

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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PANAMANIAN UNIONS CONTINUE PROTESTS DESPITE LAST WEEK'S DUST-UP

Workers at a demonstration last week calling for a safer Panama Canal were stomped on by police and subjected to rubber bullets and teargas. A handful of Canal workers, including members of M.E.B.A. and MM&P affiliated unions, were hogtied by police and hauled off to jail, apparently because their peaceful dissent was not appreciated.

M.E.B.A. affiliate Union de Ingenieros Marinos (UIM), which represents Canal engineers, has been outspoken about Panama Canal Authority (ACP) cost-cutting safety shortcuts that have created a more dangerous workplace. MM&P affiliate Union de Capitanes y Oficiales de Cubierta (UCOC), a Panama Canal union representing tugboat captains, says its members are being targeted by the ACP, (the Government agency responsible for Canal operations) for speaking up about serious safety concerns.

At the demonstration, canal worker unions appealed for safer working conditions following several incidents. They also called for improvements to working hours to help lower the fatigue level the current system exacerbates. UCOC says that collective ACP bargaining agreement negotiations have been conducted "in bad faith." A UCOC spokesman said, "Canal labor relations are at an all-time low, and it appears that the ACP seem to be reveling in this fact. We asked ACP to approach us as trade unions to negotiate properly, but it seems to have forced the police's action by ignoring that request, in order to justify the use of force."

Nautilus Federation director Mark Dickinson said, "Workers should be able to call for safety at work without fear of violence or repression. It appears there are grounds for complaints to be made to the International Labour Organization (ILO) about the violation of workers' rights, and we stand ready to support UCOC and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) in escalating the matter."

UIM, UCOC and the other Panamanian unions representing canal workers planned to continue their demonstrations today.

APL CREW EXTINGUISHES ENGINE ROOM FIRE, NO INJURIES

Last Wednesday, crewmembers extinguished an engine room fire onboard the M/V PRESIDENT EISENHOWER, a 7,500 TEU containership that sails for APL under the Maritime Security Program.

APL's parent company, CMA CGM, said the fire broke out while the vessel was transiting Southern California's Santa Barbara Channel. "Thanks to the crew's rapid response, the fire was extinguished," the statement said. "There are no reported injuries or pollution."

Managed by APL Maritime, the 984-foot M/V PRESIDENT EISENHOWER was built in 2005. M.E.B.A.'s L.A. Branch Agent Rich Doherty visited the engineers on Friday aboard the ship in San Pedro to make sure they were safe and well represented. The ship appears that it will be sidelined for the time-being for repairs.

AMC's CAPONITI PLANNING RETIREMENT; SUCCESSOR SOUGHT

The American Maritime Congress (AMC) has announced the upcoming retirement of its President, James Caponiti, later this summer. Jim is winding down a 47-year career as an industry advocate with the last decade spent working on behalf of the U.S. Merchant Marine from AMC's Washington DC Headquarters. He will continue in that capacity until AMC can seat a worthy successor, as the organization begins its search for their next leader.

Speaking for the entire AMC Board of Directors, AMC Board Chairman and M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac thanked Jim "...for his commitment and leadership over the last decade." He called Caponiti "a tireless advocate for the U.S. Merchant Marine and the U.S.-flag industry. His knowledge of the U.S.-flag shipping community has helped our industry navigate through sometimes difficult waters."

The AMC Board of Directors also announced that it has engaged the executive recruitment firm of JDG Associates, Ltd. (JDG) to conduct the search for Jim's successor. All parties wishing to express an interest in the position, or to suggest the name of someone else they believe to be qualified to serve, are urged to contact Paul Belford, the Principal at JDG in charge of the search. He can be reached at belford@jdgsearch.com or (301) 340-2210. An announcement on the position can be found at (<https://jdgsearch.com/active-searches/>). (NOTE: All inquiries to JDG will be treated on a strictly confidential basis.)

