

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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LIBERTY PEACE TURNOVER: CONTINUE FORWARDING RÉSUMÉS

As announced last week, the M.E.B.A. recently came to agreement with Liberty Maritime to crew the LIBERTY PEACE. The transition is scheduled to take place in Beaumont, TX on or about June 9th. Contract wages and benefits will be the same as the other three Liberty PC/TC vessels (LIBERTY PRIDE, PROMISE and PASSION).

The Union is asking for résumés from members and applicants interested in employment on the LIBERTY PEACE to be forwarded as soon as possible to the NY/NJ Union hall. Those candidate résumés received before May 15th will get priority consideration. *Please note: if you have previously forwarded a résumé to Liberty for consideration but were not hired, this should not preclude you from submitting your résumé again.*

Forward all résumés to M.E.B.A. Atlantic Coast VP Jason Callahan (jcallahan@mebaunion.org) or NY Patrolman Nico Sermoneta (nsermoneta@mebaunion.org) at the NY/NJ M.E.B.A. Union hall so they can ensure the Company receives them. Our members and applicants should consider these new job opportunities and your assistance with this transition and turnover are appreciated.

INTERLAKE TO OPERATE GREAT LAKES HOPPER BARGE

M.E.B.A.-contracted Interlake Steamship Company, through Interlake Logistics Solutions, will be market-testing a 418-foot Great Lakes towing barge time chartered from Moran Towing. The MONTVILLE, a single-hold, covered hopper barge with a 14,400-short ton capacity will be able to carry a wide variety of cargoes from bulk products to steel to specialty project cargoes such as wind turbines, generators, heavy equipment and other large structural components. The barge will eventually feature a rail-mounted gantry that will support a large material handler capable of digging or lifting cargo out of the cargo hold and onto shore.

"We are very excited to bring the MONTVILLE into service to provide new maritime logistic solutions for our partners on the Great Lakes," says Interlake President Mark W. Barker. "We're seeing an increasing need for moving other types of cargo than the free-flowing bulk cargoes that we have traditionally moved. We felt that it was important to respond and fulfill the needs of our customers."

Brendan O'Connor, Interlake's Vice President of Marketing and Marine Traffic, said "While barge service is available in the region, we believe the MONTVILLE is a unique asset. Its sheer size and versatility sets it apart. The MONTVILLE will be the largest U.S.-flagged barge of its kind on the

Great Lakes. With its large, open cargo hold – that is completely covered – it will be able to carry high cubic cargoes as well as heavy cargoes protected from the environment."

INTO THE RAGING SEA: NEW BOOK DETAILS EL FARO TRAGEDY

A newly-released book cataloging the loss of the EL FARO is drawing critical praise for its unflinching examination of one of the more affecting maritime tragedies in decades. Battered by Hurricane Joaquin, the vessel was overwhelmed by an angry Atlantic Ocean on Oct. 1, 2015 while en route to San Juan, Puerto Rico.

INTO THE RAGING SEA: Thirty-Three Mariners, One Megastorm and the Sinking of El Faro hit bookshelves this week garnering acclaim from reviewers and from those who've already plowed through the book's 416 pages. To help her recreate the final moments of the EL FARO and her crew, Boston-based journalist Rachel Slade was aided by hours of audio recordings extracted from the ill-fated vessel's Voyage Data Recorder (VDR).

In addition, Slade's hundreds of interviews with family members and maritime experts, along with the Coast Guard and NTSB probes into the sinking, helped her vividly illustrate the circumstances that led to the heart-rending demise of the vessel and her 33 person crew.

It humanizes the tragedy, giving voice to the mariners aboard and the families they left behind. A compassionate telling of the tragedy, it traces decisions made, both on ship and on land, that led to EL FARO's sinking. It also examines weather forecasting, the role of the National Hurricane Center, and the challenges that mariners face. Additionally, it provides a broad (and at times flawed) overview of US maritime history, labor unions, and the history of admiralty law and shipping regulations, as well as contextualizing the Merchant Marine of today.

It is not without its faults. The book regurgitates Puerto Rico's oft-repeated mantra that the Jones Act is considerably culpable for the island's dire economic woes. It unfortunately reoffers the thoroughly discredited notion that the Jones Act was the cause of relief cargo disruptions in the aftermath of last year's Hurricane Maria. As insiders know, 10,000 containers of food and relief items were stacked up at the San Juan seaport in the wake of the Hurricane. Destroyed internal infrastructure was actually to blame for the inability to successfully distribute the previously delivered Jones Act cargoes throughout the island.

The book does much better when reconstructing the final voyage of the EL FARO, with the luxury of tapping into the mindset of crewmembers via direct quotes preserved by the vessel's VDR. A real page-turner, the book is now on sale.

