

MESSAGE
FROM THE PRESIDENT



FULL SERVICE: UNION HALLS KEEP MEMBERS ON THE GO

Almost 132 years after MEBA's founding fathers formed this Union on the banks of Lake Erie, the system they put in place to protect our members and further facilitate their success as mariners continues to thrive. Our Union hiring halls across the country not only help obtain work for members in a transparent and democratic fashion, but also provide a multitude of services that help maximize the working experience for our people.

The MEBA is a union of leaders – men and women with enormous responsibility whose good judgment is exercised each day aboard our ships and ferries, in shoreside work sites and in our Union halls. When a ship breaks down, there is no roadside assistance. Our members are self-reliant, innovative and well educated – they are more than prepared to get the job done the right way. But back on the “beach,” each member does have shoreside support working for them behind the scenes. Our Union officials make sure our members can concentrate on what they do best – perform workplace miracles and deliver the goods whether from their cubical in Denver or on a ship half way around the world. It doesn't matter if the cargo is people or commodities, our members get it there safely and on time.

This issue of the *Marine Officer* takes a look at the services provided to our membership. There is a profile of Al Camelio, who recently retired as a union official in the Los Angeles Hall. Brother Camelio shares with the membership the wisdom he's gleaned from almost ten years of service as a union official and as a long-time sailing member. Al provides advice to current and future union officials, shares insight on what it is like to run a hall, and guidance to those members considering a position of leadership within the union.

All of our union officials have worked in a MEBA bargaining unit before becoming an official. Most of them had careers as sailing members before their decision to come in from the sea and work on behalf of the membership. The scattered few who did not have deep-sea backgrounds hail from our shoreside units such as the City & Bureau of Juneau or POID, the Washington State Ferries or the New York Fire & Ferry boats. Being an official is often a thankless job that requires a great deal of dedication, persistence and compassion and requires the recognition that sometimes it is impossible to please all our members when making the hard decisions.

Often the membership does not realize that union officials do much more than negotiate contracts or handle grievances. They work to organize new work and to keep the current jobs we have, they speak to politicians, they maintain the union halls, they work on benefit plan issues and they help assist our members through family and life crises. Some prepare government and commercial bids, or work with our companies on contract interpretations, and most provide input to the Coast Guard, as well as other federal and state government agencies. Union

officials participate on the local, state and national AFL-CIO as well as with global organizations such as the International Maritime Organization and International Transport Workers' Federation. These are just some of their duties and for that I would like to congratulate them on continuing a job well done for the MEBA membership.

In the last issue I welcomed aboard some new union officials. This issue I'd like to single out some new faces in the New York Hall -- Erik Barton and Joe Martucci Jr. Erik and Joe have the distinction of being the youngest officials in the Union. They represent the future leaders of the MEBA. They bring high energy, keen intellect and a fresh perspective. They are the newest generation to come ashore and serve. We also welcome new officials Jim McCrary in Seattle and Greg Revers in L.A.

Work is concluding on the MEBA Union hall in Oakland, California. MEBA recently switched construction management firms due to repeated restatements of the projected costs and delays by the original builder. The hall should be open for business in early 2007. In addition to all the necessary fixtures of a union hall, the new space has washing machines and showers for the use of members on the go. You can check out the progress of the new Oakland hall by going onto the Hot! section of the MEBA website to see pictures. I believe the membership will be very pleased with this new hall when construction is completed.

MEBA union halls and our officials can only be effective if there are MEBA jobs. The MEBA job base continues to be very stable ashore and at sea. Your union officials work continually to keep the current job base as well as constantly search for new employment opportunities for the membership. I was fortunate recently to be part of a contingent to welcome in one of the brand new ships that our officers will be sailing on well into the future. The OVERSEAS HOUSTON, a 600-foot long product tanker, was recently completed at Aker Philadelphia Shipyard in Philadelphia. At the naming ceremony I was very impressed with the vessel and look with much anticipation to the next nine or more of these next-generation newbuild tanker vessels that will be operated by OSG Shipping. Progress has been made on three other OSG tankers at the yard, and like the HOUSTON, each will provide good jobs for our members upon completion for the next thirty years.

Finally I would like to extend fraternal holiday tidings to all active and retired members and their families. May you and yours have a safe and healthy holiday season and a happy new year. ■

F R A T E R N A L L Y ,

Ron Davis

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