UPCOMING 4MF, G&W FUNDRAISER AT SCHOOL WILL INCLUDE SILENT AUCTION, DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT; ITEM DONATIONS ENCOURAGED

The M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF) is putting together a Fundraiser and Disc Golf Tournament in mid-June to benefit the Memorial Park at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering 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 event will take place on June 17th and will include a silent auction, a 50/50 raffle, a disc golf tournament, music and fun.

Donations of auction items would be appreciated. If you have an item of value that you feel could raise money for this great cause, please contact the Foundation. The proceeds from this auction will help usher in additional improvements and necessary maintenance of the Memorial. Contributions made to the 4MF are tax deductible. Some of the donation items will help supplement the Good &

Welfare fund. The G&W fund is used to help active and retired members and their families in times of need.

The Disc Golf Tournament (Frisbee Golf) is named in honor of Leroy Koehler, a longtime member who gave back to the M.E.B.A. with a generous donation upon his passing. The 1st annual Leroy Koehler Memorial Disc Golf Tournament will take place on Thursday, June 17th and will be reprised on Saturday June 19th. There is a \$25 entry fee for the tournament. 18 challenging holes (baskets) have been set up in strategic locations on the School campus and it should be a great time. Hole sponsorship opportunities are available.

Please contact 4MF Chairman Bill Van Loo for further information at (443) 676-6248 or bvanloo@bvlworks.org

VIRTUAL NATIONAL MARITIME DAY OBSERVANCE COMING UP

The upcoming National Maritime Day observance will be conducted virtually for a second year in a row, perhaps the last online adaptation of the annual event. National Maritime Day – May 22nd - honors mariners who have served our nation in times of peace and war. The day is also a tribute to the maritime industry as a whole and its critical importance to our economy and national security. This year, the Department of Transportation’s Maritime Administration is planning to virtually celebrate our industry on Thursday, May 20 at 10 am. The program is currently being finalized and a link will be forthcoming when available.

Last year, the National Maritime Day observance was conducted as a YouTube broadcast and was made available for additional viewings.

The Department of Transportation is headed up by Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg. Lucinda Lessley is the Acting Maritime Administrator.

HOUSE MEMBERS CALL FOR FULL MSP FUNDING

On April 30, a group of 93 bipartisan congressional lawmakers urged the House Appropriations Committee to include \$318 million dollars for Fiscal Year 2022 to fully fund the 60 vessels enrolled in the Maritime Security Program (MSP). The letter cites MSP as a “...vital component of our military strategic sealift and global response capability. It is designed to ensure that the United States has the U.S.-flag commercial sealift capability and trained U.S. citizen merchant mariners available in times of war or national emergencies.”

M.E.B.A. members may recall that the life of the Maritime Security Program was recently extended through 2035 due to extensive lobbying efforts to both political parties by the Union, that was enacted in the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. However, funding must be continually secured through separate enactments of subsequent appropriations bills. The high number of signatories reflects continued efforts by the M.E.B.A. and industry stakeholders to successfully engage lawmakers through virtual meetings over the past year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

STATE DEPT. WILL ASSIST MARINERS NEEDING TO RENEW PASSPORTS

The State Department said that due to public health measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, its Passport Services office continues to have limited operations at passport agencies and centers. They plan to assist mariners who urgently need a passport for international voyages, and whose current valid passport expires in 13 months or less.

The State Department issued a notice detailing instructions for applying for a passport for urgent work-related reasons or personal travel. The notice also gives instructions for your next step if you've already applied for a passport but have not yet received it. The full notice has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website in the Documents & Member Notices section. You can contact the National Passport Information Center at (877) 487-2778.

MARINER WELFARE GROUPS LOOK TO AID COVID-HIT INDIAN SEAFARERS

Leading seafarer welfare charities and shipping industry players have launched an emergency relief fund to support seafarers and their families devastated by the rampant COVID-19 pandemic in India and other countries. Seafarers have been the invisible victims of COVID-19, with hundreds of thousands marooned on vessels for months beyond agreed contracts, in some cases. Despite suggestions that the crew change crisis was near its end, the escalation of COVID-19 cases in India to more than 400,000 per day has prompted some major ports to prohibit ship crew changes for seafarers with recent travel history to India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

In response, the Seafarers International Relief Fund launched a \$1 million relief fund, established by The Seafarers' Charity, ISWAN, Sailors' Society, Stella Maris, and other charities – in a united appeal to the shipping industry – to deliver urgent support to seafarers and their families in India.

