

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*  
**M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES**  
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## **PASHA WELCOMES GEORGE II FOLLOWING LNG RETROFIT**

M.E.B.A. attended a ceremony at the Port of Long Beach earlier this week as Pasha christened the GEORGE II – the former HORIZON RELIANCE – following an LNG retrofit. The redubbed vessel honors The Pasha Group's founder – George Pasha II. The Pasha/Sunrise ship was converted from steam propulsion power to dual fuel. The work involved installation of a high-pressure fuel gas supply system, power management system, ship performance monitor and digital solutions for data collection, along with full automation of new systems onboard the ship. This was the first in the world Steam to LNG internal combustion conversion ever.

M.E.B.A.'s President Adam Vokac, Executive V.P. Claudia Cimini, and L.A. Branch Agent Rich Doherty attended the ceremony on Tuesday and President Vokac delivered remarks upon the occasion. He thanked the Pasha family for their vision and ingenuity in transforming a 44-year old vessel into "a cutting edge wonder" and noted that "Pasha is one of the few companies that knows its business depends on its people – on the ground, on the docks, on the bridge and, most importantly of course, in the engine rooms...They invest in their people, they take care of them, and when there are problems, I know they will continue to work with the Union to solve them. They know their quality workforce is as valuable as this ship behind us and that they are both needed for success. I trust them to double down on that winning model."

## **PUSH FOR FULL FOOD AID FUNDING GETS HEAD START**

A coalition of 123 agriculture and shipping interests, including the M.E.B.A. and American Maritime Congress, has already begun the process of urging Congress to support our nation's international food aid programs for the Fiscal Year 2025.

FY '24 Appropriations were recently approved by Congress and signed into law. However, the funding level for a pair of important Department of Agriculture programs were slimmed down over the FY '23 level. Food for Peace endured a \$62,416,627 cut from the year before and the McGovern-Dole Food for Education program took a \$5 million haircut over the previous fiscal year.

Food for Peace has proven to be the most successful international food aid program in the world providing transparency and reliability while lending crucial support to vital U.S. agriculture and

maritime jobs. However, through the years some opponents have called for reform of the PL-480 program by eliminating the U.S.-flag cargo preference component and transforming it into more of a cash-based system. The drastic reduction of cargoes for U.S.-flag shipping over the past decade alongside the lowering of the food aid cargo preference level from 75% to 50% in 2012 helped facilitate a precipitous reduction in the internationally-trading U.S.-flag fleet as ships continue to flag out from the Stars and Stripes. Subsequent erosion of the mariner pool will continue to complicate the nation's ability to fulfill DOD sealift requirements. P.L. 480 Title II Food for Peace, Food for Progress, and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education, have garnered significant bipartisan backing for over six decades and have aided millions of vulnerable individuals globally.

The coalition penned a letter to the Chairs and Ranking Members of both the House and Senate Agriculture Subcommittees (part of each chamber's Appropriations Committees) emphasizing the importance of supporting these lifesaving programs that guarantee good American jobs. The letter has been posted on the M.E.B.A. homepage located at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)

The 123 signatories ask that Congress increase the Fiscal Year 2025 agriculture appropriations funding for these crucial accounts to a minimum of \$2.4 billion. The need for global food assistance remains high due to persistent drought, ongoing conflict, inflationary costs, and other crises worldwide.

According to the UN World Food Programme, the number of people facing crisis levels of food insecurity has risen to 333 million due to COVID-19, conflict, and climate-related extreme events.

### **AMC PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS CATAPULTED TO FAME**

The American Maritime Congress has concluded their successful photo contest that landed the winners in a new tax bracket and won them countless new friends and hangers-on.

M.E.B.A. members swept the Professional Mariner category led by Jake Kopras who snapped a sweet shot of the Interlake vessel JAMES R. BARKER unloading taconite on a frigid morning. Jake serves as Chief Mate on the vessel. He took the top prize – and is currently swimming in cash with his cool \$1K prize. Following the announcement, he soon learned he had more friends than he thought.

Second place in the category went to member Jonathan Land, another M.E.B.A. Deck Officer, who grabbed a shot of the Keystone-managed LMSR M/V BOB HOPE which was loading up a CH-47D Chinook helicopter in Alaska. Yet another M.E.B.A. Deck Officer was honored as LIBERTY PRIDE Third Mate Samuel Boney rounded out the winners in the Professional Mariner category. Good for 3<sup>rd</sup> place, his photo captured a snowy moment on deck aboard the Liberty Maritime vessel which was making a run in the Bering Sea.

