

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



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AMHS CUTS; SYSTEM FLAGSHIP TO LAY-UP

The Alaska Marine Highway System's flagship ferry M/V COLUMBIA will be pulled from service at the end of the summer to help conform to drastic State budget cuts. AMHS spokesperson Aurah Landau said the 45-year old vessel will be tied up by October 1 while two other ferries – the M/V MALASPINA and M/V MATANUSKA take over some of the 418-foot COLUMBIA's workload. Landau said the ferry system will attempt to stave off lay-offs for the 62 mariners assigned to COLUMBIA by utilizing them on other vessels. Crews include M.E.B.A., MM&P and IBU members.

Landau said the COLUMBIA "will remain out of service for the winter and the marine highway system will assess options for future use of the vessel when it looks at the results of the marine highway system economic restructuring analysis." That study could be released sometime in October.

The State's budget mess prompted Governor Mike Dunleavy to initially propose a \$98 million cut to the ferry system, which would likely trigger "eight bells" for year-round ferry service. But the Alaska Legislature later eased the blow to the ferry system to about \$38 million. The Governor line-item vetoed various aspects of the Legislature-approved budget earlier this week but it appears that the \$38 million haircut for AMHS was left in place. Among other things, the Governor defunded the Ocean Ranger cruise ship pollution inspection program. Higher education was a big loser in the budget, suffering a 41% cut as part of \$444 million the Governor shaved from the Legislature-approved \$8.7 billion operating budget while wielding his veto powers.

The State is in the process of selling fast ferries FAIRWEATHER and CHENEGA, additional moves that will save money, but will further diminish service for Alaskans. The AMHS ferry fleet serves as a crucial connector for Alaskan communities spread out over 3,100 miles. The ferry service was built with federal dollars and is part of the National Highway System.

CHANGE OF COMMAND AT MSC

M.E.B.A. took part in a Military Sealift Command ceremony late last week to welcome in a new Commander. Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne handed over the reins at MSC to Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer in a ceremony that took place on the M.E.B.A.-crewed expeditionary fast transport vessel USNS BURLINGTON in Norfolk, VA.

Rear Adm. Wettlaufer, who began his career as a naval aviator, was serving as the Commander of U.S. Navy Carrier Strike Group 3 in Bremerton, Washington. Among many other assignments and highlights, RADM. Wettlaufer commanded the Dambusters of VFA-195, the USS DENVER and USS JOHN C. STENNIS.

“I am truly humbled to be here and to join this fantastic team,” said RADM Wettlaufer. “Just coming off a dynamic, around the world strike group deployment, my team was a prodigious consumer and demanding customer of logistics systems around the globe. As such, I understand and appreciate the challenges which MSC overcomes every day in order to provide the systems and synchronize global activities needed to deliver, distribute and sustain our warriors forward.”

The outgoing RADM. Mewbourne had led MSC since Aug. 25, 2016. He is scheduled to take over as Deputy Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command, responsible for conducting globally integrated mobility operations.

DOT SEC. CHAO, ATC's MATHUR AMONG ANNOUNCED AOTOS HONOREES

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and Alaska Tanker Company President & CEO Anil Mathur are among four newly announced recipients of the prestigious Admiral of the Ocean Sea (AOTOS) honor to be awarded at a maritime gala later this year. The United Seamen's Service (USS) sponsors the event and presents the AOTOS statuettes to maritime industry advocates for lifetime contributions.

Other honorees will include James Given, President of the Seafarers International Union of Canada as well as Joseph Pyne who is Chairman of the Board of the Kirby Corporation.

The awards ceremony will take place in New York City on November 1, 2018. In addition, during the event, as yet undetermined American seafarers will receive recognition for acts of bravery and heroism at sea.

M.E.B.A. URGED TO PARTICIPATE IN NAUTILUS FEDERATION STCW SURVEY

The Nautilus Federation is urging affiliates to take part in a special online survey focusing on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW). Responses will aid the Federation in an upcoming STCW review which has great bearing on mariners.

