

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

The Official Union Newsletter

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INLAND BARGAINING UNITS CONFER AT ITC MEETING

Members representing ferry and inland waterways bargaining units across the country converged at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School on Wednesday. They pored over related topics, addressed challenges facing our members in those sectors and considered strategies to strengthen their hand. Inland groups represent almost one third of the total M.E.B.A. membership.

Union officials rounded up representatives from a diverse mix of M.E.B.A. inland groups for the third conference in recent years of the group known as the "Inland Transportation Coalition." The ITC was formed in 2012 to help lend a voice and further extend assistance to our members serving those sectors.

Washington State Ferry Rep. Isaac Seidman and Staten Island Ferry Rep. Mike O'Toole organized the one-day conference and helped secure participation from a dozen M.E.B.A. inland members. Also in attendance were several other key Union officials who oversee inland contracts of bargaining units that were not able to send a representative. They included Seattle Branch Agent Jeff Duncan, Boston Rep. Pete Tsarides and Juneau Rep. Ben Goldrich. M.E.B.A. Contracts Rep. Mark Gallagher and Political Director Matt Dwyer gave presentations in their areas of expertise. In addition, M.E.B.A.'s five-person District Executive Committee took part which helped supplement discussion and better isolate realistic approaches on items of interest.

Matters of mutual concern that were thrashed out included contract negotiations and enforcement, political concerns as well as union representation and administration. In addition, a presentation and subsequent workshop overseen by Labor Professor Kitty Conlan proved useful for attendees. Conlan provided a rich history of unions and delved into other topics such as labor relations, leadership and communication.

Rank and file attendees at yesterday's meeting included Randy Aurella (FOSS); Capt. Denault Donovan (Boston Marine); Eric Downer (AMHS); Chris Ferrara (Staten Island Ferry); Daniel Lindberg (Woods Hole Martha's Vineyard Steamship Authority); Roland Rexha (Staten Island Ferry); Capt. Stacy Shonk (Golden Gate Ferry); Nickolas Tapley (WSF); Melissa Velli (Cape May-Lewes Ferry); Eric Winge (WSF); and Mark Wolf (Cape May-Lewes Ferry).

HOUSTON HALL CLOSED MONDAY FOR JUNETEENTH

M.E.B.A.'s Union hall in Houston will be closed on Monday, June 19 in honor of the Texas holiday known as Emancipation Day or "Juneteenth." The observance harkens back to 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger and his Union troops arrived in Galveston bringing (late) word about the Emancipation Proclamation, which took place 2 ½ years earlier. Granger announced that "all persons held as slaves" in the rebellious States were "thenceforward, and forever free." Though it was cause for immediate celebration, the wheels turned slowly and many of the 250,000 slaves in the Lone Star State wouldn't enjoy their freedom until many months later. By the next year, the annual celebration of Juneteenth had begun. Over half of the states in the country have legislated Juneteenth-oriented observances of some sort and the U.S. Congress has designated June 19th as National Juneteenth Celebration Day, a day of great rejoicing.

FALSE THREAT SPARKS SEARCH ON MAERSK MEMPHIS

An "All-Clear" was issued at the Port of Charleston following a dirty bomb scare Wednesday night. Authorities were made aware of a threat that a device could be in one of the containers loaded aboard the M.E.B.A.-crewed MAERSK MEMPHIS which was moored at the Wando Terminal. Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies investigated the threat. The ship was evacuated and a safety zone was established around the vessel temporarily affecting operations at the Port. After a search that included scanning certain containers aboard the vessel, nothing was found to justify the threat.

Authorities had located a person of interest who may have information about the discredited threat. A media source reported that the false information may have been cultivated by "a known conspiracy theorist and spread online."

TENNESSEE LAWMAKER PUSHING ANTI-UNION BILL

Efforts to disempower labor unions were relaunched recently with the re-introduction of a bill, the so-called "Employee Rights Act." Introduced by Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.), and co-sponsored by 31 Republicans so far, H.R. 2723 would require federally monitored secret ballot votes for all workplaces that call for organizing elections. At the same time, the bill would require unions to win the majority of all employees, including those who don't vote, before they can be certified as the collective bargaining representative. Under the legislation, any votes not cast would be counted as a "no" on the voting ballot. It would also require periodic union re-certification elections.

"If political elections were held in this fashion, virtually no one would have been elected, because the number of people who stay home, leave ballot sections blank or vote for someone else outstrips the number of votes officeholders receive," the AFL-CIO stated.

The bill would phase out card check recognition of unions, require written consent before worker dues could be used in collective bargaining and make strikes subject to a majority vote by the union members monitored by a neutral organization chosen at the time of agreement between both the labor union and the employer. Congressman Roe characterized the bill as pro-worker. "The rights of American workers were under attack during the Obama presidency, and it is time to restore those rights and work to foster a pro-growth, pro-employee environment," he said. "This legislation will ensure individuals' rights are upheld when considering whether or not they wish to join a union."

