

# 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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### **HISTORIC CBJ AGREEMENT**

M.E.B.A. members employed by the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) enthusiastically ratified a newly negotiated three-year agreement that netted them their most lucrative contract in history. The approximately 240 M.E.B.A. members in the CBJ toil on a wide range of jobs around the city including at airports, parks, docks and harbors, and in engineering and building maintenance, among other areas.

M.E.B.A. Executive Vice President Max Alper oversees the contract and put together a winning team. Washington State Ferry Representative Eric Winge served as our chief spokesperson for the talks that began in March and stretched through mid-May. The bargaining team was organized in February, member priorities were engaged and proposals were drafted that kept talks productive and led to an historic contract that was ratified by the membership by a large margin and was passed by the Juneau Assembly. The rank-and-file negotiating committee included Nicole Tragis, Aaron Dean, Kevin Mitchell, Jeremiah Cryts, Gernot Bucheli, Stephanie Ashley, and Brandon Ridle. Nathan Reddikop and Caleb Brown served as alternate negotiating committee members. The contract went into effect on July 1, 2025 and continues to June 30, 2028.

The agreement nets generous wage increases and lump sum payments, enhances tool allowances for applicable workers, creates additional incentives to attract workers, increases healthcare contributions, and adds a new holiday (Juneteenth) among many other items. Following the completion of the agreement, the Union signed up 51 new applicants at the CBJ.

### **M.E.B.A. HAILS PASSAGE OF WASHINGTON STATE SALARY SURVEY BILL**

M.E.B.A.'s hard work on behalf of Washington State House Bill 1264 was validated as the measure was signed into law on May 17, 2025. The new law marks a crucial step toward tackling the issue of uncompetitive wages, which has hindered Washington State Ferries from recruiting and keeping skilled mariners.

The bill makes three important changes to the salary survey which is used in collective bargaining. (1) It requires the state to pay competitive wages. (Previously there was no obligation to do so). (2) It expands the comparator set to include Staten Island Ferries on the East Coast and private shipping companies on the West Coast. (Previously only public ferries on the West Coast were used as comparators). (3) And it requires the Office of Financial Management to use a nationally recognized

firm to conduct the salary survey. (Previously OFM conducted their own salary survey, which raised concerns about objectivity).

Winge noted, “Still unaddressed is a significant 20% wage disparity between deck crew and the engine room. The legislative update to the salary survey process is an important and overdue step toward pay equity for essential ferry engineers. Paying competitive wages for skilled engineers isn’t just a matter of fairness, it is vital to keeping the boats sailing, communities connected and our economy moving. If we want a safe, reliable ferry system, we must invest in the skilled professionals who keep it running.”

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha and Washington State Ferry Representative Eric Winge helped craft bill language along with M.E.B.A. Counsel and several M.E.B.A. members along with Rep. Winge testified in support of the bill during the 2025 legislative session in Olympia, WA. Congratulations!

#### **FOURTNER, MASTRICOLA SALUTED**

As part of the Plans modernization and streamlining that is resulting in cost savings and efficiencies, the last two Vacation Plan outpost offices (in Boston and Seattle) concluded operations earlier this week along with the Medical Plan’s clinics in Baltimore and Oakland. Members have been kept apprised of the latest information and alternate locations in a series of mailings along with membership meetings including Online Headquarters Informational meetings.

Mike Mastricola was the Vacation Plan representative in our Boston Union hall and has served in various capacities there for the past 39 years. Members were pleased to learn that he will continue his routine excellence in the Boston Union hall, now serving as the new Dispatcher. Members expressed their appreciation for Mike with effusive praise at the membership meeting earlier this month. In addition, Boston members – and the Seattle membership – were vocal in their gratitude for Ron Fournier, as well, who has spent an amazing 43 years with the Union. A stream of Seattle-area members, retirees and applicants made their kind feelings for Ron known and he was showered with gifts and praise as he heads into a well-deserved retirement.

At the Seattle membership meeting, a very nice statement, crafted by Boston members, was seconded and read to Ron. It states, in part, “Thank you very much for your many years of stalwart service to the M.E.B.A. membership, it has not gone unnoticed. Many times, and for many members, you have gone above and beyond your call of duty and responsibility to ensure we receive our vacation benefits the way we thought we would, despite filling the form out wrong. Your dedicated commitment to the M.E.B.A. membership is appreciated and will be missed upon your retirement. We hope retirement treats as you as well as you have treated us. We make a toast to you, Ron, to a future retirement of freedom, recreation and relaxation to pursue interests and goals nearest to your heart. We wish you all the best.”

Members are purchasing commemorative bricks to be placed at the M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School to honor the wonderful service of Ron Fournier as well as new Boston Dispatcher Mike Mastricola.

