

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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BARGAINING CONTINUES WITH HAPAG/CROWLEY

Late last week in Denver, Colorado, an M.E.B.A. negotiating team continued bargaining with Marine Personnel & Provisioning (MPP) (Hapag/Crowley). The parties are discussing contract terms for the five "Express Class" vessels in the MTL/Hapag U.S.-flag fleet. Those vessels include the Maritime Security Program vessels DELAWARE EXPRESS, COLORADO EXPRESS, HUDSON EXPRESS, MISSOURI EXPRESS and the POTOMAC EXPRESS.

M.E.B.A. Gulf Coast Vice President Adam Smith is leading the talks along with Tampa Branch Agent Nicole Greenway and M.E.B.A. Contracts Officer Mark Gallagher. Rank-and-file members Craig LaChance (C/E) and Capt. Sam Leshner assisted the M.E.B.A. team.

The current contract runs through December 31, 2021. Continued input and participation in future talks is encouraged. You can contact GCVP Adam Smith at the Houston hall or email him at asmith@mebaunion.org or Tampa Branch Agent Nicole Greenway at the Tampa hall or ngreenway@mebaunion.org.

WSF VACCINE MANDATE TAKES EFFECT

Washington State's vaccine mandate requiring COVID-19 inoculations for all state workers as a condition of employment took effect on Monday. The mandate, issued by the Governor in August, affects over 800,000 public sector workers including state troopers, health care and school employees, as well as transportation workers including those in the Washington State Ferry system. The mandate allows for religious and medical exemptions but does not provide an avenue for the unvaccinated to remain on the job subject to a testing regime. In effect, the policy is "no jab, no job" and unvaccinated employees were informed of their dismissal this week. It appears that about 120 WSF employees hadn't been vaccinated as of the deadline though some of them have requested extensions, and others were tardy in providing proof of vaccination. About 35 M.E.B.A. members appear to be among that group and will not be allowed to continue sailing in the WSF fleet. The ferry system had already been dealing with manpower shortages and other COVID-19-related issues before Monday's deadline.

WSF officials thanked current and departing employees for their service and the many challenges they faced throughout the pandemic. They issued a travel alert bulletin this week informing riders of ongoing sailing schedule changes due to crew shortages. "Washington State Ferries continues to operate an Alternate Sailing Schedule on most routes until further notice," the bulletin noted. "These

changes will help offer more predictable and reliable service systemwide in the face of crewing shortages due to a global mariner shortage that has been worsened by the pandemic.”

WSF officials admitted that the current sailing schedule “is not ideal and is not permanent” and noted that they will aggressively continue a big push to bring in qualified mariners to help fill the gap.

UNION PRODS NYC TO ADDRESS UNAPPRECIATED S.I. FERRY WORKERS

The M.E.B.A. is again reaching out to New York City’s Department of Transportation to help rectify a broken wage structure at the Staten Island Ferry system that has contributed to major retention issues and service disruptions.

M.E.B.A., which represents Captains, Assistant Captains, Engineers and Mates on the Staten Island Ferries, points out that officers are working for much less than industry wages with inadequate benefits and have not had a pay increase in almost 11 years. In addition, the many challenges brought about by the pandemic have caused an exodus of qualified officers who can find better paying jobs with fewer headaches elsewhere.

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland “Rex” Rexha, once a former Shop Steward at the ferry system, called on the (Mayor Bill) de Blasio administration to restart talks and revitalize the nation’s busiest ferry system with a fair contract for mariners. In a letter sent to New York City DOT Commissioner Hank Guttman, Rexha noted, “A new contract would recognize the value of ferry workers and the duties they perform by providing them prevailing wages and benefits, and recognize the sacrifices they have made during difficult days and periods... It is time to end this stalemate for our ferry officers and negotiate a fair and respectful contract that recognizes the dedicated Licensed Officers’ enormous contributions to our City.”

The letter has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website at www.mebaunion.org.

SHORTAGES CREATING DRUG TESTING DELAYS

Drug testing facilities are not immune from global supply chain congestion that has exacerbated delays. Members are urged to get started early when seeking out the necessary screening to keep their licenses active. There have been various reports that some facilities are experiencing shortages of qualified personnel and equipment necessary to the process.

New Drug Test forms will be available in the halls next week and by request from M.E.B.A. Plans. The new forms are necessary to avoid delays in processing. Contact your local hall or M.E.B.A. Plans for the most current form.

You can use the National Maritime Center website to locate an approved drug testing center near you by visiting www.dco.uscg.mil/nmc/drug_testing/ You can also visit that page to go over the requirements and check out a Frequently Asked Questions page that may prove helpful.

MARITIME UNIONS URGE ICEBREAKER FUNDING

Four major maritime labor unions are urging lawmakers to ensure that crucial funding for the construction of a new Great Lakes icebreaker remains as part of a reconciliation bill that Democrats are hoping to pair with a forthcoming infrastructure bill.

M.E.B.A., along with AMO, MM&P and SIU signed onto a letter sent to House and Senate leaders stressing the necessity for a new icebreaker on the Lakes that is desperately needed to keep ships moving during the frozen winter months. Lawmakers approved full icebreaker funding in an early version of the bill, but with certain members balking at the overall price-tag, a number of programs and initiatives are being whittled out of the legislation in an attempt to win overall passage.

