

# 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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### **M.E.B.A. CONTINUES TO GAIN GROUND ON SHORESIDE MARINE OPPORTUNITIES**

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac and Gulf Coast V.P. Adam Smith have finalized another contract with a new employer that secures shoreside job opportunities for our membership with a full-service Marine and Industrial Repair company. Based in Tampa, FL, Padgett Swann Machinery performs repair work on all types of vessels around the country. The company has a multi-week job coming up next week that will include M.E.B.A. labor.

The Memorandum of Understanding, including full M.E.B.A. benefits, utilizing M.E.B.A.-contracted Keystone Ocean Services, was finalized this week. The MOU is available for review at the Union halls. Anyone interested in these short to medium length surge opportunities should contact Adam Smith Gulf Coast Vice President at [asmith@mebaunion.org](mailto:asmith@mebaunion.org).

Padgett Swann Machinery has long been aware of the expertise and professionalism of our M.E.B.A. engineers, and the current M.E.B.A. leadership team worked to find a mutually beneficially arrangement that will prove an asset to their already successful business model, while providing more diverse opportunities to our membership that include Union benefits.

The Union's District Executive Committee has made it a priority to continue to find and secure professional work opportunities that deliver plenty of options for mariners at all stages of their careers and lives.

### **K.P. CADETS GET A JUMP ON SEAFARING CAREERS WITH THE M.E.B.A.**

Eight top Kings Point cadets with seagoing aspirations recently wrapped up an eye-opening, productive week of training at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School in mid-March. Each of the budding young engineers from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy took part in the early spring installment of the M.E.B.A.'s Licensed Cadet Internship program that gives bright young mariners a head start on their shipping careers. The full program is scheduled for three weeks later this summer (July 11-29). The program allows cadets to acquire valuable knowledge and much-needed skills in a highly-professional and enjoyable learning environment. Cadets can take part in the program without making a commitment to the Union, but while they attend, they will learn more about the excellent career opportunities that the M.E.B.A. presents. Maritime academy juniors/seniors and recent

graduates can find out more and sign up for the summer program by visiting [www.mebaschool.org/admissions/cadet-intern-program](http://www.mebaschool.org/admissions/cadet-intern-program)

The eight cadets spent their week taking Government Vessel Operation training and earning their certifications for this key course that helps enable excellent job opportunities with the M.E.B.A. that will benefit the nation's economy and national security.

The eight Kings Pointers, all seniors, include Jason Aiello, James Aird, Daniel Mansfield, Aodhan Meyer, Eli Reese, Andrew Scherrer, Maxwell Sims and William Sims.

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac and Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha met with cadets toward the end of their week at the School, answered numerous questions and discussed the advantages of M.E.B.A. membership.

### **REP. DON YOUNG WAS A MARITIME INDUSTRY LEADER**

Congressman Don Young (R-AK), a gruff and unapologetic champion for Alaska and U.S.-flag shipping, passed into the great unknown last week at the age of 88. Born in California, he relocated to Alaska in 1959, the year the "Last Frontier" became a state. He served in the Army, mined gold, was a grade school teacher and a tugboat captain, among many other occupations before he turned to politics. He was first elected to Congress in 1973 and was serving out his 25<sup>th</sup> term in office as Alaska's only House Member. A strong Jones Act supporter, he was a reliable proponent of U.S.-flag shipping. The Propeller Club honored him with the 'Salute to Congress Award' in 1999 to recognize his critical support for the U.S. Merchant Marine. Rep. Young was a key voice on the old House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee and served as the Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee from 2001 to 2007. The "Dean of the House" and longest-serving Republican representative will lie in state at the U.S. Capitol on Tuesday, March 29.

### **BILL TO BETTER OVERSEE CARRIER PRACTICES & BEEF UP FMC NEARS FULL PASSAGE**

A bi-partisan bill to make the Federal Maritime Commission a more effective regulating agency that is able to crack down on adverse carrier practices has advanced to the Senate floor. The "Ocean Shipping Reform Act" has already passed the House and will likely gain Senate approval, though final Senate and House bill language would have to be reconciled through a conference committee.

Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and John Thune (R-SD) introduced the bi-partisan legislation in the Senate. A similar bill was fronted by Reps. John Garamendi (D-CA) and Dusty Johnson (R-SD) in the House which passed with bipartisan support in a 364-60 vote. "Congestion at ports and increased shipping costs pose unique challenges for U.S. exporters, who have seen the price of shipping containers increase four-fold in just two years. Meanwhile, ocean carriers have reported record profits," said Sen. Klobuchar. "This legislation will help level the playing field for American exporters so they can get their goods to market in a timely manner for a fair price."

The Ocean Shipping Reform Act would:

- Require ocean carriers to certify that late fees — known as "detention and demurrage" charges — comply with federal regulations or face penalties;

- Shift burden of proof regarding the reasonableness of detention or demurrage charges from the invoiced party to the ocean carrier;
- Prohibit ocean carriers from unreasonably declining shipping opportunities for U.S. exports, as determined by the FMC in new required rulemaking;
- Require ocean common carriers to report to the FMC each calendar quarter on total import/export tonnage and 20-foot equivalent units (loaded/empty) per vessel that makes port in the U.S.;
- Authorize the FMC to self-initiate investigations of ocean common carrier's business practices and apply enforcement measures, as appropriate; and
- Establish new authority for the FMC to register shipping exchanges.

