

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 MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR BATTLING FOR U.S. SHIPPING

Rear Admiral Mark Buzby offered a full-throated defense of the Jones Act, Maritime Security Program and cargo preference laws during his first appearance before the Washington D.C. Propeller Club in his new capacity as Maritime Administrator. His first 45 days on the job have been extremely active he told an industry luncheon crowd yesterday. He said he is brimming with enthusiasm and motivated to fight for the advancement of the industry. “I’m all-in,” he noted. “I don’t know how much I’ll get done – but it won’t be for lack of trying.”

The former Commander of the Military Sealift Command, RADM Buzby’s background and experience afford him a full grasp of the issues and has allowed him to hit the ground running as there will be no let-up on issues facing the industry. He discussed the importance of the Ready Reserve Force vessels which he noted, along with the maritime academy school ships, are in need of recapitalization to guarantee our ability to respond to future contingencies with a highly-trained mariner force. He also briefly discussed the need for the Maritime Security Program and noted that high-level discussions continue in talks to increase the nation’s cargo preference commitment to guarantee additional U.S.-flag carriage. He discussed the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and noted that the Transportation Department and MarAd will continue to emphasize continued improvements at the school including needed campus upgrades and enhancements. He also welcomed back the Academy’s Alumni association which will be setting up an office on school grounds.

Along with every other American mariner who was subjected to media reports following Hurricane Maria, the Admiral was extremely displeased over the false Jones Act portrayals and poor reporting that incited unnecessary negative publicity for a statute that is key to U.S. national security. Jones Act vessels have done an outstanding job in forwarding timely aid to the island from the very start of the storm to the present day. He noted that Jones Act shipping was largely responsible for delivering the almost 10,000 containers of food and relief items that were stacked up at the San Juan port days after the Hurricane. Even as news crew footage beamed images of this “iron mountain” of containers, unknowledgeable talking heads and anonymous bloggers were falsely faulting the Jones Act for preventing delivery of vital relief supplies. The facts on the ground, however, proved that smashed internal infrastructure hindered intra-island distribution of the delivered cargo and the Jones Act was fully exonerated. But Jones Act opponents, playing into the hands of foreign interests, used the opportunity to smear the statute and push for its waiver or repeal. Rear Admiral Buzby urged the industry to fight back against these unfair attacks by setting the record straight and helping people

understand the significance of U.S.-flag shipping and its tie to national security. (*A weblink at the bottom of this issue provides an easy avenue to inform your legislative delegation about the importance of the Jones Act*). Pointing out that the Merchant Marine flag displays the words “In Peace and War,” Rear Admiral Buzby told the industry gathering that it is incumbent on all of us to emphasize the vital connection and critical importance of U.S. shipping to our nation during times of “peace” and its utter indispensability during times of “war”. “Your voice has never been more important,” he affirmed.

HORIZON SPIRIT DEPLOYED FOR PUERTO RICO RELIEF DELIVERIES

Sunrise Operations (Pasha) has brought the M.E.B.A.-crewed HORIZON SPIRIT out of lay-up for use in the Puerto Rico trade in the wake of the island’s devastation to Hurricane Maria. The vessel will support hurricane relief and rebuilding efforts in Puerto Rico beginning with deliveries of bottled water. Reports out of Puerto Rico indicate that a million island residents are without running water and many have resorted to reliance on contaminated water. Pasha Hawaii partnered with Lipsey Mountain Spring Water to bring 800 containers filled with over 15 million bottles of water on the SPIRIT bound for Puerto Rico. The ship will load the bottled water in Long Beach, CA and traverse the Panama Canal en route to Puerto Rico. The ship will be made available in the Puerto Rico service thereafter.

"Our hearts go out to the people of Puerto Rico as they rebuild their homes and communities, and address basic needs," said George Pasha, IV, President and CEO, Pasha Hawaii. "We are thankful to be of direct help to these families and businesses, especially as many of our folks who joined us from Horizon Lines, Inc. have family, friends, and colleagues on the island. We've supported hurricane relief efforts via an employee giving campaign with the American Red Cross, and are glad we can offer the service of our containership."

