

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

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



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

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### **TENTATIVE LONG-TERM AGREEMENT REACHED WITH HAPAG**

After a final bargaining session in Tampa last week, M.E.B.A. negotiators reached a tentative 12-year agreement with Marine Personnel & Provisioning (MPP) (Hapag/Crowley) covering the "Express Class" vessels in the MTL/Hapag U.S.-flag fleet. The current contract expires at the end of the year. The tentative agreement secures substantial raises as well as benefit improvements and strengthens work rules and job security, among other areas. The T.A. covers the five A7 6,900 TEU Flex engine Express-class ships which include the DELAWARE EXPRESS, COLORADO EXPRESS, HUDSON EXPRESS, MISSOURI EXPRESS, and POTOMAC EXPRESS.

M.E.B.A. Gulf Coast Vice President Adam Smith led the talks along with Tampa Branch Agent Nicole Greenway and M.E.B.A. Contracts Officer Mark Gallagher. Rank-and-file members attending various bargaining sessions during negotiations included Mark Maloney, Larry Balsamo, Craig LaChance, Sam Leshner, Todd Williams, David Greenway and Rich Lundin. Those members are issued heartfelt thanks for their involvement in the process and gratitude is expressed for all the input from members who assisted in talks.

The T.A. will be put to a ratification vote by members at the regular December membership meetings.

### **ASM/PATRIOT TO REENTER COMMERCIAL TRADES WITH RECENTLY PURCHASED TANKER; M.E.B.A. WILL CREW NEW ENTRY TO U.S.-FLAG**

A newly signed agreement with Patriot Contract Services will ensure that expert M.E.B.A. officers will crew up the M/T HAINA PATRIOT, a shallow draft product tanker that signals the company's return to the commercial trades. The last commercial vessel operated by ASM/Patriot was the integrated tug/barge MOKU PAHU that was eventually sold for scrap in 2019.

The 340-foot , 6765 DWT HAINA PATRIOT was constructed in a Chinese shipyard in 2011 as the SNANTI T1 and later renamed AMANI sailing under the flag of the Marshall Islands. ASM/Patriot will operate the U.S.-flag vessel in the Asia-Pacific trades. M.E.B.A. officers crewed up the vessel this week joining MM&P, SUP, MFOW and SIU mariners. The MOU for the vessel has been sent to each of the M.E.B.A. Union halls.

## **CONGRESS PASSES LONG-AWAITED BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE PACKAGE**

Late on Friday, the House passed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package that reauthorizes existing transportation programs and provides new spending for roads, bridges, electric vehicles, broadband, and water & port infrastructure. The legislation is considered one of the largest investments in transportation infrastructure in American history and includes nearly \$550 billion in new investments toward a number of domestic maritime industry priorities. Specifically, billions of dollars will be invested in port and ferry services supported by the M.E.B.A., including:

- \$1 billion for ferry service in rural areas including the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS)
- \$337 million for the construction of Ferry Boats and Terminal Facilities Program under the Federal Transit Administration
- \$250 million for the establishment of a Department of Transportation pilot program to provide grants for the purchase of electric or low-emission ferries
- \$2.25 billion for the Maritime Administration's Port Infrastructure Development Program, among other critical investments.

The bipartisan legislation was approved by the Senate last August by a 69-30 vote where it was stalled in the House following months-long negotiations as Congressional Democrats grappled with how to move forward on an anticipated multi-trillion dollar social spending package vote. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act went to President Biden's desk where he is expected to sign it into law on Monday as part of the Administration's campaign promise to create jobs and grow the economy through infrastructure spending.

## **M.E.B.A. ON HAND AS PRESIDENT TOURS BALTIMORE PORT**

M.E.B.A. took part in a visit by President Joe Biden at the Port of Baltimore where the Chief Executive discussed the newly passed infrastructure package which represents the largest ever federal investment in U.S. seaports. M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac and Secretary-Treasurer Roland "Rex" Rexha were on hand at the event which also included Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott, members of Maryland's Congressional delegation and the Executive Director of the Maryland Port Administration William Doyle, a former M.E.B.A. engineer who leads the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore.

