



Ahoy Mateys!

Keystone Deck Officers Onboard with M.E.B.A.

The Union's relationship with Chas. Kurz & Co., Inc. just got a little more mutually beneficial. A recent agreement with the company, the controlling parent of Keystone Shipping, has solidified an M.E.B.A. presence on the bridge of the Keystone commercial vessels.

Since the early 1990s, M.E.B.A. has represented deck and engine officers on Government-owned Keystone vessels that include the Military Sealift Command-contracted ships and the MarAd Ready Reserve Force fleet. Such vessels often need to be crewed up on a moment's notice dictated by military operations overseas.

The "war on terror" has provided numerous opportunities for the M.E.B.A. to demonstrate its spectacular track record in getting these ships ready to sail at the earliest opportunity with the finest seagoing officers in the world.

Until now, this wildly successful arrangement pertaining to the Keystone Government ships did not translate to the commercial side where M.E.B.A. engineers sailed alongside non-union deck officers. The new agreement designates M.E.B.A. as the sole and exclusive bargaining representative of the licensed deck officers employed

aboard the company's commercial, ocean-going tanker vessels.

The agreement does not include Captains, although the Masters have the option of joining M.E.B.A. or remaining outside of the bargaining unit. Since the announcement, all Captains sailing in the Keystone commercial fleet have committed to the M.E.B.A. and are coming aboard as Group II members.

The company's fleet of oceangoing tanker vessels currently consists of the KEYSTONE TEXAS and the DELAWARE TRADER. M.E.B.A. is confident in Keystone's ability to expand its tanker operation and we welcome the opportunity for continued growth with the company.

Under an unusual arrangement, M.E.B.A. has, since March 7, 2003, represented the Third Mate billet on the DELAWARE TRADER. When the permanent M.E.B.A. member takes a leave of absence, the relief job is called out of the M.E.B.A. hiring hall. This practice will continue.

The agreement is the culmination of many months of discussions M.E.B.A. has had with the company. This effort was

further enhanced by the stellar support, determination and professionalism exhibited by M.E.B.A. officials visiting the vessels while in port and our engineers sailing the ships. We owe each and every one of them a debt of gratitude for a job well done and thanks to all the rank and file members for the valuable input they provided to the Union as well.

This new pact bodes well for the future expansion of both M.E.B.A. and Keystone and it is our sincerest desire that our newly recognized licensed deck officer brothers and sisters will enjoy the same fulfillment, stability and peace of mind that is the hallmark of M.E.B.A. as an institution. ■

1: Houston Patrolman Donn Reamer snapped this photo of the MEBA engineers on a ship visit to the DELAWARE TRADER. Left to right are 3rd A/E Zbigniew (Peter) Przyblyski, 1st A/E Joe Gilbert, C/E Tory Ricker and 2nd A/E Tom Eastwood.

2: New M.E.B.A. members on the deck side of the Keystone-managed DELAWARE TRADER include (l-r) Second Mate Jason Law, Third Mate Ken Perrine, Chief Mate Phil Plummer and Captain Jeff Miller