## **KP'S NUNAN ENDS RUN**

Vice Admiral Joanna M. Nunan, superintendent of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, stepped down from her position following the commencement ceremony for the Class of 2025. She had served in that position since December 2022. Deputy Superintendent Rear Admiral David M. Wulf also announced his departure. Captain Anthony J. “Tony” Ceraolo (USCG, Ret.), the academy’s chief of staff, assumes the role of acting superintendent while the Department of Transportation searches for a permanent successor.

“I thank Vice Admiral Nunan and Rear Admiral Wulf for their service to our Nation and to our midshipmen,” said Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy. “The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, its critical mission, and its extraordinary midshipmen fully deserve the kind of dedication and commitment the superintendent and deputy superintendent brought to their roles at Kings Point.”

“I have long believed that I am the luckiest admiral I know,” Nunan said. “I have been privileged to play a role in the lives of some of America’s most inspiring young people as they became our finest future mariners.”

## **1,100 MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATES**

The American Maritime Partnership, a coalition representing the domestic maritime industry that counts the M.E.B.A. and AMC as members, sent a shout-out to the more than 1,100 person class of 2025 maritime academy graduates. They hailed the talented young men and women as a welcome addition to the existing maritime workforce that numbers 650,000 at sea and ashore. “These men and women are entering a career rooted in service, and they do so as America rededicates itself to building more ships here at home and sailing them under Old Glory,” said Jennifer Carpenter, AMP President. “From Gulf Coast shipyards to the ports of Hawaii and Alaska, a stronger American Maritime means a stronger country. We are proud to stand behind these bright leaders of tomorrow as they help carry out a national mission bigger than themselves.”

Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy, speaking at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy commencement on June 23, underscored the environment this year’s graduating class enters, “This administration understands that restoring maritime dominance is critical to America’s national security, and to do that, our nation needs more brave men and women to sail the ships we have now, but the great ships we’re going to build in the future. This mission you’re all about to embark on could not be more important at this very moment when our nation stands on the precipice of potential conflict in the Middle East. Whether it’s the Suez Canal or the South China Sea, there are rough waters ahead.”

## **CMES NOTE FOR THOSE TAKING WARTSILA COURSE**

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School issued a notice reminding students attending either the Wartsila RT Flex Basic and/or Wartsila RT Flex Operator courses to bring the following with them for the lab portions of the courses:

- An adequate supply of work clothes appropriate for working in a diesel engine lab environment.
- Safety shoes are recommended.
- Appropriate personal protection equipment will be made available throughout the course.

## ANTI-BULLYING CAMPAIGN

Maritime experts united to give their backing to a global anti-bullying campaign and invited others to join the cause. The International Maritime Organization's "Day of the Seafarer" was observed last week (June 25) with the theme of 'My Harassment-Free Ship,' stating that bullying and harassment was unacceptable in all its forms. A webinar organized by the Maritime Authority of Jamaica examined 'How to foster a positive culture' and how the industry could better work toward that goal. At the webinar, Georgia Allen, from the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) said that her organization had received over 100 calls from seafarers in the past six months alone suffering mental health issues while serving at sea, which had originated from being bullied. She added that seafarers not only needed physical safety, but they should be made to feel safe mentally too. Captain Steven Spence (Maritime Authority of Jamaica) pointed out that eliminating harassment on ships would lead to better relationships, collaborations and co-operation among seafarers.

The panel was also critical that there is no global system to allow seafarers to make an official complaint on such issues. Dr. Maria Ali (OneCare Group) stated the industry needs to make seafarers aware that if they have reason to complain they will be protected and supported – not punished. She said, "This shows the start of quite a big shift in the industry – going beyond the training and measures." Dr. Hortense Ross-Innerarity (Superintendent of Pilotage at the Port Authority of Jamaica), said the initiative of My Harassment-Free Ship was effectively a call to action to everyone in the maritime industry 'to foster a safe, inclusive and respectful working environment for all seafarers, irrespective of their rank, race, gender, nationality and background.' "They deserve our unswerving advocacy and support," she added.

## HALLS CLOSED FRIDAY FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY; WEST HALLS CLOSED ON MONDAY FOR BLOODY THURSDAY

The halls will be closed tomorrow (Friday, July 4) for Independence Day. West Coast halls will continue to be shuttered on Monday, July 7<sup>th</sup> in observance of "Bloody Thursday." Bloody Thursday commemorates the 1934 longshoremen labor action led by Harry Bridges that culminated in street fighting and clashes with police. Hundreds were injured and several were killed in the riots that came to a head on July 5, 1934. Following a general strike and federal intervention, the longshoremen won a coast-wide contract, union hiring halls, and various improvements to wages and conditions.

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

Monday, July 7 – **Boston@1200**. *Bloody Thursday observed – West Coast Halls Closed*

Tuesday, July 8 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300**.

Wednesday, July 9 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

Thursday, July 10 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300**.

Friday, July 11 – **Honolulu@1100**

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