AFL-CIO REPORT REVEALS 275 U.S. WORKERS KILLED DAILY

In 2019, 5,333 working people were killed on the job and an estimated 95,000 died from occupational diseases, according to the latest “Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect” report. That means every day, on average, 275 U.S. workers die from hazardous working conditions. And this was before the devastating COVID-19 pandemic that has been responsible for far too many worker infections and deaths in our country.

“This year, we commemorate 50 years of OSHA and the lives saved by ensuring workers are protected on the job,” said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler. “COVID-19 has been a stark reminder that workplace safety protections are absolutely critical, and we still have a long way to go. As a country, we must renew our commitment to safe jobs for all workers and invest the resources to make that happen.”

The fatality rate for Latino workers increased 14% from 2018 and is the highest rate since 2008. In 2019, there were 1,088 Latino worker deaths, compared with 961 Latino worker deaths in 2018. The majority (66%) of Latino workers who died on the job in 2019 were immigrants. Black workers are also at an increased risk of work-related deaths. In 2019, 634 Black workers died—the highest number in more than two decades. Workplace violence is the third-leading cause of workplace death. In 2019, deaths increased to 841, while more than 30,000 violence-related lost-time injuries were reported.

COMMERCIAL VESSEL MASK WEARING REQUIREMENTS UNCHANGED

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently published updated COVID-19 guidelines related to cruise ships and easing mask requirements for vaccinated people outdoors. The Coast Guard continues to work closely with the CDC for maritime related issues and confirmed with the CDC that the CDC requirements in Marine Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB) 02-21 Change 1 remains the most current guidance. *[MSIB 02-21, Change 1 is available on the M.E.B.A. website in the Docs & Member Notices section.]*

According to the CDC, there is no change related to the requirements for wearing a mask on commercial vessels in Executive Order (13998) issued by the President on January 21, 2001 and the CDC Order under section 361 of the Public Health Service Act. The CDC prevention measures continue to apply to all travelers, including those who are vaccinated. All travelers are required to wear a mask on all forms of public transportation and at transportation hubs. The Coast Guard will publish updated guidance as CDC requirements change. For more information, mariners can contact the Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance (CG-CVC), U.S. Coast Guard, 2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20593 at wearamask@uscg.mil.

LAST SECOND GIFTS FOR MOM - UNION-STYLE

Ok guys, admit it – Mother’s Day snuck up on you and you got nothin’. Here’s some ideas to show your appreciation to your mom and/or the mother of your child(ren) – union-style! On Sunday, you can say “I love you” with food, flowers, candy or champagne. Here’s where to go:

Grocery Stores - Albertsons (UFCW); Costco (IBT); Food 4 Less (UFCW); Gelson’s (UFCW); Lucky (UFCW); Pavilions (UFCW); Ralphs (UFCW); Stater Bros (UFCW); Vons (UFCW). **Chocolates** - Ghirardelli (BCTGM); Hershey (BCTGM, UFCW); Russell Stover (BCTGM, UFCW); See’s Candies (BCTGM). **Champagne** - Chase-Limogere (UFW, UFCW); Chateau St. Michelle (IBT); Cooks Champagne (UFCW); Tott’s Champagne (UFCW).

JUNE MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – ALL *REGULAR* MEETINGS ARE IN-PERSON

(All times are local)

Monday, June 7 – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300.

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

Wednesday, June 9 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; **Online Headquarters “Informational” Meeting@1300** (No voting)

Thursday, June 10 – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Monday, June 14 – 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 demonstrated 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 (and to send photos & hot news tips) 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.