

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

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



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

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### **HAPAG BEGINS SWAP-OUT OF EXPRESS-CLASS VESSELS**

Hapag-Lloyd has begun changing out the Express-class vessels, managed by Marine Personnel & Provisioning, with newer and much larger ships from its international fleet. The five 17-18 year old 3,237 TEU geared containerships are being replaced by five 12-year old A7 6900 TEU Flex engine ships which will each assume the former vessels Maritime Security Program operating chits. M.E.B.A. crews on the older vessels are joining the newer ships as they sift into the fleet.

The CHARLESTON EXPRESS flagged-out yesterday at Port Canaveral and was replaced by the COLORADO EXPRESS (ex-AL KHARJ). Next week the WASHINGTON EXPRESS is expected to be replaced by the HUDSON EXPRESS (ex-AL RAWDAH).

In April, the YORKTOWN EXPRESS was replaced by the former Liberian-flagged AL BAHIA which was redubbed the DELAWARE EXPRESS. The YORKTOWN EXPRESS continued sailing under the U.S.-flag following the swap-out but will be re-flagged sometime next week.

The other current vessels operating in the fleet will change out to their newer vessels on a staggered schedule through the summer – all at Port Canaveral.

### **GLOBAL PUSH FOR MARINER VACCINATIONS**

#### **ICS Reiterates Call for Mariner Vaccinations**

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is strongly urging governments to prioritize seafarers for vaccinations to put an end to the ongoing crew change crisis that remains a huge problem, well over a year after the pandemic began.

"We cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the plight of hundreds of thousands of seafarers," said Esben Poulsson, Chairman of the Board at ICS. "All nations have benefited from their sacrifice throughout the pandemic. Those same nations have a duty to prioritize seafarers for vaccinations and keep their word to allow crew changes."

Poulsson made his comments shortly before last Friday's 'Day of the Seafarer' which was used this year to highlight the need to vaccinate all mariners.

He said, “We will be feeling the ripple effects of this crisis for years to come, but today, governments have a chance to take meaningful action to protect both seafarers and global trade. They must seize it. Seafarers cannot survive on platitudes.”

About 200,000 seafarers are currently affected by restrictions which prohibit them from leaving their ships. According to the latest data from the Global Maritime Forum, the crisis is worsening: the number of seafarers working over their assignments has grown from 5.8% in May 2021 to 7.4% in June. ICS estimates that 900,000 seafarers are from developing nations with limited vaccine supplies. At present, 12 countries are prioritizing seafarers for the vaccine and ports across the United States, and in Belgium and the Netherlands are vaccinating crews delivering goods in their ports, regardless of nationality.

### **Cyprus Could Become Hub for Mariner Vaccinations**

The Republic of Cyprus is making a concerted effort to vaccinate all mariners aboard its flag state vessels – which would cover about 40,000 seafarers. The Cyprus Shipping Deputy Ministry released a circular, coinciding with Friday’s “Day of the Seafarer,” announcing the plan. The country will also seek to make vaccines available to all mariners making vessel stops in Cyprus.

So far, the country has vaccinated about 32.5% of its population. Cyprus designated seafarers as “essential workers” early on and has been proactive in addressing crew change issues during the pandemic. Shipping Deputy Minister Vassilios Demetriades said, “We continue to prioritize seafarer welfare and support a practical and coordinated solution to the ongoing crew change challenge. We would also like to further explore, in cooperation with the global shipping community, the possibility of becoming a vaccination hub for seafarers. This will require collaboration with other nations and organizations to pool spare vaccines, and we are in active conversations to progress the potential of this idea.”

### **European Crewing Costs, Shortages Due to Vaccination Delays**

Costs are rising in the crewing sector and crew shortages are beginning to be seen as COVID-19 travel restrictions and vaccination delays impact the availability of trained seafarers, warns Hamburg, Germany-based Danica Crewing Services. Noting recent changes in the availability of crew members, Danica officials said that the Eastern European crewing market is under extreme pressure as companies turn to places like Ukraine and Russia to replace officers and seafarers unable to travel from places like India and the Philippines.

As the summer holiday season approaches, regarded as a ‘low season’ in terms of crew availability due to family commitments, they say crew numbers are being adversely impacted by the availability of COVID-19 vaccines and the time needed to allow immunity to develop. Some seafarers are also waiting until they have had their second vaccination before returning to sea.