M.E.B.A. is an affiliate of the Nautilus Federation which represents international mariners and shipping professionals with the objective of spotlighting officer issues such as criminalization, fatigue, and the impact of automation.

The link can be accessed at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NFedSTCW The Federation stated the need for a high response rate from all affiliates to legitimize captured data as reflective of mariner opinion. Survey respondents will be asked to identify their union so M.E.B.A. is looking for a good showing. Please check out the quick survey and weigh in!

RELEASE OF SHIP CAPTAIN WHO AIDED MIGRANTS

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) expressed relief over the release of Captain Carola Rackete after the German captain was arrested on Saturday for docking the humanitarian search and rescue vessel SEA-WATCH 3 in Italy with 40 migrants onboard. The vessel belongs to the non-profit organization “Sea-Watch e.V.” which conducts civil search and rescue operations in the

Central Mediterranean Sea. As has been widely reported, Captain Rackete was taken into custody after carrying the 40 migrants and refugees that she had rescued off Libya into the Italian Port of Lampedusa, despite attempts by the Italian Coast Guard to prevent the rescue boat from entering the port.

The anti-migrant government in Italy put her under house arrest when she defied their orders and refused to yield as border police in motorboats attempted to block her way. Her decision to enter the port and knock a blockade boat aside came sixty hours after a state of emergency was declared onboard. She said the safety of her passengers could no longer be guaranteed. An Italian judge ruled the ship captain was "doing her duty saving human lives" thus freeing Capt. Rackete from house arrest. Her decision prompted Italy's Deputy Prime Minister to label the judge's decision as "politically motivated."

ITF Seafarers Section Chair Dave Heindel noted, "Although we acknowledge the political complexity of migration issues in the Mediterranean, today we're relieved that Captain Rackete has been released." He said, "The Italian authorities have quickly concluded that SEA-WATCH 3 entered the port because of valid safety concerns for the people on board and that Rackete had been carrying out her duty to protect life, not as a deliberate challenge to the right of Italy to protect its borders."

The SEA-WATCH 3 rescue set off an unprecedented political debate in Italy about immigration, the criminalization of rescuing migrants and the nation's obligation to rescue lives in danger at sea. The ITF noted that they fully support the objective of Captain Rackete, Sea Watch and other organizations providing support that keep migrants from dying at sea. ITF estimates that at least 555 migrants and refugees – that can be verified - have lost their lives in Mediterranean crossings in the first six months of 2019.

A spokesperson for the United Nations commission for refugees noted that, "Rescue at sea is a centuries-old tradition. It is an obligation under international maritime law and non-governmental organization (NGO) search-and-rescue vessels have saved thousands of lives in the central Mediterranean in recent years."

NMC CATCH-UP FROM PARTIAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN; LATEST CREDENTIAL BACKLOG MITIGATION EFFORTS ANNOUNCED

Seven months after the partial government shutdown that helped curtail the steady processing of important shipping document applications, the National Maritime Center continues to recover from the disruption. This week, they issued yet another bulletin detailing efforts to mitigate the shutdown's impact on mariners. NMC noted that the following updated actions are being taken:

- Merchant mariner credentials (MMC) and medical certificates (national endorsements only) that expire in **December 2018, January 2019, February 2019, March 2019, April 2019, May 2019, June 2019, or July 2019** are extended as valid until August 31, 2019. Mariners who are actively working on expired credentials that meet the expiration criteria must carry the expired credential with a copy of the attached letter. (*Visit NMC site to download the letter*).

- This extension does not change the time frame during which a credential may be renewed. A credential may be renewed at any time during its validity and for 1 year after expiration based on the expiration date printed on the credential.

If you have questions, visit the NMC website (www.uscg.mil/nmc), or contact the NMC Customer Service Center by using the NMC online chat system (accessed from the NMC homepage), by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

MARAD ISSUES REVISED ADVISORIES ON PIRACY, YEMEN UNREST & COMMERCIAL SHIPPING NEAR IRAN

The Maritime Administration issued a pair of revised advisories this week on threats to commercial shipping due to piracy and regional unrest. Both advisories can be read in full on the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org). Each notice replaces an older advisory with new information.

