

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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UMPIRE CONFIRMS M.E.B.A. JURISDICTION ON PASHA NEWBUILDS

As expected, the AFL-CIO has confirmed M.E.B.A./MM&P work jurisdiction aboard a pair of LNG-fueled containerships being built for the Pasha Hawaii fleet. The two Ohana-class vessels, the 774-foot long M/V GEORGE III and M/V JANET MARIE, are being constructed by Keppel AmFELS at its yard in Brownsville, TX. The GEORGE III is nearing completion and is scheduled to replace the 1980-built C-8 vessel HORIZON ENTERPRISE sometime later this year. The JANET MARIE is set to debut soon after and is expected to replace another aging vessel.

M.E.B.A. also represents engineers onboard the HORIZON PACIFIC (C-8), HORIZON SPIRIT (C-9) and HORIZON RELIANCE (C-9) in the Pasha fleet, as well as Port Engineers, through our contract with ship manager Sunrise Operations.

Once completed, the Ohana Class vessels will join the Pasha Hawaii fleet providing service on the Hawaii/Mainland trade lane. The Jones Act vessels will have a capacity of 2,525 TEUs, with a sailing speed of 23.0 knots. The design of the ships' hulls are being fully optimized using computational fluid dynamics, and will be among the most hydro-dynamically efficient hulls in the world. The vessels were named in honor of the parents of Pasha Group President and CEO George Pasha, IV.

TWU SEEKING HARSHER PENALTIES FOR THOSE ABUSING NY TRANSIT WORKERS

New York legislators may push ahead legislation to embrace a Transport Workers Union., Local 100 initiative to increase penalties for harassment/spitting on a public transit worker. Currently, this vile act is considered as a simple violation and is subject to a fine and a maximum incarceration limit of 15 days. In addition, the assailant's act must be witnessed by a police officer for a successful prosecution to be made.

The TWU proposal, that has received support from District Attorneys from all five boroughs, would upgrade the spitting, or other form of assault or harassment, to a misdemeanor that would be subject to as much as one year in jail. Witness statements could also be used to prosecute if a police officer is not present.

At a press conference this week, Local 100 President Tony Utano said, “This is about respect. We are tired of going home with blood on our uniforms, we are tired of getting spit on and not knowing whether we have the coronavirus, AIDS...tuberculosis, it’s gotta stop.”

This year, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has already counted 311 instances of assault/harassment on City transit workers, including 17 spitting incidents. Last year, 197 spitting incidents were reported.

FMC COMMISSIONERS CONTINUE QUEST TO PRIORITIZE MARINERS FOR VACCINATIONS

Two Commissioners on the Federal Maritime Commission continue their efforts to prioritize the maritime workforce for COVID-19 vaccinations. Carl Bentzel and Daniel Maffei sent letters to Governors of major port states urging that U.S. mariners and seaport workers be protected from the virus to ensure the fluidity of the supply chain.

Letters were sent to the Governors of Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, South Carolina, Texas, and Washington. The Commissioners earlier appealed directly to the Biden Administration in a letter from several weeks back.

They wrote, “The sacrifices, resilience, and selflessness of those who work in the maritime industry have kept our supply chain functioning and our economy connected and will serve as a foundation as we look to recover as a country in 2021. For this to happen, we must provide immediate vaccination to the maritime workforce.”

M.E.B.A. MEMBERS & APPLICANTS IN ALASKA CAN BEGIN RECEIVING VACCINE

The State of Alaska has shifted to a new phase of its vaccine dispersal program that allows M.E.B.A. members and applicants living in “the Last Frontier” to sign up for and receive their COVID-19 vaccinations. M.E.B.A. members and applicants are categorized as “essential workers” during this ongoing pandemic, but still fall in the “1C” category. Efforts continue to prioritize American mariners around the nation and on ships overseas for vaccinations.

1C designees, which includes those above age 55, essential workers, people with certain medical conditions and those who live in multigenerational housing are now eligible to be vaccinated in the State. Alaska is expecting to receive 103,120 first doses of Pfizer and Moderna vaccine this month. Providers are also about to receive 8,900 doses of the recently authorized one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Those previously eligible in the State (Phase 1a and 1b) can continue to get immunized against COVID-19 if they have not already done so.

Governor Mike Dunleavy applauded the move as a step toward recovery. “Expanding the vaccine eligibility to reach more people is significant in protecting Alaskans and in getting Alaska reopened and our economy back up and thriving,” he said.

Alaskans are being asked to screen themselves for eligibility prior to making an appointment. Eventually, as vaccine supply increases, COVID-19 vaccine will be available to anyone who wants it. In the meantime, residents should visit covidvax.alaska.gov to check eligibility, use the Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker and then look for an open appointment if eligible.

MARAD URGES CAUTION AFTER ATTACK ON CAR CARRIER

A suspected attack on a commercial vessel in the Gulf of Oman late last week has prompted the Maritime Administration to issue an MSCI - Maritime Security Communications with Industry – that newly urges vessels transiting the area to exercise extreme caution. The incident involved an explosion near the waterline of the HELIOS RAY, an Israeli-owned car carrier that sustained non-crippling damage with no injury to crew. Reports indicate the blast opened up holes on both port and starboard sides of the ship above the waterline. The vessel had previously made several Persian Gulf stops and was headed toward Singapore when the incident occurred which eventually forced the ship to head to Dubai for repairs. Israel blamed the attack on Iran which vociferously denied the accusation.

