

Change of Command at Nation's Oldest Maritime Union

With a dozen years of service as an M.E.B.A. Union official under his belt, Don Keefe will take over the leadership of the nation's oldest maritime labor union at the stroke of midnight on December 31st. Keefe assumes the M.E.B.A. presidency following a 90-day balloting period in which he prevailed over three other major candidates for the Union's top job.

Experience won't be an issue for the 51-year old Keefe who is coming off two consecutive terms as Atlantic Coast Vice President and 12 total years as a Union official, including stints as Representative in both Boston and New York. He has earned a reputation as both a straightforward, no-frills advocate for the membership as well as a sturdy negotiator who drives a hard bargain. Following his graduation from Massachusetts Maritime Academy in 1978, Keefe joined the Union and shipped out under the M.E.B.A. blue and gold for 17 years earning his Chief Engineer's License (Steam/Motor/Gas Turbine Unlimited) before becoming an official.

He takes over the mantle from two-term President Ron Davis who re-established Union job opportunities on the Great Lakes, LNG and cruise industries but suffered from a divided District Executive Committee (D.E.C.) among other issues. The D.E.C. is the District's governing body. In 2004, Davis staved off an M.E.B.A. democratic tradition by the membership of limiting their presidents to one term, but the tide of members clamoring for a different direction keelhailed his chances for a third.

Keefe will attempt to unify a collection of M.E.B.A. union officials elected from three different slates as he moves forward to fulfill campaign pledges for accountability, transparency and a step-up in organizing job opportunities for the membership. He will be joined on the Union's five-person D.E.C. by Executive V.P. Ed MacCormack, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo, Atlantic Coast V.P. Bill McHugh, and Gulf Coast V.P. Marc Huber.

25-year member Ed MacCormack has spent the last three years serving as the Patrolman in San Francisco where he has rewarded members with his integrity and hard work. Third generation member Bill Van Loo is a past Baltimore Branch Agent and a 1983 graduate of the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School. He took over the vacant Secretary-Treasurer position in late 2006 and his experience and strong work ethic will benefit the membership over the next three years. Bill McHugh is well-prepared to take over as Atlantic Coast V.P. He impressed

members with his effectiveness as New York Patrolman for over five years and has done a top-notch job following his appointment as Baltimore Branch Agent in late 2006. Marc Huber makes his triumphant return as Gulf Coast V.P. after a three-year hiatus. He served one-term in that capacity and a previous term as the New Orleans Patrolman. In bringing him back to office, members remembered Marc's hands-on approach and attentiveness to their issues.

Including Bill Van Loo, only three elected officials will continue in the same positions they served in the Davis administration. Mike Nizetich will continue as L.A. Branch Agent and Karol Kingery returns to head up the Seattle hall. Five candidates currently showcasing their skills as Representatives won elected office. The Rep. from Jacksonville, Tom "Sunny" Suneson, takes over as Branch Agent in Baltimore. New Orleans Rep. Wil Jones and San Francisco Rep. Jim Staats will now serve as Patrolmen in their respective ports. L.A. Rep. Larry Young and Seattle Rep. Jim McCrary each ran unopposed and will also stay at their ports to serve as Patrolmen.

There are only three members of Don Keefe's administration that will gain their first experience as union officials. However all three have had extensive sailing careers with the Union as well as years of activism on behalf of the M.E.B.A. Dana Woodruff is the new Branch Agent in Houston. Dana is a "Dualie" holding both deck and engineer's licenses. She will be joined by Mike Dunklin, the new Houston Patrolman. Mike is a native Texan who graduated from the Calhoon School in 1977. Chris Guerra is the new Patrolman in New York. He has shipped out with the Union for 19 years and, like our other newly elected M.E.B.A. officials, is ready to get to work. Congratulations all!!!

Following is the list of newly elected M.E.B.A. Union Officials:

President & National M.E.B.A. Delegate
Don Keefe

Secretary-Treasurer & National M.E.B.A. Delegate
Bill Van Loo

Atlantic Coast V.P. & National M.E.B.A. Delegate
Bill McHugh

Gulf Coast V.P. & National M.E.B.A. Delegate
Marc Huber

Executive V.P., S.F. Branch Agent & National M.E.B.A. Delegate
Ed MacCormack

Baltimore Branch Agent & National M.E.B.A. Delegate
Tom Suneson

Houston Branch Agent & National M.E.B.A. Delegate
Dana Woodruff

L.A. Branch Agent & National M.E.B.A. Delegate
Mike Nizetich

Seattle Branch Agent & National M.E.B.A. Delegate
Karol Kingery

New York Patrolman
Chris Guerra

New Orleans Patrolman
Wil Jones

San Francisco Patrolman
Jim Staats

Houston Patrolman
Mike Dunklin

L.A. Patrolman
Larry Young

Seattle Patrolman
Jim McCrary

Joining the nine officials listed above who will serve as Delegates at the National M.E.B.A. Convention taking place in March 2008 are the following 11 members:

Patrick D. Anderson
Erik Barton
B.M. "Mike" Dunklin

Mark S. Gallagher
Chris Guerra
Jim McCrary
Tom Monahan
Alana Newman
Jim Staats
Ray Twitty
Patrick M. Wright

Tallying Committee Completes Report

An elected rank and file Tallying Committee successfully completed its report, within 24 hours after the count of the ballots as stipulated in the M.E.B.A. By-Laws. The Committee was made up of Chairman Jim Langmeyer (NY/NJ), Recording Secretary Jon Anderson (Seattle), Tom Birago (Baltimore), Brian Evjen (Houston), Steve Byerley (L.A./Wilmington) and alternates John Ebanks (New Orleans) and James Howard (S.F./Oakland).

The Committee met with principals from the American Arbitration Association (AAA) including Impartial Administrator Ken Egger on Monday morning before proceeding to the Port Office to pick up the ballots. The rest of the day was consumed by scrupulous oversight of the ballot count along with validating that each vote was cast by a member in good standing. The Committee's report, the report of the AAA and sheet with the vote count were all faxed to the M.E.B.A. Union halls and offices on Tuesday after becoming official.