

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

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



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

*The Official Union Newsletter – "The Word to the Wise"*

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In this issue//Productive MLL Talks//Nabisco Workers Ratify Contract//101-Year Old WWII Mariner Promotes Mariner Compensation Bill//Pay.gov Problems on NMC Site//REC NY Opens in New Location//GPS Disruption Advisory Updated//Bill Would Exempt Alaska from PVSA//Movie, Stage Union Readies for Strike//Disc Golf Tournament – Thanks for Supporting M.E.B.A. Memorial//

### **PRODUCTIVE MLL REOPENER TALKS**

An M.E.B.A. negotiating team, including rank-and-file members, had two-days of productive talks with Maersk Line, Ltd. this week in reopener discussions that took place at M.E.B.A. Headquarters. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the parties discussed wages and benefits as well as other economic terms of employment. The reopener covers 19 ships over three contracts (MLL, E-Ships & M-Ships). The overall agreements expire in 2025.

Rank-and-file members on the M.E.B.A. team included M.E.B.A. Chief Engineers Fil Gaylan (ALLIANCE FAIRFAX) and Todd Bilodeau (MAERSK HARTFORD). Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan led negotiations for the Union assisted by HQ Contracts Officer Mark Gallagher. MLL was represented by Vice President (Labor Relations) Ed Hanley and Payroll Manager Wendy Isaacs.

### **NABISCO STRIKE ENDS WITH CONTRACT RATIFICATION**

Nabisco/Mondelez workers represented by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) are back on the job after they ratified a new contract following a five-week strike. The new four-year contract addresses worker concerns about unreasonable shifts and low pay and staves off cuts to healthcare and overtime pay.

BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton stated, "This has been a long and difficult fight for our striking members, their families and our union. Throughout the strike, our members displayed tremendous courage, grit and determination. The BCTGM's striking members made enormous sacrifices in order to achieve a quality contract that preserves our Union's high standards for wages, hours and benefits for current and future Nabisco workers. Their sacrifice will benefit all BCTGM members and working people around the country for years to come. Those Brothers and Sisters who walked the picket lines day-in and day-out are true BCTGM heroes."

### **HONORING WWII MARINERS BILL PROMOTED BY 101-YEAR OLD WWII MARINER**

101-year old Charles Mills, a former mariner (NMU) during World War II, was on hand earlier this week with Congressman Al Green (D-TX) to promote H.R. 39, the "Honoring Our WWII Merchant Mariners Act of 2021." Charles was in town to attend the AMMV Convention taking place at MITAGS this week.

Congressman Green has introduced the legislation in each Session of Congress for years, where it has yet to make any progress. The longshot bill would provide surviving WWII merchant mariners with a one-time \$25,000 benefit. Specifically the bill would compensate qualifying individuals who were members of the Merchant Marine between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946 (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service). The bill was referred to the Veterans Affairs Committee.

Merchant mariners were the unsung heroes of WWII. 733 U.S. cargo ships were lost to enemy action and over 8,500 mariners were killed with more than 11,000 wounded. Though the Merchant Marine suffered the highest casualty rate than any service branch during the war, they never received full veteran benefits despite their contributions. It took until 1988, supplemented by efforts from the M.E.B.A. and American Maritime Congress, for WWII mariners to be legally recognized as veterans. They were granted healthcare rights at Veterans Affairs' hospitals as well as burial flags, but because they weren't eligible for the original benefits under the G.I. Bill, they did not receive college tuition subsidies, home loan guarantees, pensions, or other provisions. The youngest WWII mariners are now in their 90s. We owe it to them to help recognize our WWII Fourth Arm of Defense and provide them a token of appreciation before the dying of the light.

#### **PAY.GOV PAYMENT PROBLEMS ON NMC SITE**

The National Maritime Center (NMC) recently became aware of a problem with the Merchant Mariner User Fee Payment Form on the Pay.gov website. During the last 90 days, mariners who attempted to pay Examination, and/or Issuance Fees after previously paying their Evaluation Fee may have been required to pay an additional Evaluation Fee to complete the Pay.gov transaction. Mariners who paid all required fees via a single Pay.gov transaction were unaffected. This problem has been resolved and the Merchant Mariner User Fee Payment Form is now functioning properly.

Those who believe they were prevented from providing an Examination and/or Issuance Fee payment without also paying another Evaluation Fee should send their Pay.gov receipts, reflecting the additional fees, to [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil) with a request for a refund. Additional information regarding merchant mariner fee payments can be found in the User Fee FAQs on the NMC website.

You can call NMC at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662) for more info.

#### **REC NEW YORK REOPENS IN NEW LOCATION**

Regional Exam Center (REC) New York has reopened for examination services in the Federal Building at 201 Varick Street in Lower Manhattan.

The new mailing address for REC New York is 201 Varick St., 9th Floor, Suite 904, New York, NY 10014, and mariner applications may still be e-mailed to [RECNY@uscg.mil](mailto:RECNY@uscg.mil). Mariner examination services will continue to be provided by appointment only. No walk-in appointments are available. Examination appointment request may be e-mailed to [RECNY@uscg.mil](mailto:RECNY@uscg.mil) and should include the applicant's name, mariner reference number, requested testing date(s), phone number, and a copy of their Approved to Test letter(s).