MarAd referred industry to an earlier-issued Maritime Advisory (2021-001 - Threats to Commercial Vessels by Iran and its Proxies), urged caution, and asked that mariners watch out for – and report suspicious small boat activity in those areas. Maritime industry questions regarding the alert can be directed to GMCC@uscg.mil

CRUISE SAILINGS PUSHED BACK ANOTHER MONTH

Norwegian Cruise Line-America announced that its U.S.-flag vessel PRIDE OF AMERICA won't take on passengers and resume its normal itinerary around the Hawaiian Islands until June 1st, at the earliest. The company had previously been looking at May 1 for the vessel's restart date, followed by a resumption for the rest of its fleet with U.S. itineraries, but delayed the start as cruise ship companies wait on the issuance of new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance that could affect protocols.

The cruise industry has been on a hiatus for more than a year after the onset of the pandemic which hit the industry particularly hard. The CDC previously cleared the way for the resumption of cruise sailings making U.S. port stops, but many companies, including NCL's parent company, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd., continued a voluntary suspension of cruising to allow additional time to implement extensive COVID-19 safety measures. The M.E.B.A.-crewed PRIDE OF AMERICA is the lone large U.S.-flag passenger vessel and also the only cruise ship operating exclusively between the Hawaiian Islands.

The government of Canada recently announced that it is suspending all cruise ships from transiting through Canadian waters until the end of February 2022. The Northwest & Canada division of the Cruise Lines International Association was taken aback by the extended suspension. "While we understand and support the government's focus on combatting COVID-19 in Canada, we are surprised by the length of the extension of the prohibition of cruise," said Charlie Ball, Chair of CLIA-NWC. "We hope to have an opportunity to revisit this timeline and demonstrate our ability to address COVID-19 in a cruise setting with science-backed measures, as CLIA members are doing in Europe and parts of Asia where cruising has resumed on a limited basis."

UNION FILM NIGHT

As we approach movie award season, we look back at some highly-touted films of yore with worker themes. Thanks to Labor 411 for helping us to further flesh out this list, though there are so many more:

Feature Films

"The Devil and Miss Jones" (1941) - Comedy about NYC department store strike.

“On the Waterfront” (1954) – A longshoreman who is an ex-fighter stands up to corruption on the docks.

“Salt of the Earth” (1954) – Drama about a worker strike against a New Mexico zinc company.

“The Molly Maguires” (1970) - In 1876, Irish coalminers fight back against conditions in a Pennsylvanian coal mine.

“Bound for Glory” (1976) - Biography of folk singer Woody Guthrie, friend to the working class.

“F.I.S.T.” (1978) - Sylvester Stallone works his way up in a truckers' union. Interestingly, M.E.B.A. Headquarters Building in Washington D.C. was used as the fictional "Federation of Inter-State Truckers" (F.I.S.T.) building as portrayed in the movie.

“Norma Rae” (1979) - Sally Field is a textile worker trying to unionize her factory.

“Silkwood” (1983) - Meryl Streep is a whistleblower at a plutonium processing plant.

“Matewan” (1987) - A union organizer in a West Virginia coalmining town meets resistance from the company.

“Hoffa” (1992) - Jack Nicholson is legendary Teamsters President Jimmy Hoffa.

“Newsies” (1992) - Disney musical where newsboys organize against greedy newspaper publishers.

“Germinal” (1993) - French coalminers’ strike in the 1800’s.

“Brassed Off” (1996) - A brass band unites in an English coal mining town.

“Bread and Roses” (2000) - A pair of Latina cleaners fight for union rights.

“North Country” (2005) – A Minnesota mineworker fights back against sexual harassment.

“Made in Dagenham” (2010) – Underpaid female machinists fight back against inequality at an auto plant in London.

Documentaries

“Native Land” (1942) – Union busting corporations try to beat back labor in the 1930s.

“Harlan County U.S.A.” (1976) - Kentucky coalminers' early 1970’s strike turns violent.

“The Willmar 8” (1981) – Eight midwestern women go on strike against a small town bank.

“Miles of Smiles: Years of Struggle” (1982) - The story of the first black trade union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

“Roger & Me” (1989) - Michael Moore pursues the GM President after a plant closure devastates Flint, Michigan.

“American Dream” (1990) - Documentary of the Meat Packers' strike at Hormel.

“At the River I Stand” (1993) - Short film with Martin Luther King Jr. supporting the 1968 sanitation workers' strike.

“The Fight in the Fields” (1997) - Cesar Chavez and the struggles of the Farmworkers.

“Live Nude Girls Unite! (2000) - San Francisco topless dancers organize.

“Bread and Roses” (2000) - Documentary on a Justice for Janitors struggle in L.A.

“American Factory” (2019) – A Chinese billionaire opens a factory in a blue-collar Ohio town.

ONLINE FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (*All times are local*)

Monday, March 8 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, March 9 – CMES@1430 (*CMES Meeting will be conducted in-person*);
Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, March 10 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, March 11 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, March 12 – Honolulu@1100

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