

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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ELECTION NOTES

As final votes are being counted in a number of states including Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Georgia, Nevada, and Arizona, the 2020 presidential race remains undecided. Currently, the results of four Senate races are being finalized that will determine which party holds control. Of those four, two races in Georgia are expected to go to a run-off special election later this year. Democrats are expected to retain control in the U.S. House of Representatives but faced a series of upsets that includes the loss of 7 seats, a number that is expected to grow. Lastly, a number of M.E.B.A. endorsed candidates are projected to win what were very competitive congressional races including Reps. Peter DeFazio (D-VA), Elaine Luria (D-VA), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Don Bacon (R-NE), and John Katko (R-NY).

INTERCARGO SAYS CHARTERERS HOLDING UP CREW CHANGES

The International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO), which represents dry bulk shipowners covering 2,400 vessels around the world, are alleging that many dry bulk charterers are helping to impede mariner crew changes, adding to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. The International Maritime Organization and others have estimated that as many as 400,000 seafarers around the globe have been stuck on their ships long past their assignments as COVID-19 travel restrictions are preventing crew changes. Seafarers are being pushed to their limits of fatigue. Combined with the challenge of accessing medical services, the probability for accidents has risen as stress affects work and compromises safety.

INTERCARGO said that charterers in the dry bulk sector, in a number of instances, have been preventing crew changes from taking place during the period of the charter, despite the ship owner agreeing to accept the associated costs. The agency issued a statement strongly condemning such practices. "Ironically," they said, "this appalling practice has been reported primarily in the dry bulk sector, where the prevention of seafarer fatigue is of special concern. Bulk carriers on tramp trading routes call at many more ports than other shipping sectors, piling added strain on an already fatigued workforce with no hope of crew change...It is very disappointing that dry cargo charterers do not understand or wish to take responsibility for the concept of the common venture which exists under a time-charter."

CRUISE INDUSTRY EXTENDS PAUSE DESPITE CDC GREEN LIGHT

The large passenger vessel industry has voluntarily extended its suspension of ship operations making U.S. ports of call despite a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announcement freeing up cruise lines to resume sailings.

Late last week, the CDC opened the door to the resumption of cruise operations in the U.S. when it replaced its no-sail order with a “framework for conditional sailing order.” The conditional order outlined a “phased approach” for lines to resume sailing before the end of the year. But the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), representing 95% of the industry including M.E.B.A.-contracted Norwegian Cruise Line-America, said that its member lines would not resume sailing this year and would use the time to implement “extensive measures” to address COVID-19 safety.

Even before the CLIA announcement, certain cruise lines, including NCL Holdings and Royal Caribbean, announced that they would not resume sailings to U.S. ports until 2021.

CLIA said that its member lines, “are committed to implementing stringent measures to address COVID-19 safety, including 100% testing of passengers and crew, expanded onboard medical capabilities, and trial sailings, among many others.”

AVOID THE YEAR-END RUSH: APPLY FOR VACATION & PORT RELIEF BENEFITS EARLY

•*FILING DEADLINE*: The deadline for issuing checks dated in 2020 in the M.E.B.A. Outports and the Plan Office is Thursday, December 17, 2020.

•*DIRECT DEPOSIT*: The final Direct Deposit Transfer for 2020 will be made on 12/18/2020 and the funds will be deposited into bank accounts on 12/22/2020.

•Any requests for Port Relief and Vacation checks received after 12/17/20 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid in the order received beginning 1/4/2021.

Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2020 must file before this deadline. Remember, Friday December 25, 2020 and Friday January 1, 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 2020 and 2021

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 2020 and a second in 2021. The 12/17/2020 deadline applies to split claims also. The vacation benefits paid in this manner MUST be a continuous vacation period.

Please contact the M.E.B.A. Vacation Plan staff in Baltimore at 800-811-6322 or 410-547-9111 if you have any questions.