The NMC Customer Service Center remains open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday. Mariners can contact the call center at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662) and [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil).

## **GPS DISRUPTION ADVISORY REAFFIRMED & UPDATED**

The Maritime Administration has reaffirmed and updated a Maritime Advisory that warns commercial shipping of nefarious parties attempting to disrupt vessel operations with GPS interference. MarAd says that incidents continue to be logged – the latest in the eastern and central Mediterranean Sea and in the vicinity of the Suez Canal.

The U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Center (NAVCEN) web page, <https://go.usa.gov/xMZ2q>, contains a chronological list of recently reported GPS problems. The NAVCEN and NATO Shipping Center websites contain information regarding effective navigation practices for vessels experiencing GPS disruption. The Advisory is in effect until March 1, 2022.

## **MURKOWSKI PLANS BILL TO EXEMPT ALASKA FROM PVSA**

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) is planning to introduce legislation that would more permanently exempt her state from complying with the Passenger Vessel Service Act (PVSA), a cruise ship statute similar in nature to the Jones Act. The Act prohibits foreign-flagged cruise ships from directly operating between two U.S. ports.

U.S. lawmakers recently passed a PVSA workaround bill, recently signed into law, that enables foreign-flag cruise ships to bypass Canada on Alaska cruises from Washington. The workaround was sought because of Canadian COVID rules that bar cruise ships and Arctic pleasure craft from making stops in Canada until March 2022. The exemption only applies for a specified list of cruise ships and remains in place only as long as the Canadian ban is in effect. Canada has since announced that it is seeking to lift the prohibition by November 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

Now, Senator Murkowski is seeking a more permanent exemption for Alaska and called for reform of the PVSA. She announced that this exemption for her state would be dissolved once a U.S.-built-cruise ship (carrying more than 1,000 passengers) enters into the trade so that foreign ships don't retain an advantage over U.S. vessels.

The M.E.B.A. remains deeply concerned about the long-term implications of dismantling U.S. cabotage laws and will need to fully review the legislation once final text of the bill has been released.

## **MOVIE, STAGE UNION PREPARES FOR STRIKE**

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) are readying for a strike that could ground Hollywood productions and stage shows to a halt if studios continue to put their own profits in front of worker safety. The union was calling for a strike authorization vote from about 60,000 members who are concerned about unsafe working conditions exacerbated by exorbitantly-long work days in high-pressure jobs. Most of the members are based in Los Angeles and include camera operators and other film and tv production crew. A strike would make headlines around the country and help shutter numerous TV and film productions.

So far, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) are not acknowledging the severity of the problem and are not treating the workers as a partner in their quest to address excessively unsafe and harmful working hours; unlivable wages for the lowest paid crafts; and failure to provide reasonable rest during meal breaks, between workdays, and on weekends.

The union said that workers on certain “new media” streaming projects get paid even less, often on productions with budgets that rival or exceed those of traditionally released blockbusters. “It is incomprehensible that the AMPPTP, an ensemble that includes media mega-corporations collectively worth trillions of dollars, claims it cannot provide behind-the-scenes crews with basic human necessities like adequate sleep, meal breaks, and living wages. Worse, management does not appear to even recognize our core issues as problems that exist in the first place. These issues are real for the workers in our industry and change is long overdue.”

### **DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT: THANKS FOR SUPPORTING THE MEMORIAL!**

The recently departed Jamie Butler was honored on Sunday at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School during a Disc Golf Tournament (frisbee golf) benefiting the M.E.B.A. Memorial. Jamie was a 1983 CMES cadet school graduate who shipped as an M.E.B.A. Chief Engineer for years and served as the Baltimore hall dispatcher before he sailed into the sunset late last year at the age of 59.

Disc golf combatants hurled their hearts out on Sunday in the name of a great cause. Tournament entry fees and contributions benefited the Memorial located on School grounds. As you know, the Memorial Park was created to honor fallen seafarers who have delivered the goods and answered the call of this country since 1775. The M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF), which supports the Memorial, is a section 501(c)(3) entity under Internal Revenue Service rules, so all donations are tax deductible.

4MF officials are still probing whether the unlikely Disc Golf tournament victory of *Telex Times* Editor Marco Cannistraro was legitimate. If they find a way to depose this unworthy champion, a more suitable winner will be declared, particularly the popular Bryan Jennings, CMES Deputy Director, who was denied the throne on Sunday because of ill-conceived tiebreaker rules.

In any event, thanks to 4MF Chairman Bill Van Loo who put the tournament together and continues to encourage members, applicants and retirees to support the Memorial!

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

**Monday, October 4** – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300;

**Tuesday, October 5** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

**Wednesday, October 6** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online Headquarters “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – **Register now at [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

**Thursday, October 7** – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

**Friday, October 8** – Honolulu@1100.

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



*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.*