

# M.E.B.A. Extending Its Reach into New Frontiers

The multifaceted skills of our members coupled with the finest maritime continuing education available has helped our Union usher in new work opportunities in fields not recently associated with the M.E.B.A. Already in the last few years, the Union reclaimed a stake in the cruise ship industry and on the Great Lakes, and of late, engineered a return to the LNG arena. Now, the Union has helped apply the expertise of our members to the international subsea oil and gas industry.

It took a few months to hammer out a full-bodied collective bargaining agreement, but at the end of the day, Union officials worked out a deal to put our members to work immediately aboard drillships and drill rigs involved in the exploration of natural resources around the globe.

Houston, Texas-based Frontier Drilling is a supplier of drilling and production services for the oil and gas industry and has contracts with Shell Oil. M.E.B.A. officers – on both deck and engine levels – will be afforded opportunities in Frontier's six-vessel fleet through our referral arrangement with Armada Companies, LLC. M.E.B.A. has a collective bargaining agreement with Armada which provides maritime technical staffing to the maritime and non-maritime engineering industries worldwide.

The deal was brokered by M.E.B.A. President Ron Davis along with Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo and Deputy General Counsel William Doyle. HQ Contracts Rep. Mark Gallagher provided valuable assistance in the process.

In addition, to the traditional sailing opportunities aboard the vessels, M.E.B.A. has worked out language in the contract that will allow our members to fill some of the specialized non-shipboard operation positions in the Frontier fleet as well. With some additional training and vessel familiarization, the position of subsea engineer will be a natural extension for the skills that M.E.B.A. engineers already possess. Their skills will be tapped to ensure that the actual drilling, the lifeblood of Frontier's operations - continues unabated.

The advantage of the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School (CMES), our Union's training facility, was the final selling point in our new relationship with Frontier. School Director Lou Marciello and his dedicated staff of professionals (in particular Scott Conway & Bob Smith) should be commended for their tireless efforts in support of this endeavor. In conjunction with Frontier Drilling, the School is developing a CMES course that will provide the additional training required for subsea and assistant subsea engineers.

As Frontier taps the reliable source of highly skilled M.E.B.A. licensed officers, our Union has an excellent opportunity to prove itself in yet another sector of the industry and further establish our presence in this ever-expanding field.

Photo #1: The drillship FRONTIER DISCOVERER has just been refurbished and is going back to work in the Beaufort Sea with a crew of approximately 120 including M.E.B.A. officers. Among other things, a new sponson tank and accommodation block were installed and the marine and drilling equipment aboard the vessel was modified to ice class requirements.



## Union Rustles Up Preservation Work aboard N/S SAVANNAH

In another example of the Union branching out beyond traditional work, M.E.B.A. has been supplying labor to aid in the preservation of the Nuclear Ship SAVANNAH, a vessel that M.E.B.A. officers crewed in its heyday in the 1960s. The ship's active sailing life ended in 1971, at which time all nuclear fuel was removed. The SAVANNAH is currently sitting at a MarAd berth in Newport News, VA.

The Maritime Administration has been awarding work to decommission the ship and remove its nuclear-related components. Through MarAd's contract with Keystone Shipping, M.E.B.A. is providing supervisory and oversight functions aboard the vessel during the preservation stage. The ultimate fate of the SAVANNAH has not yet been determined but MarAd's safekeeping of the vessel bodes well for the ship's future.



Photo #2: Named after the SS SAVANNAH, the first steamship to cross the Atlantic, the N/S SAVANNAH was the world's first commercial nuclear vessel. M.E.B.A. members aboard the ship on Maritime Day in Newport News are (l-r) CAPE RISE Chief Mate Gary Hill, SAVANNAH 1st A/E John Malliarakis, CAPE RISE 1st A/E Dave Cake and Norfolk Representative Jeff Hauck