RELOCATION OF JUNEAU REC

The Coast Guard’s Juneau Regional Exam Center (REC) has relocated from the Mendenhall Mall to the Hurff A. Saunders Federal Building in Juneau, Alaska, and is open for limited examination services only. REC Juneau’s new mailing address is 709 W. 9th Street, Suite 322, Juneau, AK 99801. The REC’s

primary telephone number (907 463-2458), fax number (907 463-2482), and e-mail address (recjun@uscg.mil) remain the same. Mariners seeking to schedule an examination at this location may do so by e-mailing a request to recjun@uscg.mil. REC and Monitoring Unit location information can be found on the REC page of the National Maritime Center (NMC) website.

The Customer Service Center remains open 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday. You can contact the call center at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662) or IASKNMC@uscg.mil.

UPCOMING COVID WEBINAR ON MARINER TESTING & PREVENTIVE MEASURES

A Government COVID-19 Working Group established to facilitate pandemic coordination between federal agencies and industry stakeholders will host a webinar later this month of interest to seafarers. The Wednesday, November 18 maritime industry webinar focuses on “COVID-19 Testing Strategies for U.S. Merchant Mariners” and will take place from 1400-1530 on that day.

Maritime Administrator Rear Admiral Mark Buzby will attend and provide opening remarks and a pair of CDC experts will discuss pandemic data and topics such as workplace prevention and control strategies. The discussion will also involve types, availability and reliability of testing for mariners, CDC recommendations for mariners and preventive measures. Industry attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions. For more information about the working group visit www.cmts.gov/topics/working_group. You can see the agenda and sign-in details at <https://tinyurl.com/y3xzpk8u>

NEW ICS DIVERSITY TRACKER SPOTLIGHTS WOMEN IN GLOBAL SHIPPING

A newly launched diversity report, intended to be issued every three years by the International Chamber of Shipping, highlights percentages of women involved in the industry and calls for continued growth of the female presence at sea and ashore.

The ICS Diversity Tracker reveals that 30% of companies employ women in board-level roles, and close to 60% of companies have female officers onboard their ships, but just 7.5% of total seafarers are female. Results were collected from a survey of 240 shipping companies around the world.

The Tracker raises concerns over whether companies actively encourage diversity and inclusion among crews and staff. The report comes with recommendations to improve diversity efforts and sets targets for better corporate diversity and inclusion policies. You can check out the report here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxzdra4g>

GATES-BACKED VENTURE FOR NUCLEAR-POWERED COMMERCIAL SHIPS

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates is fronting a new venture that would help generate a future fleet of nuclear-powered commercial ships plying the world's oceans. Gates chairs a nuclear tech company called Terrapower which recently teamed up with nuclear power company Orano USA and reactor developers Core Power as they seek to perfect a Molten Salt Reactor (MSR) type ‘atomic battery’ pack that would be used to power vessels.

They point out that stringent International Maritime Organization standards are prompting the transition of 60,000 vessels to low-emission propulsion over the next few decades.

The partners submitted an application with the Department of Energy for a cost-share risk reduction award to build a prototype MSR, as a proof-of-concept for a medium-scale commercial-grade reactor.

Core Power CEO Mikal Bøe noted that, “The implications of the MSR for transport and industry could be transformational, as we seek to build scale-appropriate technology and broad acceptance of modern and durable liquid-fueled atomic power to shape the future of how we deal with climate change.”

M.E.B.A. ELECTION: NOVEMBER 15th IS THE DEADLINE TO BE “IN GOOD STANDING” FOR YOUR BALLOT TO COUNT

According to our By-Laws, members who are not in good standing by November 15, 2020 are not eligible to vote in the ongoing M.E.B.A. election. Please refer to the M.E.B.A. By-Laws Article Two, Section 2 and/or visit this page: www.mebaunion.org/assets/1/6/M.E.B.A._Election_-_Dues_Must_Be_Current_for_Vote_to_Count.pdf

DECEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (All times are local)

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

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

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

Thursday, December 10 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, December 11 – Honolulu@1100.

M.E.B.A. Election: Info on Obtaining a Duplicate Ballot is Available on the M.E.B.A. Website (www.mebaunion.org) in the “Documents & Member Notices” Section

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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 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.