SHOT IN THE ARM FOR GOOD & WELFARE FUND

Many thanks to the members, applicants and retirees and others who helped make last week's Silent Auction & Fundraiser a roaring success on behalf of the M.E.B.A.'s Good & Welfare Fund. G&W Chairman Bill Van Loo reported that the Fund raised over \$6,000 that will be used to assist those in the M.E.B.A. family in times of crisis. Kudos go to Union officials across the country who helped sell raffle tickets over the last six months and we appreciate every single person who bought tickets to help the Fund. In addition, Gloria Tosi, former longtime American Maritime Congress President, is especially singled out for her extremely generous donations of M.E.B.A. and nautical items that raised additional money for the G&W. Thursday night's silent auction and raffle drawing took place at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. Jeff Hauck, a former official and Norfolk-area retiree was the big winner in the raffle but many who attended the event walked away with terrific memorabilia and enjoyed a great night of food and entertainment en route to aiding a terrific cause.

But you don't need a raffle or star-studded entertainment-soaked event to support the Good & Welfare Fund. You can contribute all year-round! March into a Union hall and talk to an official there – or easier yet – log onto the M.E.B.A. Payment Portal from our homepage and contribute. Remember, your contributions to the fund are tax deductible so please give liberally in order to help a Union brother or sister in need.

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.

PAYMENT PORTAL FOR DUES, P.A.F., G&W

The payment portal accessed from M.E.B.A.’s homepage (www.mebaunion.org) allows members and applicants ease when making a dues or service charge payment and to assist the P.A.F. and Good & Welfare funds. Payments can be made by credit card, debit card or through a checking account. Long in demand, a recurring payment option is also available on the portal enabling automatic quarterly payments so members can “set it and forget it” and always stay current. You simply check the “Recurring Billing” box that appears at the top of the page when you’re filling out your information to enable automatic quarterly payments. This feature is also available to support the Good & Welfare and the Political Action Fund on a monthly basis. P.A.F. is crucial for keeping U.S. shipping and the Union’s interests viable in the halls of Congress. The recent hurricanes and the desire to lend assistance to members, applicants and retirees in their time of need is a good reason to support the G&W Fund.

Some M.E.B.A. bargaining unit members pay dues by the automatic Dues Check-Off (DCO) system. 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 are not 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 electronic payment portal by visiting the M.E.B.A. homepage (www.mebaunion.org).

PIRACY INCIDENTS HAVE DIPPED THIS YEAR

A total of 121 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships were reported in the first nine months of 2017, according to the International Maritime Bureau’s (IMB) latest quarterly report on maritime piracy. The flagship global report notes that, while piracy rates were down compared to the same period in 2016, there is continuing concern over attacks in the Gulf of Guinea and in South East Asia. The increase in attacks off the coast of Venezuela and other security incidents against vessels off Libya – including an attempted boarding in the last quarter – highlights the need for vigilance in other areas. In total, 92 vessels were boarded, 13 were fired upon, there were 11 attempted attacks and five vessels were hijacked in the first nine months of 2017.

No incidents were reported off the coast of Somalia in this quarter, though the successful attacks from earlier in the year suggest that pirates in the area retain the capacity to target merchant shipping at distances from the coastline.

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 (Forms & Documents, Vacation Plan Forms). Complete details are available on the Plans' site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or 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 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. 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.

FIGHT FOR THE JONES ACT!

Many of the online news items that bash the Jones Act have a comment section where you can inject a little truth into the false narratives being foisted on the public. Some valuable facts can be accessed from M.E.B.A.'s website (www.mebaunion.org) that will assist you when writing an online comment or penning a letter to your Congressional representation. The Navy League has made it easy to let your lawmakers know how you feel about this important issue. They created a ready-made modifiable pro-Jones Act letter accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/JonesActLetter>

With a few clicks, you can help counteract the lies and let your Congressional representation know that we need the Jones Act for a strong America!

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, November 6 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;
Tuesday, November 7 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;
Wednesday, November 8 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;
Thursday, November 9 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;
Friday, November 10 - 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. Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org