



MEBA CONTINUES TO SET THE COURSE

We've all heard the cliché that "a chain is only as strong as its weakest link." Like many clichés, it has been repeated so often because it's true. When you look at any organization, whether it's a labor union, a professional sports team or a major corporation, you can tell its true strength not only by those in the highest leadership positions, but by the strength and quality of others throughout the organization. Thankfully, the MEBA has solid leaders at all levels and that has borne itself out as we fill vacant positions created through several departures.

After over 25 years of dedicated service, Secretary-Treasurer Cecil McIntyre has announced his retirement. Cecil's hard work, dedication and loyalty to the MEBA are unmatched. Under his tenure Cecil got our treasury back in the black, among other things. He will be missed. He is being succeeded by Bill Van Loo, formerly our Agent in Baltimore. I have every confidence in Bill's ability and look forward to working with him at Headquarters. Van Loo's former post will be filled by Bill McHugh, who will be moving down to Baltimore as Branch Agent. In Seattle, long-time MEBA elected official Moose Mallini will be taking over as Branch Agent. Thanks to the ability and dedication of the MEBA officials we have throughout the Union, I am confident that these changes will make our Union as strong or stronger than we were before the changes. Also retiring from the MEBA family is AMC President Gloria Tosi and although her experience can never be replaced, Brian Schoeneman will do a very capable job running the AMC.

This past summer has been busy and I was pleased to attend two more dedications of newly constructed MEBA vessels. The MAUNALEI is Matson's fourth newbuild out of Aker Philadelphia shipyard and the ALASKAN FRONTIER is the fourth newbuild out of NASSCO built for BP and operated by ATC. The recent announcement by Chevron that they were increasing the size of their fleet, along with the newbuilds, represents thirty more years of seagoing employment for MEBA members.

We keep many irons in the fire for new work and continue to be successful in adding new jobs for MEBA members. I continue to work with our affiliates in areas that are important to them as we strengthen our ties to the AFL-CIO and the DEC is exploring joint co-operation avenues with the MM&P. On behalf of the Maritime Trades Department of the AFL-CIO I testified before Congress to voice our concerns for the TWIC card while at the same time giving our support to the US Coast Guard. On Labor Day I had an opportunity to speak with President Bush at Piney Point about the state of the American Merchant Marine and he expressed his support for America's Fourth Arm of Defense.

Currently we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Calhoun MEBA Engineering School. In September of 1966, the first 25 students of the School began courses at the Emerson Hotel in Baltimore. In the forty years since that first class began, the MEBA School has blossomed into one of the premiere education and training facilities for marine engineers and deck officers in the world.

This issue of the *Marine Officer* is dedicated to celebrating this anniversary. Interviews with past Directors and a history of the School paint a vivid picture of how far we've come since the early days.

Today, CMES educates over 1600 members of the Union a year. In the last few years, we have made significant upgrades to the School that made it an even better facility for training our members. From the new auditorium and state-of-the-art bridge simulators, from the renovation of the living quarters to the addition of the members lounge, MEBA has made a commitment to the continuing development and improvement of the CMES.

I have always felt that our training program has been a major focal point for the Union. The training that the CMES provides ensures that MEBA members maintain their reputation as the highest quality, most highly trained mariners in the business. And the School continues to evolve to meet the needs of our members, just as our members must evolve to meet the needs of our industry, often made necessary by the next generation of merchant ships and new trends in the global maritime industry.

Our adaptability has been a key aspect of our success – not only the success of the school, but also of the Union itself. The last forty years have seen the rise of containerization, larger ships, the transition from steam to diesel engines, the implementation of STCW, and more. Through each major change to our industry, MEBA and CMES have evolved to meet every new demand. We must always be willing to embrace this change, to be on the cutting edge of the industry. I am confident that this willingness will open new doors that will lead to new ships and new jobs for our members.

A quick look through this issue of the *Marine Officer* proves the point. In the last few months we've seen record orders for new vessels, and a number of new ship dedications. We have a new Maritime Administrator and a new Secretary of Transportation. And come November, we will have a new crop of legislators in Washington D.C. Change is inevitable, and we must meet those changes with optimism and flexibility.

It has been an interesting 40 years since that September in 1966 and I am certain that the next 40 years will see even more changes to our industry and to the MEBA School. However, I am confident that no matter how much things may change, one thing will remain the same – MEBA's training facility will remain at the upper echelon of maritime training worldwide.

Congratulations CMES, and on behalf of the MEBA, best wishes for a bright future. ■

Fraternally,

Ron Davis