



MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

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MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)
"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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FINISHED WITH ENGINES: CHIEF BILL VAUGHAN

Bill Vaughan, longtime member, great friend and shipmate sailed into the sunset this week at the age of 69 following a brief bout with cancer. Bill applied with the Union in 1967 just shy of his 20th birthday and was sailing deep-sea aboard various vessels at the time he made membership in 1972. He had a long and colorful career at sea that continued even after he became a retired member in the mid-2000s. That's when Bill began volunteering more of his time in support of the Tampa, Florida-based SS AMERICAN VICTORY, one of only two WWII Victory ships still operational. He became the historic vessel's Chief Engineer in 2007, a position which he held until his death. The family plans to have some sort of ceremony in April, perhaps in Virginia, and his ashes will be returned to the sea.

HALLS, OFFICES CLOSED MONDAY FOR PRESIDENTS DAY

As always, the third Monday in February marks the observance of Presidents Day. M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on February 20.

The holiday was officially approved in 1968 as "Washington's Birthday" in honor of our first President George Washington (born Feb. 22, 1732). It eventually morphed into "Presidents Day" and became an occasion to also celebrate the birthday of another one of our greatest Presidents – Abraham Lincoln (born Feb. 12, 1809).

But on Monday, feel free to also honor the memories of the other two February Presidents - William Henry Harrison (born Feb. 9, 1773) and Ronald Reagan (born Feb. 6, 1911). Happy Presidents Day!

USMMA ANNOUNCES RESUMPTION OF SEA YEAR WITH ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY

The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) has announced that Sea Year training for their Midshipmen will resume on three commercial carriers beginning in March 2017. The reinstatement of the program follows the implementation of comprehensive new policies, including a zero tolerance policy for sexual assault and sexual harassment to ensure that the Academy's standards for behavior, leadership and integrity are upheld.

"I commend the maritime industry's efforts to combat sexual assault, sexual harassment and other coercive behaviors, particularly Crowley, Maersk and APL, which are the first companies to meet MarAd's Sea Year requirements," said Maritime Administration Executive Director Joel Szabat. "Commercial Sea Year training is a core training component of the Academy and its

Midshipmen, and critical to the success of the industry, as today's Midshipmen are tomorrow's operators." Crowley Maritime Corporation, Maersk Line Limited, and American Presidents Line (APL), comprised half of the Academy's commercial Sea Year program before it was suspended.

"The results of these collaborative efforts establish a formal protocol that will improve conditions for the United States Merchant Marine Academy Midshipmen. These young men and women will receive valuable training on commercial ships that will strengthen the industry overall," continued Szabat.

By order of then-Secretary Foxx, Midshipmen training on commercial vessels was suspended in June 2016, while MarAd, industry and labor examined ways to ensure that training was conducted in a safe and respectful environment. Since that time, MarAd, along with the industry and unions, has worked to establish requirements for companies providing Sea Year training opportunities for Midshipmen. These requirements include zero tolerance for sexual assault sexual harassment (SASH), vetted mentors, regular crew training, and no fraternization between crew and Midshipmen. These requirements will be reviewed after six months, and annually thereafter.

A consortium of maritime industry companies and labor organizations is working with MarAd to develop computer-based training programs and best practices to combat SASH. In addition, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2017 requires a working group to report to Congress in September 2017 on efforts to further address SASH prevention and reporting. In addition to the initial three shipping lines, MarAd is reviewing applications from other companies that have applied to meet the Sea Year requirements. A full list of requirements is available on MarAd's website at <https://www.marad.dot.gov/criteria/>

SENATORS' VISIT WITH TRUMP YIELDS POTENTIAL POSITIVE NEWS FOR U.S.-FLAG SHIP CARGO

A group of U.S. Senators departed a White House lunch this week with potential great news for badly needed cargo sources for U.S.-flag shipping. Senators including Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) reported that the President is in favor of returning the Export-Import Bank to full operational status which would help provide additional cargoes for U.S.-flag ships.

The Ex-Im Bank helps keep American businesses competitive by assisting U.S. companies with financing the export of U.S. goods and services to international markets – at no cost to taxpayers. Importantly, a portion of cargo generated by the Bank is required to be transported aboard U.S.-flag ships. For transactions above \$20 million, 100% of all cargo financed by the Bank must be carried on US-flag vessels.

However, because of Congressional inaction, there are vacancies on Ex-Im's Board of Directors and they need at least one more Director to field a quorum. Without a quorum they can't approve loans for more than \$10 million. Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Alabama) was chairman of the Senate Banking Committee in the last session of Congress and refused to allow any confirmation votes for the vacant board seats. President Trump's position on the matter was not clear during his election campaign but his indication that he will forward a nomination for the board is a welcome announcement.

Sen. Heitkamp noted, “During our lunch, I specifically talked with the president about the need to get the Export-Import Bank up and running, just as I did at our meeting in December. To support the economy and boost American manufacturing jobs, enabling the Ex-Im Bank to work is a critical step. It’s great news he agreed and said he would nominate someone to serve on the Ex-Im Bank Board very soon so the agency – which has been stalled for a year – can fully function and keep supporting American workers and small businesses, including many in North Dakota, just as it has done for more than 80 years. Right now, the lack of a majority on the Ex-Im Bank Board is halting in excess of \$30 billion worth of deals waiting in the pipeline from being approved. That \$30 billion worth of American exports supports almost 174,000 American jobs.”