The unions noted that the icebreaker is vital for the economic viability of shipping on the Lakes and stated that full funding “will support maritime and other union jobs, address climate change impacts, and support economic resilience and billions of dollars in revenue and wages.”

TENTATIVE AGREEMENTS AVERT FILM & TV WORKER STRIKE

Tentative agreements reached late last week will at least temporarily avert a planned strike by behind-the-scenes film and television workers looking for a fair contract. 60,000 union members from the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) were ready to go on strike this last Monday to win relief from unsafe hours, unlivable wages and a lack of reasonable rest on set. Once members gave the union strike authorization and prepared to walk off the set, as if magic, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) became more realistic with its contract offers and the parties began making progress.

The “Basic Agreement” covers 13 IATSE West Cost Locals. A separate contract known as the “Area Standards Agreement” covers 26 IATSE Locals outside of L.A. IATSE members will put the tentative three-year agreements to an online ratification vote.

The proposed contracts address core issues, including reasonable rest periods; meal breaks; a living wage for those on the bottom of the pay scale; and significant increases in compensation to be paid by new-media companies.

“This is a Hollywood ending,” said IATSE International President Matthew Loeb. “Our members stood firm. We are tough and united...This settlement allows pre-production, production and post-production to continue without interruption. Workers should have improved morale and be more alert. Health and safety standards have been upgraded...Solidarity is more than a word,” Loeb added. “It’s the way to get things done.”

WORKER ANGER FUELS LABOR ACTIONS

The AFL-CIO noted that following more than a year of continued COVID-19 fall-out that has physically and emotionally drained employees across the country, workers “are standing up for basic dignity and respect on the job in a historic way.” The Federation’s “Working People Weekly List” rounds up some of the labor unrest around the country:

- More than 10,000 workers at 14 different John Deere locations are on strike after the United Auto Workers union said it was unable to reach a new contract with the tractor company. “Our members at John Deere strike for the ability to earn a decent living, retire with dignity and establish fair work rules,” UAW’s Chuck Browning said in a statement.
- Unsatisfied with seven-day work weeks and a two-tier retirement system, 1,400 Kellogg’s workers in several U.S. cities, are on strike. The strike began on Tuesday, October 5, when the master contract between the Kellogg Company and the local Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco

Workers and Grain Millers International unions expired, after a one-year extension that was put in place in 2020.

- UFCW Local 23D bourbon-industry workers in Kentucky, including those at Jim Beam, have been on strike for a month. UFCW said the company's proposed contract "removes a cap on health insurance premium increases that reduce take-home pay, cuts overtime, and drastically changes work schedules which makes it harder for employees to support and care for their families."
- New Jersey Transit has settled contracts with roughly 60% of the rail unions representing employees who keep the trains rolling, after approving new labor agreements with six railroad unions. Unions included in the settlement are the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation SMART-TD Local 60, representing conductors and assistant conductors, the National Conference of Fireman and Oilers, representing laborers, power plant employees, motor equipment operators and rail equipment helpers, the Transportation Communication Union, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, representing rail car maintainers, and the International Association of Machinists.

The AFL-CIO noted, "...through the pandemic, the nation was reminded of the essentialness of labor—not the labor of Wall Street; rather, the labor that drives our hospitals, our groceries, our mail, our livelihoods. They are striking; they are picketing; they are demanding fair contracts. They are forming new unions on campuses and coffeehouses, and they are walking out on low-wage jobs at Burger King, Dollar General, and elsewhere. In short, laborers are demanding their due. And it is infectiously spreading from workplace to workplace."

There are more than 20 strikes going on throughout the U.S. right now. Check this "strike map" to find a labor action near you that you can support: <https://tinyurl.com/y87s477y>

PIRACY AT A 27 YEAR LOW, BUT DANGER LURKS

So far this year, reported piracy and armed robbery incidents at sea are at their lowest numbers for any year since 1994.

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) issued its latest global piracy report recording only 97 incidents of piracy and armed robbery through September. Reported incidents are down to their lowest levels in decades, but violence against seafarers has continued with 51 crew kidnapped, eight taken hostage, five threatened, three injured, two assaulted and one killed, according to the latest IMB statistics. Incidents in the Gulf of Guinea fell from 46 to 28 over last year's levels. However, armed robbery in the Singapore Straits erupted with 20 incidents, up five from last year and the most since 1991. The coast of Peru was another rising hotspot with 15 incidents so far this year, the most in 30 years in that region. IMB was pleased to report that incidents in Indonesia were down representing the lowest level in that area since 1993.

While the reduction of reported incidents is a welcome, IMB warns that seafarers must remain vigilant as violence against crew remains high in many areas of the world.

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 (Go to “Forms, Documents & Notices” (up top) then “Vacation Plan Forms”). Complete details are available on the Plans site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or vacation@mebaplans.org for more info.

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*

Monday, November 8 – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300;

Tuesday, November 9 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, November 10 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online Headquarters “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting)

Thursday, November 11 – Veterans’ Day – *All Halls Closed*

Friday, November 12 – Honolulu@1100; L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

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***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. 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 Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.