In remarks, Biden called the infrastructure package "a win" for U.S. ports with more than \$17 billion for port and U.S. border entry points. That includes \$5.2 billion in direct funding for seaports that will help fund port equipment and facilities improvements, dredging, work on Marine Highways, and on- and near-dock rail infrastructure and emissions reduction upgrades, among many other areas.

He noted that the package is part of the plan to fight inflation, alleviate supply chain disruptions and create good union jobs. He said, "for American families, it means products moving faster and less expensively from factory floor, through the supply chain, to your home...This is a once-in-a-generation investment."

Members of the ILA, including Port longshoremen as well as MM&P representatives also attended the event. President Vokac spent some time with President Biden following the ceremony in discussion that was focused on incentivization issues that would help strengthen and increase the number of U.S.-flag ships.

## **BILL FOR MORE KP CADET SAFEGUARDS ABOARD COMMERCIAL SHIPS**

A bipartisan group of Senators have teamed up on legislation that would create additional safeguards to protect cadets sailing aboard commercial vessels during their sea year. Sens. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) introduced the “Improving Protections for Midshipmen Act,” which would strengthen Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment (SASH) prevention, response, investigation, and accountability in the maritime industry and provide additional safeguards for the Midshipmen at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA).

Sen. Collins noted that “this legislation would strengthen sexual violence prevention, response, investigation, and accountability measures to improve cadets’ safety. Congress must remain committed to reducing the instances of sexual assault at our service academies and providing appropriate care for survivors.”

Among other things, the legislation would give the Coast Guard authority to suspend or revoke a mariner’s license if the individual is found to have committed sexual harassment or sexual assault; Include commission of sexual assault as an independent and explicit ground for suspension or revocation, and add sexual harassment as a new form of misconduct on which a license could be lost; establish a sexual assault and sexual harassment database at the USMMA; Provide information, training, and resources to students and advance policies to increase diversity at the Academy and in the maritime workforce.

## **NEWBUILD MSC FLEET OILER CHRISTENED & LAUNCHED IN SAN DIEGO**

The second of six John Lewis-Class Military Sealift Command fleet oilers that will replace the aging Kaiser-class vessels was christened and launched at NASSCO’s San Diego shipyard on Saturday.

The USNS HARVEY MILK, named after the gay rights activist and former Navy diver, will provide underway replenishment of fuel and stores to US Navy ships at sea and jet fuel for aircraft assigned to aircraft carriers. M.E.B.A. represents the engineers in MSC’s civilian mariner fleet.

The USNS HARVEY MILK is 742-feet long and has the capacity to carry 156,000 barrels of oil, including the Navy’s new biofuels. The ship also offers a significant dry cargo capacity, aviation capability and reaches a speed of 20 knots.

Stuart Milk, nephew of the ship’s namesake and co-founder and President of the Harvey Milk Foundation, spoke at the ceremony along with Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) was a ship sponsor. Sen. Feinstein had known Milk when they served together on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and had been present when Milk was assassinated in 1978.

In addition to the MILK christening, two ships in the T-AO class fleet oiler program for the U.S. Navy – the future USNS EARL WARREN and the future USNS ROBERT F. KENNEDY are currently under construction. The lead ship, the USNS JOHN LEWIS was launched earlier this year.

## **APPLICANTS MUST PROVIDE HQ WITH REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION TO QUALIFY FOR UPCOMING VOTE ON MEMBERSHIP**

A letter recently sent by the Headquarters Membership Department details the outstanding requirements needed to be fulfilled by M.E.B.A. applicants in order to qualify for membership. Such letters are sent two times a year in the weeks preceding the release of the twice-a-year District Investigating Committee Report. DIC reports contain a list of qualified applicants who have fulfilled the obligations in their application packet (including sea service documentation and initiation fee) and are current on their service charges. The reports are put before members for a vote at the June and December meetings. Once members approve the report, listed applicants become members and the Membership Department informs them of their new status.