### **LABOR EXPRESSES DISGUST OVER P&O FIRINGS**

Labor unions voiced outrage at the sudden firings of 786 UK union crewmembers working for P&O Ferries, a subsidiary of Dubai company DP World, via a pre-recorded Zoom call. The company plans to replace the fired workers with cheap non-union, foreign labor. The company sent security teams onboard many of its 20 operating vessels to forcibly eject any fired worker who lingered too long.

Despite receiving millions in COVID aid from the British Government, P&O took advantage of weak labor laws to dismiss its workers that were represented by Nautilus International and the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT). The company previously reflagged its fleet away from the UK to the flag of Cyprus in 2019. Unions believe the firings were carried out in violation of UK and international law. The incident prompted widespread union protests in London and at UK ports. UK transport workers organized a petition and called for a boycott of P&O Ferries.

International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) President Paddy Crumlin said, "DP World's callous decision to sack and attack 800 hard-working seafarers represents a brutal attack on their dignity...In doing so, they're breaching laws and failing to meet their own company's standards."

European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) President Frank Moreels agreed and said the use of non-union replacement labor amounts to a fundamental breach of workers' rights to freedom of association. "Their plan to outsource the jobs is in tatters. Reports are coming in across Europe that their original strategy was to replace the sacked workers with Russian and Ukrainian seafarers," said Moreels. "What we're seeing now is a chaotic scramble to recruit seafarers on two week contracts through a shady shell corporation with links to the Paradise papers...If the company was in actual trouble, which it's not, it should have approached unions. This would have allowed time for fair and reasonable discussions to ensure that these workers' rights were protected and that P&O Ferries' passengers are not inconvenienced or put at risk by ill-thought decisions," he said.

Nautilus International is prodding the government to take action against "these law breakers who think they can buy silence and bully seafarers into unemployment or accepting lower wages and detrimental and unsafe terms and conditions of employment." You can add your name to the global letter of protest against P&O by visiting this page: <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/po-global-letter-of-protest>

### **ANOTHER STARBUCKS GOES UNION**

Workers at a Starbucks in Seattle, the coffee giant's "hometown," unanimously voted to go union, the seventh U.S. Starbucks store to organize since December. Among 13 eligible voters, Seattle's

Broadway and Denny Starbucks workers voted unanimously to be represented by Workers United, which is part of SEIU. Starbucks has been vehemently anti-union and the National Labor Relations Board recently filed a complaint against them for alleged retaliation against pro-union workers. Starbucks owns about 9,000 stores around the country and over 100 locations have already filed petitions to organize, so far.

### **“SPRING OPEN” 4MF DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT IS SATURDAY AT CMES**

All are welcome to attend and participate in the upcoming Disc Golf tournament scheduled to take place this Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School. All proceeds will benefit a great cause – the M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF) which provides upkeep and makes improvements to the Memorial Park at the School. As you know, the Memorial was created to honor fallen seafarers who have delivered the goods and answered the call of this country since 1775. The Foundation supporting the Memorial is a section 501(c)(3) entity under Internal Revenue Service rules, so all donations are tax deductible. The 4MF’s Spring Open “Frisbee Golf” tournament on March 26 starts at 1 pm - open to everyone - with a \$25 entry fee. This is a great way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Come on by! For more info, contact 4MF Chairman Bill Van Loo. He can be reached at (443) 676-6248 or [bvanloo@bvlworks.org](mailto:bvanloo@bvlworks.org)

### **WEST COAST HALLS CLOSED NEXT THURSDAY FOR CHAVEZ DAY**

West Coast Union halls will be closed on Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup> to observe labor giant Cesar Chavez’s birthday. Chavez was an American farm worker, labor leader and civil rights activist. He was known for his use of non-violent tactics and made the farm workers’ struggle a moral cause and gained nationwide support. His family lost their farm in Arizona during the Great Depression and he moved to California and became a migrant farm worker facing much adversity during those 14 years. In 1952, he became an organizer and effective voice for the Community Service Organization, a civil rights group. Four years after becoming the CSO Director, he left the organization and along with Dolores Huerta, co-founded the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers. He led his union on a series of strikes and work actions that led to extraordinary gains and protections for farm workers across the country.

He spent time in the U.S. Navy as a young man. In 2012, the Military Sealift Command dry cargo vessel USNS CESAR CHAVEZ, with M.E.B.A. officers proudly serving in the engine room, went into service. A well-received 1997 documentary, *The Fight in the Fields*, catalogued Chavez’s story and the struggles of the Farmworkers. A 2014 movie with Hollywood actors, entitled *Cesar Chavez (An American Hero)*, is also worth checking out.

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

**Monday, April 4** – All Halls Closed (*Jesse Calboon Day*)

**Tuesday, April 5** – **Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle-Fife@1300.**

**Wednesday, April 6** – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register at [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

**Thursday, April 7** – **L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

**Friday, April 8** – **Honolulu@1100.**

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