMPERO, a Swedish-operated tanker with a crew of 23 made up of Indian, Russian, Latvian and Filipino nationalities.

Calling such attacks "intolerable," the IMO Council emphasized the need for flag states and shipowners and operators to review the maritime security plans for their ships and implement necessary measures to address the heightened security risk to ships operating in the Strait of Hormuz and Sea of Oman.

Nautilus International and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) called for a diplomatic resolution to the STENA IMPERO situation and is seeking a de-escalation of tensions in the region. Nautilus International general secretary Mark Dickinson said, "Our thoughts are with the seafarers being held, and with their families. We offer our support to the international effort to have them released safely, and promise to redouble our efforts, including collaboration with our international colleagues, to ensure that all seafarers are protected from aggression wherever the risk is evident."

"The ITF is deeply concerned," said ITF Seafarers' Section chair David Heindel. "The seizure of the STENA IMPERO marks a dramatic intensification in the turmoil in the region...Seafarers are concerned about the risk to their safety, it's essential that the maritime industry and governments work collectively to guarantee safe passage and defuse conflict in such a vital region," said Heindel.

2020 WORLD MARITIME THEME: SUSTAINABLE SHIPPING FOR A SUSTAINABLE PLANET

The International Maritime Organization has announced that "sustainable shipping for a sustainable planet" has been selected as the World Maritime theme for 2020. IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim said, "the year 2020 will mark the beginning of a decade of action and delivery. It will be a decisive decade not only for the shipping industry, but for life on the planet."

"The shipping industry, with the support of the IMO regulatory framework, has already started the transition towards this sustainable future," said Lim. "We have adopted and continue to develop

measures to cut greenhouse gas emissions, reduce the sulfur content of ships' fuel oil, implement the Ballast Water Management Convention, protect the polar regions, reduce marine litter, improve the efficiency of shipping through the electronic exchange of information, meet the challenges of the digitalization of shipping and enhance the participation of women in the maritime community.”

REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monday, August 5 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**
Tuesday, August 6 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**
Wednesday, August 7 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**
Thursday, August 8 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**
Friday, August 9 – **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 Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.