Qualified applicants who are trying to make membership must provide Headquarters with required documentation to ensure their inclusion on the next DIC report – to be voted on in the first week of December 2021. The DIC will meet two weeks before the December membership meetings to formalize their report. **To make membership, an applicant needs the required sailing days or specified years of employment with a particular bargaining unit, must be current with service charges and must complete other necessary requirements which may include an initiation fee and/or letters of recommendation.**

Applicants should know that they are responsible for providing their local Union hall/Headquarters with the documentation demonstrating their fulfillment of the application requirements. Once they submit the requisite amount of sea time (or documented years of service) to Headquarters and have otherwise fulfilled the needed requirements as stated in the application packet they signed, they may be eligible for membership. M.E.B.A. Headquarters does not, and cannot, update an Applicant's record with sailing time/years of service unless that Applicant submits the required paperwork, i.e. discharges, sea service letters, documentation of employment, to HQ, by e-mail, fax, or mail or via your local Union hall. For further information you can visit your local Union hall or contact the HQ Membership Department at (202) 638-5355 or [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org).

In addition, the DIC report will include a list of members or applicants that have been in dues or service charge arrears for two or more years. Once the membership votes on the report, those members and applicants will be DROPPED from the rolls. If you are in arrears and want to retain your membership or applicant status, you must contact Headquarters to make payment on your arrearage and return to good standing.

## **VACATION BENEFITS – 2021 YEAR-END CLOSING**

Apply for Vacation and Port Relief Benefits early to avoid the year-end rush.

- **FILING DEADLINE:** The deadline for issuing checks dated in 2021 in the Outports *and* the Plan Office is Thursday, December 16, 2021.
- **DIRECT DEPOSIT:** The final Direct Deposit Transfer for 2021 will be made on 12/17/2021 and the funds will be deposited into bank accounts on 12/21/2021.
- Any requests for Port Relief and Vacation checks received after 12/16/21 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid in the order received beginning 1/3/2022.

Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2021 must file before this deadline. Remember, Friday December 24, 2021 and Friday December 31, 2021 are holidays and the Outports and the Plan Office will be closed. It is always wise to plan ahead, so you should verify the specific holiday schedule with the Plan Office Representative.

### **SPLIT YOUR VACATION PAYMENTS BETWEEN 2021 AND 2022**

You can submit an Application for Vacation Pay prior to the end of the year and request that the payment of your vacation benefits be split. Two checks will be issued to you, one in 2021 and a second in 2022. The 12/16/2021 deadline applies to split claims also. The vacation benefits paid in this manner MUST be a **continuous vacation period**. Please contact the Vacation Plan staff in Baltimore at 800-811-6322 or 410-547-9111 if you have any questions.

### **“FALL OPEN” 4MF DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT LATER THIS MONTH AT CMES**

The M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF) will host a Disc (Frisbee) Golf tournament on November 28<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm - open to everyone - with a \$25 entry fee. The 2021 Fall Open Disc Golf Tournament will benefit the Memorial which is located on School grounds. 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 M MMMF is a 501(c)(3) entity, so contributions are tax deductible.

You can contact 4MF Chairman Bill Van Loo for additional information. He can be reached at (443) 676-6248 or [bvanloo@bvlworks.org](mailto:bvanloo@bvlworks.org)

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

**Friday, November 12** – Honolulu@1100; L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

**Monday, December 6** – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300.

**Tuesday, December 7** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

**Wednesday, December 8** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online Headquarters “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – **Register at [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

**Thursday, December 9** – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

**Friday, December 10** – Honolulu@1100.

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



*M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.  
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline  
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.*

*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](mailto: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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*