

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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### **MATSON COMPLETES UPGRADE OF ALASKA FLEET**

Matson Navigation announced the conclusion of upgrades to the last of its three D-7 Class vessels allowing them to be among the cleanest running in Alaska. The ships were outfitted with new exhaust scrubber systems which help eliminate virtually all sulfur dioxide and particulate emissions. Work was completed on the MATSON ANCHORAGE joining sister ships MATSON KODIAK and MATSON TACOMA which underwent the same upgrade work last year.

The state-of-the-art hybrid “wet scrubber” exhaust gas cleaning (EGC) technology is unlike any other on a U.S.-flagged vessel. When operating within 12 miles of the coastline, it uses a closed loop system which sprays fresh water treated with sodium hydroxide into the vessel’s exhaust system and then collects and treats the wash water to neutralize harmful compounds. Consistent with Matson’s zero-solid-waste policy, the wash water is then off-loaded in port for disposal in accordance with strict environmental standards. The system reduces sulfur dioxide and particulate matter in emissions to levels below limits set by stringent federal and state environmental regulations. Testing of the equipment in recent months has shown fleet sulfur emissions below those of vessels using low-sulfur fuel.

“Our hybrid system is new, so it has required extensive testing and independent analysis to earn federal certification,” said Matson President Ron Forest. “The Coast Guard and EPA have been enthusiastic about the environmental benefits and worked closely with our engineers to develop and certify our new system. It has become a good example of public/private sector partnership in bringing environmental innovation to the marketplace.” Matson’s Alaska fleet upgrades were part of more than \$50 million the company has invested in new equipment and upgrades to its Alaska operations in its first 18 months in the market, including two additional ships it keeps ready as reserve vessels principally for Alaska service to provide increased or replacement capacity should needs arise.

### **ICS PUSHING FOR DRAMATIC CO<sup>2</sup> REDUCTIONS**

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is urging the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to adopt dramatic CO<sup>2</sup> reduction objectives on behalf of the international shipping sector in order to match the ambitious Paris Agreement on climate change. ICS is an influential international shipping industry trade association representing ship-owners. It develops best practices and guidance used by operators globally. In a submission to IMO Member States, ICS is proposing that IMO adopt three objectives: To maintain international shipping’s annual total CO<sup>2</sup> emissions below 2008 levels;

To reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions per ton-km, as an average across international shipping, by at least 50% by 2050, compared to 2008; and to reduce international shipping's total annual CO<sup>2</sup> emissions by an agreed percentage by 2050, compared to 2008, as a point on a continuing trajectory of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions reduction.

ICS Chairman Esben Poulsen said, "Shipping has a very good story to tell about reducing CO<sup>2</sup> but this is difficult to convey so long as there is no clear signal from IMO as to what our collective CO<sup>2</sup> reduction objectives should be." ICS is suggesting that IMO should adopt these objectives as part of the initial IMO CO<sup>2</sup> reduction strategy to be agreed in 2018.

## **WWII MARINER COMPENSATION BILL, MATHEWS MEN BOOK HIGHLIGHTED AT DC EVENT**

A terrific afternoon event at a Congressional building earlier today in Washington DC helped underscore the tremendous contributions of WWII mariners and promoted legislation to assist survivors. A packed room – half of which were fresh-faced Congressional staffers – attended the event sponsored by the Navy League and USA Maritime, which includes the M.E.B.A.

Author William Geroux discussed his new book, relating many colorful anecdotes from "The Mathews Men: Seven Brothers & the War against Hitler's U-Boats." A great read, it trumpets the heroic role of mariners in World War II as told through the true story of an extended family of seafarers from Mathews County, VA who joined the war effort. It's available right now on Amazon.com for \$10.