AFL-CIO REPORT REVEALS 150 WORKERS DIED EVERY DAY IN '16

A newly-released AFL-CIO report revealed that even more on-the-job worker deaths occurred in 2016 than reported in the previous year. The release of the annual "Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect" report uncovered that 5,190 American workers died on the job in 2016, an increase from 4,836 deaths the previous year. Another estimated 50,000 to 60,000 died from occupational diseases, meaning approximately 150 workers died on the job each day from preventable, hazardous workplace conditions. Overall, the national job fatality rate increased to 3.6 per 100,000 workers from 3.4 in 2015. 2017 figures are not yet available.

The report shows the highest workplace fatality rates are in Wyoming (12.3 per 100,000 workers), Alaska (10.6), Montana (7.9), South Dakota (7.5) and North Dakota (7.0). Startlingly, workplace violence is now the second-leading cause of workplace death, accounting for 866 workplace deaths, including 500 homicides. Other report highlights show that the construction, transportation and agriculture industries remain among the most dangerous. In 2016, 991 construction workers were killed—the highest total of any sector. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting was the most dangerous industry sector, with a fatality rate of 23.2 per 100,000 workers. AFL-CIO criticized the current administration’s de-emphasis on important OSHA initiatives and said the White House continues to enact an aggressive deregulatory agenda, gutting safety rules and proposing deep cuts to worker safety and health training. “We deserve to walk out the front door in the morning knowing we’ll return home safe and healthy after a full day’s work,” said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. “It’s a travesty that working people continue to lose their lives to corporate greed. The selfish and reckless decisions being made in boardrooms and in Washington are killing the very people who built this country. This is officially a national crisis, and it’s only getting worse.”

HELPFUL AUDIO CHAT ON MMC MEDICAL CERTIFICATION CHANGES

In March, the U.S. Committee on the Maritime Transportation System, a Federal interagency coordinating committee, hosted a webinar on the Medical Certification process that is part of the merchant mariner credential. National Maritime Center’s (NMC) commanding officer Capt. Kirsten Martin and Chief of the Medical Evaluations Division Dr. Laura Torres-Reyes addressed upcoming changes in the merchant mariner medical certification and answered questions from webinar participants. The audio file of this illuminating webinar is available at the following link: www.cmts.gov/topics/m2m - just scroll down on that page to the “Military to Mariner Webinar Series” topic head to find the 71 minute long audio file. Presentation slides to accompany the audio are also available there.

SUPPORT THE 4MF – PURCHASE A RAFFLE TICKET!

Tickets for the raffle in support of the M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF) are available at each of the Union halls as well as Headquarters, M.E.B.A. Plans and at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School (see Trish). POID members can contact April who has a block of tickets. Members, applicants, retirees and everyone else are strongly encouraged to support the 4MF which provides upkeep and improvements to the Memorial Park located at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School (CMES). The Memorial honors fallen mariners who helped blaze the proud tradition our members continue today. The winning raffle ticket (\$2 apiece) will be drawn on October 9, 2018 at the CMES during the monthly membership meeting. You do not need to be present to win. The grand winner will receive a princely sum - 50% of the proceeds from raffle sales – so plan to purchase a thick stack of tickets. Members are urged to keep M.E.B.A.’s Memorial in mind all year long and support it when they can.

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.-flagged 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.

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 includes the application.

REMEMBER TO BRING SHOT RECORDS ONBOARD

Mariners are reminded to keep their vaccination records with them when sailing – especially when shipping onboard MSC-contracted vessels. If unsure what is required, it is a good idea to check with an M.E.B.A. clinic.

USE M.E.B.A. PORTAL TO IRON OUT LWOP/VACATION DUES LAPSES

Some M.E.B.A. bargaining unit members pay dues by automatic Dues Check-Off (DCO). But when DCO members take vacation or (in the case of the Government fleet) Leave without Pay (LWOP), there are lapses in payroll where dues aren't automatically submitted. Those members can go to the M.E.B.A. payment portal, select their bargaining unit on the "Check Off Catch-Up" section and make sure they remain as a member in good standing. Finally, a "Vacation Pay" option is now available on the portal. This will prove useful for port engineers and Union officials who can now make these payments online. Many members and applicants think the portal is the most efficient and advantageous manner to remain in good standing and extend a needed monetary infusion to vital Union programs. You can access the portal by visiting the M.E.B.A. homepage (www.mebaunion.org).

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Tomorrow: Informational Meeting in Cleveland – Friday, May 4@1230.

Monday, May 7 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, May 8 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, May 9 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, May 10 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, May 11 – Honolulu@1100.

-----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