

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

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



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

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### **NEW BALTIMORE DISPATCHER**

Jamie Butler will soon relieve Tom Leahy as our Dispatcher in Baltimore as Tom winds down his long-term service to the Union. Jamie will be on-the-job starting Monday as Tom “shows him the ropes” for a couple of weeks before Jamie is ready to take over as a solo act. Butler is a 1983 graduate of the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School (Class 81A) and has shipped with a variety of contracted companies including Lykes, Mormac, Horizon and APL among many others. He spent many of his earlier years sailing out of the Houston hall and he put his Chief Engineer’s license to good use during a long and productive career. Many thanks to Tom - who will still remain available to fill-in if needed – and congratulations and “good luck” to Jamie as he takes on a new challenge.

### **NAVY LEAGUE HITS THE HILL FOR FLY-IN WITH PRO-MERCHANT MARINE MESSAGE**

The Navy League is promoting the sea services on Capitol Hill today during its annual Fly-In. The Navy League is a non-profit civilian organization whose mission is to educate Americans about the enduring importance of sea power and to support the men and women of the U.S. sea services. It advocates for the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and U.S. Merchant Marine.

The Fly-In is comparable to the maritime industry’s Sail-In with a series of scheduled appointments with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. For the other services, participants will be advocating for a 355-ship Navy, an active force of 194,000 Marines and new cutters and additional funds for Coast Guard readiness. On behalf of U.S.-flag shipping, participants are stressing the need to enforce cargo preference laws that generate work for the U.S. fleet, protect the Jones Act, maintain funding support for the Maritime Security Program and fund new training vessels for the maritime academies in support of next-generation mariners.

### **INDUSTRY HAS SENT OVER 19,000 JONES ACT LETTERS TO CONGRESS**

The Navy League issued thanks to the maritime industry for taking advantage of their online link to pepper Congress with pro-Jones Act letters. The *Telex Times* has been informing our readers for weeks about the Navy League portal that makes it easy to tell your Congressional delegation about how critical the Jones Act is for U.S.-flag shipping. Navy League reports that 19,412 letters have been sent (so far) as part of this campaign.

If you haven't done it yet, do so now. It takes five minutes or less. The link leads you to a ready-made modifiable pro-Jones Act letter accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/JonesActLetter>

Fill in your info and a few clicks later, your entire Congressional representation will take note their constituent is urging them to support the Jones Act. With all the lies and misinformed anti-Jones Act nonsense that has fouled the waters in the wake of Hurricane Maria, five minutes of your time can really make a difference.

### **M.E.B.A. CONTINUES INVOLVEMENT IN WORKING GROUP SEEKING TO ADVANCE U.S.-FLAG SHIPPING**

M.E.B.A. has continued its participation in a Government/labor/industry working group seeking to make shipping operation under the U.S. flag more efficient and cost effective.

Sponsored by the National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA), the newly minted "U.S. Registry Working Group" tackles a variety of topics and initiatives and seeks a sensible path toward reducing costs associated with the regulation of U.S. shipping. The NDTA promotes public/private partnerships to cultivate a well-built and fluid transportation system supporting national defense.

The working group's recent meeting presented a full slate of topics including Coast Guard policy and guidance, automation, security boardings and ballast water, as well as riding gangs, MSP certifications and upcoming fuel requirements.

M.E.B.A. was part of the Board's formation in early 2016. M.E.B.A. President Marshall Ainley takes part in the meetings on behalf of the Union to ensure that the mariner perspective is represented and the interests of our members are protected.

### **NDTA, MASS MARITIME LEADERS DROP IN AT HQ**

Presidents from a couple of esteemed maritime institutions dropped in for a visit at M.E.B.A. Headquarters last week to discuss industry initiatives and challenges. The newly anointed President and CEO of the National Defense Transportation Association, Vice Adm. Andy Brown, made an appearance at M.E.B.A.'s D.C. Headquarters while our office hosted a meeting of USA Maritime. USA Maritime is a coalition of maritime unions, associations and shipping companies – including the M.E.B.A. and American Maritime Congress – fighting for the U.S. Merchant Marine.