A Danica official said, “In places like Russia, vaccines are generally available. However, in other countries, such as Ukraine, the demand for vaccine outstrips supply resulting in a longer waiting time. We are finding that seafarers, especially those who do not sign up immediately as their leave begins, are waiting 4-6 weeks to be vaccinated. Once they get their first injection they have to wait a further 8-10 weeks for the second one, and then an additional 2-3 weeks for their immunity to be fully effective. This means many seafarers are now out of the loop for 16-20 weeks, which is about double their usual leave period and is compounding the global shortage of seafarers,” he advised. “This is

why it is so important for seafarers to be designated as essential workers and given their vaccinations as soon as possible, and preferably the one-shot version.”

## **ILO CONVENTION SEEKS TO END VIOLENCE/HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

M.E.B.A. is onboard with a new labor Convention to establish global standards to end violence and harassment in the world of work.

ILO Convention No. 190 (C190) was adopted in June 2019 by the International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The international treaty, that came into force last week (June 25, 2021) recognizes the right to a workplace free from violence and harassment. Governments that ratify C190 will be required to put in place the necessary laws and policy measures to prevent and address violence and harassment in the world of work. The Convention represents an historic opportunity to shape a future of work based on dignity and respect for all.

The ILO is now embarking on a global campaign to build support for C190, and invites constituents, stakeholders and civil society actors to get involved. The end goal is for the Convention to be ratified and implemented by national governments and legislative assemblies around the world.

## **RELOCATION FORCES MONTH-LONG CLOSURE FOR NY REC**

The Coast Guard/National Maritime Center’s Regional Exam Center (REC) in New York will move to a new location, at least temporarily, after a major renovation began at its Battery Park Building. As a result, the REC will open its doors at an alternate location in lower Manhattan at the end of July.

The REC closed on Monday. The new temporary location will open on July 26. The renovation that forced the move is expected to last at least a year. During the closure, mariner applications can still be e-mailed to [RECNY@uscg.mil](mailto:RECNY@uscg.mil). Mariners seeking to complete examinations during this period should consider testing at another REC. Additional REC locations and application submission information can be found on the National Maritime Center (NMC) website ([www.dco.uscg.mil/national\\_maritime\\_center](http://www.dco.uscg.mil/national_maritime_center)).

The new location for REC New York is 201 Varick St., 9th Floor, Suite 904, New York, NY 10014. Mariners can reach the call center at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662) and [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil).

## **M.E.B.A. HQ ONLINE MEETING ON WEDNESDAY – SIGN UP NOW**

The monthly town-hall style M.E.B.A. Headquarters informational meeting will be held online – with no voting and no resolutions introduced - on Wednesday, July 7 at 1300 (Eastern Time). This is not an actual membership meeting but it is an excellent opportunity for Members, Applicants and Retirees to discuss M.E.B.A. business, exchange information and learn more about the latest Union initiatives.

Members, applicants and retirees need to register in advance for this meeting to [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)

When registering for the Online Headquarters Informational Meeting you must provide your full name and proof of good standing - such as your last dues receipt/service charge number or statement that you are enrolled in Dues Check-Off (DCO) with a particular bargaining unit. Retirees should

provide their full name and indicate their retired status. Upon confirmation of your status, the Zoom access link will be emailed to you shortly before the meeting.

**HALLS CLOSED MONDAY FOR SUNDAY INDEPENDENCE DAY; WEST COAST CLOSED TUESDAY FOR BLOODY THURSDAY**

M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on Monday (July 5) to give the workforce a day off for Sunday's Independence Day. West Coast halls will continue to be shuttered on Tuesday, July 6<sup>th</sup> in observance of "Bloody Thursday."

Bloody Thursday commemorates the 1934 longshoremen labor action led by Harry Bridges that culminated in street fighting and clashes with police. Hundreds were injured and several were killed in the riots that came to a head on July 5, 1934. Following a general strike and federal intervention, the longshoremen won a coast-wide contract, union hiring halls, and various improvements to wages and conditions.

Because of the holidays, the Boston membership meeting will be held on Tuesday and the Oakland and Seattle meetings shift to Wednesday (see the schedule below).

**MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – ALL *REGULAR* MEETINGS ARE IN-PERSON**

*(All times are local)*

**Monday, July 5 – *Independence Day Observed* (All Halls Closed)**

**Tuesday, July 6 – *Bloody Thursday* (West Coast Halls Closed) - Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315;**

**Wednesday, July 7 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle-Fife@1300; Online Headquarters "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No voting) – You can register for the 7/7 HQ meeting at [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org) – provide your details)**

**Thursday, July 8 – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**

**Friday, July 9 – 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 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.*