In related anti-labor developments, "Right-to-Work" backed groups are again making overtures to push a case before the Supreme Court challenging the legitimacy of public sector unions to collect fees as a condition of employment. The high court handled a similar case in 2016 deadlocking 4-4 in

Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association that took place shortly after the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. That tie vote left intact 1977's *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education* that ruled that non-union members should pay their fair share for the wages, benefits and protections negotiated on their behalf in a collectively bargained contract. Now that another conservative judge has been added to the court, corporate special interests are making another stab at weakening unions. Union opponents are hoping the court will take up *Janus v. AFSCME* and rule that an Illinois state government employee should not have to pay a union "security fee." Yet another similar case, *Yohn v. California Teachers Association*, could also be entertained by the Supreme Court as early as 2018. That case challenges the fees as contrary to First Amendment rights and also takes issue with the 'burdensome' opt-out process for dissenting non-members.

TRUMP: OPEN DOOR POLICY FOR LABOR

President Donald Trump declared last week that he plans to take an open door policy toward labor leaders and unions as long as he is President. Trump gave a speech in Cincinnati last Wednesday to help promote his upcoming administration's plan to help build up the nation's infrastructure. Labor leaders from the United Ironworkers, Laborers' International Union of North America and the North America's Building Trades Unions attended. "We believe in the dignity of work and in the greatness of the American worker," President Trump said. "We love our workers."

Labor has been cautiously hopeful that much-needed expenditures on the nation's crumbling infrastructure will benefit working people but they are weary of the anti-union climate on the right that is encouraging many Republicans to act upon - now that the GOP has majorities across the board. As noted by Transportation Trades Department President Ed Wytkind some months ago, labor hopes "the President rejects policy proposals that cut the wages and eviscerate the rights of working people, and instead champions policies that rebuild the middle class."

INDUSTRY ASKED TO EVALUATE COAST GUARD REGS & SUGGEST FIXES

A *Federal Register* notice issued late last week is soliciting industry input on existing Coast Guard regulations and guidance while asking commenters whether they favor repeal, replacement or modification. The notice was issued in response to a series of Executive Orders regarding regulation reductions and controlling costs. They will accept comment up until July 10 and note that comments will help assist Coast Guard in their work with the Department of Homeland Security's Regulatory Reform Task Force. Comments can be submitted by using the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov and specifying the docket number which is USCG-2017-0480.

PHILLY SHIPYARD PLANS NEWBUILDS FOR UNDEFINED BUYER

Philly Shipyard (formerly Aker Philadelphia Shipyard) said it will construct four new containerships to be delivered between 2020 and 2021. The yard said so far there is no specific buyer for the ships but they are "actively promoting the formation of a new entrant into the containership trade between the U.S. mainland and Hawaii to operate these vessels." That trade route is currently serviced by two M.E.B.A.-contracted companies – Matson Navigation and Sunrise Operations (The Pasha Group). The shipyard is currently constructing two containerships for Matson to be delivered in 2018 and 2019. The four newly announced vessels would reportedly be a "direct continuation of the [Matson Aloha Class] series."

NINTH MSC HIGH-SPEED FERRY LAUNCHED

The Military Sealift Command will soon take delivery of its ninth expeditionary fast transport (EPF) vessel after the Austal-built USNS CITY OF BISMARCK was launched this week. The EPF class

ships were formerly known as Joint High Speed Vessels (JHSVs). Crews of the Military Sealift Command EPF fleet are represented by the M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU. EPFs are versatile, non-combatant, transport ships that are being used for fast intra-theater transportation of troops, military vehicles, and equipment. They have the capability to carry out a wide range of operations, including non-combatant evacuation operations, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. The 10th vessel in the EPF Spearhead class is under construction and will be named the USNS BURLINGTON. Fabrication has begun for the 11th EPF which will be named USNS PUERTO RICO.

“GET WELL” WISHES FOR STEVE SCALISE

M.E.B.A. and the maritime industry are among those cheering for the full recovery of Congressman Steve Scalise (R-LA) who was badly injured by a deranged gunman on Wednesday. Rep. Scalise, the House Majority Whip, has been strong on the Jones Act and understands the critical importance of U.S. shipping and American mariners. At press time, Rep. Scalise was in critical condition and is facing multiple surgeries. We wish him the best.

REPRESENTATIVE FOR BOSTON HALL SOUGHT

M.E.B.A. is accepting resumes from members interested in serving as the next Representative in our Boston Union hall. The official start date will be September 15. Those who wish to be considered for this position should send a cover letter and résumé to Atlantic Coast Vice President Jason Callahan jcallahan@mebaunion.org and Secretary Treasurer Bill Van Loo at bvanloo@mebaunion.org.

CHIEF ENGINEERS, 1st A/Es SOUGHT FOR OSG

OSG is looking for Chief Engineers and 1st Assistant Engineers who have prior time/experience in those positions. The positions also require Tankerman PIC or Tankerman Engineer. Contact Gulf Coast V.P. Erin Bertram at the Houston Union hall (713-923-9424) for additional info and details.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, July 3 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, July 4 – **Independence Day – Halls Closed**

Wednesday, July 5 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, July 6 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Oakland@1230; Tampa@1300;

Friday, July 7 - Honolulu@1100.

Informational Meeting in Cleveland – Friday, July 7@1230.

-----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