Vice Adm. Brown sat in with the group which discussed a variety of topics including government contracts and expanding the mariner pool. VAdm. Brown recently concluded a 37-year Naval career and had been serving as the Navy's Joint Staff Director of Logistics. He succeeded Rear Adm. Mark Buzby who left the position earlier this year to become Maritime Administrator.

The M.E.B.A. also enjoyed last week's visit of Capt. Francis X. McDonald, President of Massachusetts Maritime Academy. M.E.B.A. President Marshall Ainley was on hand as was Mass Maritime alumnus Nils Djusberg who serves as the Union's Legal Director. A number of topics of interest were discussed including mariner recruiting and retention as well as plans for new training ships for the maritime academies.

## **VACATION REMINDER: CHECK YOUR RETURN TO WORK DATE**

Members on vacation should make certain of their return-to-work date to ensure there is no conflict with your vacation when taking a job at a hall. Members should know that taking work while on vacation or receiving a paid vacation benefit – without express permission/waiver from a Branch Agent/V.P. – violates both the M.E.B.A. Shipping Rules and Vacation Plan regulations and will trigger penalties including possible loss of vacation time.

Refer to Shipping Rule #5(b) and the M.E.B.A. Vacation Plan Summary Plan Description (Pages 7-10) for reference.

## **SENATORS PUSH CYBER PORT BILL**

To help safeguard cyber security systems in the maritime industry, Senators Kamala Harris (D-CA) and Dan Sullivan (R-AK) have put forward a bill that will help maintain the integrity of seaport networks and better incorporate policies to stave off hacks and threats.

S. 2083, termed the “Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in Our Ports Act of 2017,” was introduced this week. Specifically, the bill would adopt best practices in cybersecurity policy for Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Coast Guard maritime protective missions. It would require that DHS establish a model for assessing cybersecurity risk in the maritime sector, as well as guidelines for information sharing with the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC). It would also require the Coast Guard to integrate cybersecurity into its maritime security assessments and plans.

“The recent cyber-attack on a major shipping line doing business at the Port of Los Angeles was a call to action,” said Port of Los Angeles Executive Director Gene Seroka. “With the increased digitization of our industry, cybersecurity is a top priority. This legislation is a major step toward addressing cyber security vulnerabilities in the maritime industry.”

This bill is the companion legislation to H.R. 3101, which was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Norma Torres (CA-35) in the aftermath of the worldwide ransomware attack that disabled the largest terminal at the Port of Los Angeles. The House legislation unanimously passed last month.

## **VACATION BENEFITS – 2017 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 2017 in the outports *and* the Plan Office is Tuesday, December 19, 2017. **DIRECT DEPOSIT:** The final Direct Deposit Transfer for 2017 will be made on 12/20/2017 and the funds will be deposited into your bank account on 12/22/2017. Any requests for Port Relief and Vacation checks received after 12/19/17 at 5:00 PM will be paid on 1/2/2018. Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2017 must file before this deadline. Remember, Monday December 25, 2017 and Monday January 1, 2018 are holidays and the outports and the Plan Office will be closed. It is always wise to plan ahead, so you should verify your specific outport holiday schedule with the Plan Office Representative.

### ***Split Your Vacation Payments between 2017 and 2018***

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 2017 and a second in 2018. The 12/19/2017 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.

### **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 & Documents, Vacation Plan Forms). 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.

### **REMEMBER TO UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION WITH HQ**

Be sure to inform Headquarters if you have changed your contact information. There is an address change form on our website to help expedite the process. It can be found at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org) under the "Members" tab or in the "Documents & Notices" section. Alternatively, you can send your updated information to Doris Fitzgerald at HQ by mail, fax at (202) 638-5369, or e-mail at [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org). Since the M.E.B.A. Plans office in Baltimore and Headquarters databases are NOT linked, you must also forward a signed change of address form to the Plans Office if you wish to update your information with them.

### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS**

Monday, December 4 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;  
Tuesday, December 5 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;  
Wednesday, December 6 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;  
Thursday, December 7 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;  
Friday, December 8 – 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). Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org)*