Rep. Al Green (D-TX) and Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) took part in the event and stressed the importance of Rep. Green's bill (H.R. 154) that would provide surviving WWII merchant mariners with a one-time \$25,000 benefit. "This is a debt that's long overdue," Rep. Lowenthal acknowledged. Rep. Green noted that shortly before President Franklin Roosevelt died in 1945, he urged Congress to recognize WWII mariners (who were not included in the G.I. Bill of Rights) – but it didn't happen. "We were wrong [not to do it then]," said Rep. Green. "We should have done it sooner. But it's better to do it now than never at all."

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer, Bill Van Loo, whose father and grandfather were WWII mariners, attended the event and later presented a signed copy of Geroux's book to Congressman Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX) who proudly displays the Merchant Marine flag in his Congressional office.

## **PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST RANSOMWARE**

The malicious ransomware known as "WannaCry" has compromised hundreds of thousands of computers around the world in recent weeks and will continue to wreak havoc on unprotected PCs. Ransomware infects computers by shutting out user access until a ransom is paid to unlock it. Microsoft has released a patch that, once installed, will help secure your system from the threat. Everyone is encouraged to update your operating system and implement vigorous cybersecurity practices at home, work, and school. These practices include:

- Update your systems to include the latest patches and software updates.
- Do not click on or download unfamiliar links or files in emails.
- Back up your data to prevent possible loss, whether you are at a home, work, or school computer.

## **\$66 BILLION IN FEDERAL INVESTMENTS NEEDED FOR PORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEMANDS, CONFERENCE TOLD**

A serious federal commitment in our nation's seaports over the next decade is needed to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century freight network needs, American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) President Kurt Nagle told a ports and transportation gathering.

At a panel briefing in Washington DC titled "By Road, Rail and Sea: Building a 21st Century Multi-modal Freight Network," Nagle noted "Overall, activities at our nation's ports support 23 million American jobs, generate \$4.6 trillion in annual economic activity and produce \$321 billion a year in tax receipts. To build America's 21st-century seaport infrastructure and ensure these economic impacts continue, our ports need a combined \$66 billion of federal investments over the next 10 years into the roads, rails, and waterways that connect to them."

Panelists noted that port and state DOT officials need the funding and flexibility to adapt to new trade patterns to accommodate anticipated freight growth. They pointed out that Congress must continue to provide the resources to states for highway freight projects through the National Highway Freight program and fully enable tax revenues from the Harbor Maintenance Tax to be used for the intended purpose of navigation channel maintenance.

## **EXPERTS: SOMALI PIRACY 'IS ON A KNIFE-EDGE'**

Piracy in the waters near Somalia 'is on a knife-edge' following a recent rise in attacks on shipping and a reduction in naval forces in the region, security experts have warned the industry. Seafarers and ship-owners need to increase their vigilance and redouble the efforts to comply with Best Management Practices for preventing attacks in the face of the growing threat, the Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP) meeting in London was told. Dirk Siebels, co-author of OBP's annual report on the state of maritime piracy, said there is evidence showing that shipping companies have cut back on security in response to a downturn in attacks off Somalia between 2014 and the start of this year. The percentage of vessels carrying armed guards fell by around 12.5% to less than 33% during 2016, and the number carrying three armed guards instead of four rose sharply during the same period. Colonel Richard Cantrill, chief of staff of the EU Naval Force, described the recent increase in incidents off Somalia as worrying – warning that the situation will be on a knife-edge over the next eight weeks, with resurgence of attacks being possible if pirates succeed in hijacking a vessel and its crew before the monsoon season. BIMCO maritime security officer Giles Noakes said he was concerned by evidence that some vessels have not been following recommended precautions in high-risk areas. "It is ridiculous to be sailing within 10 nautical miles of the coast of Somalia and if you do not follow BMP, then the knife-edge will be cut," he added. 'We need to make sure that the message is out there that this is a delicate situation.' OBP's annual report reveals that armed attacks on ships in West African waters nearly doubled in 2016, with 96 crew members taken hostage compared to 44 in 2015. It also notes an alarming increase in the numbers of seafarers being kidnapped for ransom in the Sulu and Celebes Seas in Southeast Asia.

