

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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M.E.B.A. HAS A NEW KING COUNTY WATER TAXI CONTRACT

The M.E.B.A. has nailed down a new three-year contract with King County Water Taxi. M.E.B.A. represents Licensed Engineers and QMEDs aboard these passenger-only vessels that provide a valuable service to the residents, workers, and visitors around Seattle, connecting Vashon Island and West Seattle to Downtown.

The M.E.B.A. is part of a Labor Coalition that participates in large-table negotiations with all unions that have contracts with King County. Afterwards, the M.E.B.A. holds small-table negotiations alongside the other maritime unions: MM&P and the IBU. The new contract won wage increases, a Ratification Bonus for all represented employees and Penalty Time increases among other provisions. In addition, the new agreement includes Holiday pay improvements and step adjustments for Oilers.

The M.E.B.A. negotiating team consisted of KCWT Engineer James Laitila and Seattle Branch Agent Kevin M Cross. While the CBA was enthusiastically approved by the KCWT Members, we await a final approval of the King County Council.

CLEARING FOR A JOB WHILE ATTENDING CMES

After members expressed support for the M.E.B.A. District Executive Committee's proposal to enhance member services by allowing those attending the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School to complete job clearances while participating in classes, the system has gone into effect.

Students enrolled in ongoing classes can now work with the School's administrative staff during business hours to seek open board jobs or permanent assignment letter jobs. The intent is for someone to be able to take a job, still have time to finish their course, and travel to the ship after leaving the CMES. School Clearances are being conducted in conjunction with the New Orleans Union hall which will handle the paperwork and complete the process. However, Training Plan rules still apply, and if a student leaves the School early to join the vessel, they will not be reimbursed from the Training Plan for School travel as course completion is required.

The DEC emphasizes that traditional hall clearances are vital to M.E.B.A.'s unity and solidarity, and those functions remain firm.

MEMBERS CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF M.E.B.A.'S MERCHANT MARINE MEMORIAL

After the October membership meeting at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School, members, retirees and staff gathered at the ship propeller to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial — a lasting tribute to the courage, sacrifice, and service of American mariners. Beneath a bright autumn sky, attendees assembled on the Memorial grounds — an extraordinary site uniquely designed in the shape of a 600-foot merchant vessel. Complete with five-ton anchors, a foremast, a ship's bell, and a six-bladed, 22-foot bronze propeller symbolizing the ship's stern, the Memorial Park powerfully reflects the enduring spirit of the men and women who have crewed America's ships throughout history.

Along with M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac and Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha, heartfelt remarks were delivered by Bill Van Loo who was a driving force behind the construction of the Memorial and an ongoing caretaker of its upkeep and legacy. In his remarks, Van Loo reflected on the vision that brought the Memorial to life two decades ago and the collective effort it took to preserve the identity and honor of the U.S. Merchant Marine. He revealed that two decades ago, former M.E.B.A. President Larry O'Toole challenged him to spearhead a worthy tribute to mariners and provided the first \$100 donation to the cause. Bill emphasized that the site stands not only as a monument to fallen mariners, but also as a reminder of the essential role mariners continue to play in national security, commerce, and humanitarian service. Following the ceremony, attendees gathered for a reception at the historic Manor House, sharing stories and memories that reinforced the deep camaraderie that defines the M.E.B.A. family.

The Memorial Park and its upkeep are sustained by the M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF), a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Through the generosity of members and supporters, the Foundation ensures that the Memorial remains a place of pride, remembrance, and education for generations to come.

After the event, as the sun set over the Memorial on Tuesday, the gleam of the massive propeller and the sound of the ship's bell honoring M.E.B.A. Officers past and present serves as a fitting reminder of why this Memorial endures — honoring the mariners who built, sustained, and define the proud legacy of the U.S. Merchant Marine.

Those wishing to contribute to the 4MF can do so at any M.E.B.A. Union hall or through the School's website at www.mebaschool.org (click on the "Memorial" link). Donations are tax-deductible, and continued support is vital to maintaining the beauty and dignity of this special site. You can view a nice 3-minute video about the M.E.B.A. Memorial Park at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDGCxvw9f0g>

M.E.B.A. RETIREE RECOUNTS TURBULENT M.E.B.A. FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN NEW BOOK

M.E.B.A. retiree David Whiteley, who sailed for years with the Union - mostly on LNG ships with ETC - has published a well-researched and readable book cataloguing a turbulent era in the M.E.B.A. that eventually led to the strengthening of the democratic precepts the Union was founded upon. His book — "In Peace and War: The True Story of a Maritime Union's Fight for Democracy" is available now from Amazon and other fine booksellers. Whiteley points out that this "is the story of how a

handful of men and women used a grass roots approach to organize the membership and then used the law to restore the union's democracy.”

In 1989, a controversial M.E.B.A. president led a merger with the National Maritime Union, jeopardizing the M.E.B.A. pension plan and creating unrest among members. In response, members formed the M.A.D. Committee – Members Advocating Democracy - to challenge what they viewed as authoritarian leadership, financial mismanagement, and a merger that was seen as an attempt to consolidate power and weaken M.E.B.A.'s democratic structure and autonomy. Whiteley tells that story – from the perspective of a member who lived through the fray firsthand. Drawing on extensive legal records, internal union documents, and firsthand interviews with those who fought to safeguard the union's independence and revive its democratic values, the book offers a fact-based, authentic account of this pivotal chapter in the Union's history.

You should go directly to this link and order a copy! www.amazon.com/dp/1961641429

MARINERS KEEP NATION MOVING AS SHUTDOWN DRAGS ON

With the federal government shutdown entering its second week, U.S. ports and waterways continue running smoothly, thanks to the dedication of mariners and essential personnel keeping commerce flowing. While much of Washington is at a standstill, it's business as usual on the waterfront.