Advisory 2019-007 issues a revised warning for U.S. shipping in the southern Red Sea, Bab al Mandeb Strait and Gulf of Aden. Stemming from the conflict in Yemen, Houthi rebels have conducted attacks against vessels in the past, and despite a current cease-fire between Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition, extreme caution must continue to be exercised in those hotspots. In addition, piracy threats were stressed by the advisory particularly in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, and Gulf of Oman.

Advisory 2019-008 revises the guidance for U.S.-flag shipping near Iran after multiple incidents in the past few months. Six commercial vessels were rocked by explosions – four on May 12th with two more occurring on June 13th. The U.S. government believes Iran was responsible for the attacks. The advisory notes, “The heightened military activities and increased political tensions in this region continue to present risk to commercial shipping due not only to this threat, but also due to the potential for miscalculation or misidentification.” MarAd notes that vessels operating in that region could also be subject to GPS interference and other possible jamming of communications.

IMO CONTINUES PREPARATIONS FOR NEW SULFUR LIMIT

The International Maritime Organization continues to remind the industry about the approaching implementation of air pollution limits coming into effect in January. As you probably know, new requirements for ships to cut sulfur oxide emissions enter into force on January 1, 2020. Under IMO's MARPOL convention for the prevention of pollution from ships, the sulfur content of fuel oil used by vessels operating outside designated emission control areas cannot exceed 0.50% - representing an 80% cut from the current 3.50% limit.

Participants at a recent IMO roundtable discussion regarding the implementation of the new limit agreed on the need to continue to raise awareness of the requirement. The IMO roundtable group that met in London were updated on the latest guidance, treaty amendments and other IMO provisions supporting the sulfur 2020 rule.

They further discussed the adoption of guidelines on consistent implementation, port state control and other guidance; as well as interim measures to enhance the safety of ships relating to the use of oil fuel.

WEST COAST HALLS HONOR “BLOODY THURSDAY” TOMORROW

M.E.B.A. halls and offices were closed today for Independence Day. West Coast halls will continue to be shuttered tomorrow, Friday July 5th 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.

RAFFLE BENEFITING THE G&W FUND – GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

You should purchase tickets now for an ongoing raffle benefiting the Good & Welfare Fund. A 50/50 Raffle to help strengthen the fund is open to anyone who wants to purchase a ticket. The drawing will be held on October 8th to take place at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School during the regular membership meeting.

5,000 tickets were printed and sent out to the Union halls as well as the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. They are being sold for \$2 apiece. Anyone purchasing \$50 worth of tickets will be mailed an M.E.B.A. T-shirt. Those who purchase \$100 worth of tickets will earn both a shirt and an M.E.B.A. hat. \$50 and \$100 purchasers will also receive M.E.B.A. pins.

The raffle winner will receive 50% of the proceeds (*as much as \$5,000!!*) with the other half going to the Fund. Ticketholders do not need to be present at the drawing to win. Every ticket that you buy puts another dollar into the Good & Welfare Fund.

M.E.B.A. members are encouraged to support this important cause. The Good & Welfare Fund assists active and retired members and their families in times of crisis. It helps remove some of the sting and burden of unexpected tragedy and lends a hand to those within the M.E.B.A. family. This is a wonderful cause, but we must constantly strengthen the fund to allow additional assistance to members and retirees in times of hardship. The G&W Fund is exempt from Federal Income tax, so consider making a contribution. In addition, you can support the Fund on the M.E.B.A.'s electronic payment portal that is also used to pay dues and service charges as well as contribute to the Political Action Fund. Visit www.mebaunion.org to access the portal.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monday, July 8 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**

Tuesday, July 9 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**

Wednesday, July 10 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**

Thursday, July 11 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**

Friday, July 12 – **Honolulu@1100.**

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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.