ACOSTA IS NEW LABOR NOMINEE

Alexander Acosta is the new nominee for the Next Labor Secretary after President Trump’s original pick dropped out this week. CKE Restaurants CEO Andy Puzder was dogged by a series of allegations that made Senators hesitant to lend their support to his nomination. With real uncertainty that a confirmation vote would fail, Puzder withdrew from consideration on Wednesday giving way to the new pick. The AFL-CIO and its President Richard Trumka had opposed Puzder saying that his track record had indicated he was an unfriendly choice for labor law, respect of workers and an America that wants strong wages and benefits.

Acosta is a former member of the National Labor Relations Board and currently serves as the Dean of Florida International University College of Law. He was previously a judge and U.S. attorney in Florida, attended Harvard Law School and even clerked for Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito. At press time, it was learned that AFL-CIO was cautiously optimistic about the new pick. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka was quoted as saying, “Unlike Andy Puzder, Alexander Acosta’s nomination deserves serious consideration. In one day, we’ve gone from a fast-food CEO who routinely violates labor law to a public servant with experience enforcing it.”

CBP JONES ACT ACTION CONTINUES RECEIVING BIPARTISAN PRAISE; SEN. KENNEDY COMMENTS & DROPS BY HQ

A Customs and Border Protection proposal that would help strengthen Jones Act requirements related to the transportation of offshore oil and gas operation equipment continues to receive bipartisan praise. The initiative would close loopholes exploited by foreign shipping interests and could possibly pave the way for a flurry of U.S. jobs. This week, CBP extended the public comment period for its proposed notice. The docket remains open until April 18, 2017. New Senator John Kennedy (R-LA) is one of the lawmakers affirming support for the CBP proposal. He noted that the decision will put mariners in his state to work “by restoring the proper treatment of U.S.-built vessels crewed by U.S. citizens in the Gulf of Mexico. The offshore industry is a lifeblood to Louisiana. We need to close loopholes that benefit foreign workers at the detriment of Louisiana mariners.”

Senator Kennedy is a new Member of Congress having been elected to fill the open seat vacated by David Vitter. Sen. Kennedy was a guest at M.E.B.A. Headquarters on Wednesday for a “Meet & Greet” with maritime industry representatives in which he expressed his support for the Jones Act and proved very receptive in discussions about the Maritime Security Program and cargo generating programs for U.S.-flag shipping such as the Export-Import Bank. He also expressed his understanding about the value of U.S. mariners from a strategic national security standpoint. It was a constructive meeting that hopefully kick-starts a long relationship with this promising new Senator.

M.E.B.A. UPDATE FORM UPDATED

M.E.B.A. has bulked up our Update Form with more fields that will supplement our database and better our understanding of member dynamics. In addition to the normal contact information, we are collecting data about licenses and certifications that will help us isolate those with necessary credentials for future job opportunities and for Government fleet activations. The new form isn't demonstrably longer but does have a few revisions. Members, applicants and retirees should update their information from time to time and especially when they earn new certifications and/or when their contact information changes. The Union is getting closer toward ushering in an all-in-one membership database that will also include dispatching software to better facilitate service to the membership at the Union halls. Update forms are available in the Union halls and on our website. Completed forms can be given to a Union hall official or sent to Headquarters c/o Membership Department - 444 North Capitol Street N.W., Suite 800 Washington D.C. 20001 – Fax: (202) 638-5369 – E-mail membership@mebaunion.org. On the website, www.mebaunion.org), under the “Members” tab select “Update Your Contact Information.”

ITF SEEKING TO FILL EAST COAST INSPECTOR POSITION

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has put out a notice seeking to fill an ITF inspector position based in the Charleston, SC/Savannah, GA. Area. The position was formerly held by Tony Sacco of the Seafarers International Union before his untimely passing last year.

ITF notes that this is a full-time position. The job description was forwarded to each of the M.E.B.A. Union halls and is available from the ITF. The post-holder will remain an employee of the affiliated union during their time as an ITF Inspector and when taking up the position they will not hold any official union standing. If you would like to propose yourself or someone else for this position please send a covering letter, a copy of the applicant's resume and a completed ITF Inspector application form to Steve Trowsdale (Inspectorate Coordinator) (trowsdale_steve@itf.org.uk) to be received no later than March 10, 2017. The application form is also available at the M.E.B.A. Union halls and through the ITF. Once all of the applications have been considered, ITF will firm up the venue and date of the interviews. Members interested in the position can also seek further guidance about the job from M.E.B.A. ITF Inspector Tony Sasso who is based in Cocoa Beach, FL.

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, Vacation). Complete details are available on the Plans' site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or vacation@mebaplans.org for more info.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, March 6 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, March 7 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, March 8 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, March 9 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, March 10 – Honolulu@1100.

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