## **SNUG HARBOR CONTINUES TO ASSIST MARINERS**

Though Sailors' Snug Harbor (SSH) no longer owns or operates a retirement facility for mariners in Sea Level, NC, Staten Island, NY or anywhere else, they still continue to assist mariners in their home communities. The non-profit organization financially aids retired mariners with a proven need of assistance. The Trustees of the Sailors' Snug Harbor (SSH) was incorporated in 1806 as the result of a bequest made by Captain Robert Richard Randall, a wealthy New York merchant. Today, Snug

Harbor offers support to career mariners who can demonstrate they have a need for financial assistance and meet the following requirements:

- 2555 days of deep sea time, at least 5 years on U.S. ships or 14 years working on inland waters;
- 65 years of age or older or on disability (Some exceptions may be made);
- Proven need for financial assistance;
- An individual with at least \$50,000 in assets will not be eligible (primary residence excluded);
- All public benefits available to a mariner must be accessed (if eligible) before any subsidy from SSH is approved. For example, VA benefits, Medicaid, food stamps etc.

More than 16,500 mariners have been assisted since its inception in the early nineteenth century. If you have any questions or are in need of assistance, please call an SSH Mariner Counselor at 1-888-257-5456. The web site [www.thesailorssnugharbor.org](http://www.thesailorssnugharbor.org) includes the application.

**REMINDER: INCLUDE ALL DOCS WHEN FILING FOR VACATION PAY**

Members are reminded to be thorough when submitting an application for Vacation Pay at the halls and/or with the Plans Office and include all required documents, including Coast Guard Discharges and pay vouchers. Pay vouchers are used to track Social Security Tax maximums, to track wages as Medicare Tax increases and to check for any overlap days that can be identified. As detailed on the application itself, the following documents must be submitted along with your application:

- A copy of the stub portion of your last vacation benefit check.
- Coast Guard discharges and pay vouchers covering all employment since your last vacation.
- Pay vouchers must cover the entire period of employment and show all wages and tax deductions.
- Pay vouchers covering any periods of unearned wages since your last vacation.

***Failure to submit proof of all accumulated work performed to the date of application could result in the permanent loss of vacation benefits earned on the employment not submitted.***

You may also need to submit:

- A Carry Over Vacation Form from your last vacation – if applicable.
- An original copy of the Converted Overtime Worksheet, if applicable, regardless of whether or not you are applying for converted overtime vacation.
- A letter from an authorized Union official granting permission for early return or excess sailing, if applicable.

*If prior written permission is not obtained and an Officer returns to work early, they will be subject to a penalty which is loss of vacation benefits for the next six months of employment (180 days).*

You can contact the Vacation Plan staff in Baltimore prior to sending an application. They can be reached at 800-811-6322 or 410-547-9111.

## **FACEBOOK PHOTOS NEEDED**

We are always looking for photos from any of the M.E.B.A. bargaining units to better illustrate upcoming editions of the *Marine Officer* and to keep our Facebook site current. Members are urged to send in your photos to [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org). Any photos with an M.E.B.A. connection, at sea or a shore, are appreciated. Digital pictures should be taken at the highest resolution setting. In all cases, make sure you I.D. the photos. Check out the M.E.B.A. Facebook site which is usually updated daily.

## **SIGN UP FOR M.E.B.A. VACATION PLAN DIRECT DEPOSIT**

Designed for convenience, M.E.B.A. members can help themselves by taking advantage of the Vacation Plan Direct Deposit that will help save them time and ease Plans processing costs. Authorization forms are available from the Plans Office, Plans Outport Offices and at the Plans' website – [www.mebaplans.org](http://www.mebaplans.org) (Forms, Vacation). Complete details are available on the Plans' site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or [vacation@mebaplans.org](mailto:vacation@mebaplans.org) for more info.

## **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS**

*Monday, June 5* – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

*Tuesday, June 6* – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

*Wednesday, June 7* – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

*Thursday, June 8* – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

*Friday, June 9* - 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](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). For publication and related inquiries contact: Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org)*