However, the National Maritime Center (NMC) and all of the Regional Examination Centers (RECs) are closed until Congress can break the impasse. Customer walk-in service at the RECs is suspended and exams and other REC appointments are cancelled. An update issued today, stated that “approval to test letters, drug test letters, and mariner training course certificates that expire on or after October 1, 2025, will be extended from the date funding is restored for a period equal to the duration of the shutdown.” Also announced was that “Mariners who began but did not complete all modules of an examination prior to October 1, 2025, may resume testing without penalty once the NMC reopens. Testing should be completed within 60 days of reopening. Contact the NMC regarding waivers due to sea service.”

Operations at the Federal Maritime Commission have been suspended and all employees were furloughed, except for the three Presidentially appointed Commissioners. The US Merchant Marine Academy continues normal operations but a quarter of Maritime Administration employees were furloughed though all functions related to vessel operations continue until funds are exhausted, such as the Ready Reserve Force, Maritime Security Program and the Tanker Security Program.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has furloughed more than a thousand workers but continues to operate the locks, dams, and navigation systems vital to commercial shipping. Across the country, port operations remain steady. Most ports operate under state, local, or private funding, and essential federal personnel such as Customs and Border Protection officers are still reporting for duty — though without pay. So far, there have been no major slowdowns.

The Coast Guard continues to perform its national security and lifesaving missions, but other activities have been scaled back. They continue vessel inspections and marine safety enforcement, though reviews of response and security plans may face delays. Mariners remember the 2019 shutdown, which lasted 35 days and created major credential and inspection backlogs. The maritime unions are watching

closely to ensure this shutdown doesn't repeat that chaos — and that U.S. mariners can keep doing what they do best: keeping America's commerce moving.

MSC'S SOBECK WRAPS UP SERVICE

Rear Adm. Phillip Sobeck, Commanding officer of the Military Sealift Command wrapped up his service this week culminating with a small farewell ceremony aboard the USNS ROBERT F. KENNEDY following two years at the helm of MSC.

The M.E.B.A. has had an excellent working relationship with Admiral Sobeck, wish him the best and look forward to similar constructive rapport with the next Commander, who has not yet been officially announced.

Admiral Sobeck said he would be retiring at the end of the year after almost four decades in uniform. He noted, "The achievements of the past two years are a testament to the dedicated men and women of MSC. Our Civil Service Mariners who sustain the fleet at sea, our active-duty military members who serve beside them, and our civilian staff ashore who provide unwavering support; all of you have ensured that MSC delivers, day after day, wherever the Navy and Joint Force require us. I am confident the incoming commander will carry forward the momentum we have built and continue driving progress for our people and our mission. This transition will be steady, deliberate, and focused on preserving trust across our workforce."

CMES HAS OPENINGS IN UPCOMING WARTSILA COURSE

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that there are still openings for its 3-day October 29-31 *Wartsila RT Flex Basic course* (Wednesday - Friday - No time required on a flex engine). Students should expect to be in class until 1600 on the Friday.

Applications for this course can be sent via the CMES website (www.mebaschool.org), faxed to (410) 822-7220, or emailed to applications@mebaschool.org

HANWHA SHIP-TO-SHIP SEA TRIAL LNG TRANSFER

The Hanwha Group and companies within its umbrella aim to become world leaders in LNG carriage, and as members know, Hanwha Shipping previously announced that it will be building and operating at least two export-ready LNG carriers following their construction at Hanwha Philly Shipyard.

Now Hanwha Ocean announced that it has successfully completed the world's first Ship-to-Ship (STS) LNG transfer between vessels under sea trials. They note, traditionally, LNG carriers conducting gas trials must first load LNG from a terminal and later return the remaining LNG once trials are complete. But with this new innovation, LNG can be directly transferred to another vessel under trial at sea — significantly improving efficiency and flexibility. The company, which previously conducted the world's first Ship-to-Ship LNG bunkering operation within a shipyard, says this achievement "once again proves Hanwha Ocean's differentiated expertise in gas trial technologies."

HALLS, OFFICES CLOSED ON MONDAY TO HONOR COLUMBUS, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on Monday, October 13, in observance of Columbus Day and in recognition of the original "Admiral of the Ocean Seas," Christopher Columbus. Over the centuries, Columbus has been viewed in dramatically different lights — hailed by some as a bold

visionary who opened the way to the New World, and condemned by others as a ruthless conqueror whose actions included exploitation, slavery, and violence against indigenous peoples. Though he never reached the North American mainland, his famous expeditions brought him to the Caribbean as well as parts of Central and South America, setting in motion the age of European exploration and global exchange.

For many Italian Americans, Columbus remains a symbol of cultural pride, celebrated through a federal holiday that was officially recognized nationwide in 1971. Much of the romantic image surrounding Columbus stems from author Washington Irving, whose semi-fictional accounts of the explorer's life popularized enduring myths — most notably, that Columbus sought to prove the world was round. Irving's embellished storytelling helped shape the legendary, and often misunderstood, legacy of this complicated historical figure.

In his later years, Columbus grew increasingly devout, convinced that his voyages were guided by divine purpose and fulfilled a prophecy leading humanity closer to the Last Judgment. He even claimed to hear heavenly voices urging him onward. Columbus passed away in Spain in May 1506 at the age of 55, reportedly from a heart attack linked to Reiter's Syndrome — a condition caused by bacterial infection that can trigger severe arthritis and urinary complications.

Enjoy your Columbus Day this Monday!

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

Friday, October 10 – **Honolulu@1100**

Monday, November 3 – **Boston@1200. Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, November 4 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, November 5 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, November 6 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, November 7 – **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. Website: www.mebaunion.org 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. The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or www.mebaschool.org. M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or www.mebaplans.org