AMC also had a Photo Contest category for cadets and the new Mr. Popular in his circles is Kenobi K. A senior at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Kenobi nailed a good-looking shot of the Training Vessel KINGS POINTER. The grand prize in the Cadet category was worth \$750 solving all of Kenobi's financial problems for now. This should hold him over until he starts working in the lucrative commercial shipping sector. Second place in the Cadet category went to Emmett Hawkes for his photo of the ATB CLYDE VAN ENKEVORT loading stone on Lake Huron. Emmett is a Great Lakes Maritime Academy cadet. Finally, the 3<sup>rd</sup> place winner in the Cadet category was Brianna

Linderholm, a Great Lakes Maritime Academy junior. She captured a beautiful Great Lakes sunrise. AMC is greatly appreciative of everyone who participated. You can check out the photos on the AMC [LinkedIn](#) site or see them on the M.E.B.A. [Facebook](#) site where the photos have been reposted.

### **ALTERNATE CHANNELS OPENED IN BALTIMORE PORT**

The Port of Baltimore has begun the long recovery following the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge that largely halted business operations for a week. Two temporary alternate channels have been opened up to allow “commercially essential vessels” a path around the wreckage. However, the channels aren’t deep enough to accommodate most deep-sea ships but will mostly be used by vessels assisting the salvage effort. This is part of a phased approach to opening the main channel which currently has no announced timeline. Teams have begun removing the debris from the water including a 200-ton bridge scrap. Six workers were killed after the M/V DALI lost power in the early morning hours of March 26 and destroyed the bridge. Four bodies are yet to be recovered.

### **4th ANNUAL CALHOON DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT ON APRIL 14**

The M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF) will host its fourth annual Jesse Calhoon Memorial Disc (Frisbee) Golf Tournament on Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. Everyone is invited. The tournament benefits the Memorial Park at the CMES.

As you know, the Memorial was created to honor fallen seafarers who have delivered the goods and answered the call of this country since 1775. The Foundation supporting the Memorial is a section 501(c)(3) entity under Internal Revenue Service rules, so all donations are tax deductible.

There is a \$25 entry fee to participate in the tournament which will begin at 1300. You can just show up and play without advance notice, but if you need further information, contact 4MF Chairman Bill Van Loo at (443) 676-6248 or [bvanloo@bvlworks.org](mailto:bvanloo@bvlworks.org)

### **AFL-CIO HAILS RULE CODIFYING WORKER REPS DURING OSHA INSPECTIONS**

The AFL-CIO praised a Department of Labor final rule published this week that clarifies the rights of employees to authorize a representative to accompany an Occupational Safety and Health Administration compliance officer during workplace inspections. AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said the rule “clarifies and codifies an existing right that has been eroded in practice by employers and reaffirms the important role of worker representatives in addressing unsafe working conditions. It acknowledges the invaluable expertise that worker representatives bring to the OSHA inspection process — improving hazard identification and remediation efforts and empowering workers to raise concerns without fear of employer retaliation.”

The rule clarifies that a non-employee representative may be reasonably necessary to the conduct of an effective and thorough inspection based upon skills, knowledge, or experience with hazards or conditions in the workplace or similar workplaces, or language or communication skills.

President Shuler noted, “Every worker deserves the right to have a union representative, a workplace safety expert or another qualified advocate present during OSHA inspections...This rule is a significant step forward to regain worker trust in the investigation process and to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all workers.”

## **IT'S JESSE CALHOON DAY!**

Union halls were closed today in honor of an M.E.B.A.-specific holiday – Jesse Calhoon Day. The day is dedicated to the man who headed up the M.E.B.A. in exceptional fashion as National President for 22 years. Born on April 4, 1923, Jesse made his final voyage on October 22, 2013 at the age of 90.

A powerful and visionary leader, he was a tough negotiator and the employers viewed him as a formidable adversary. Jesse's intellect, know-how and energy for the job allowed him to maximize his influence within the industry and on Capitol Hill. Wages and benefits for members rose dramatically during his tenure. With scores of accomplishments during 40+ years with the M.E.B.A., he racked up many gains for the Union that we continue to build upon today and the legacy he left looms large.

The holiday was created by a member resolution in 2011 but it only became an actual holiday in 2022 – the first step toward a future fleet-wide contractual holiday.

The ILWU and ILA, among others, also have union-specific observances honoring their labor leaders (Harry Bridges, Teddy Gleason, etc.) and M.E.B.A. members take pride that the nation's oldest and finest maritime union recognizes its modern-day patriarch in similar fashion.

### **NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS** *(All times are local)*

Monday, April 8 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, April 9 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, April 10 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

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

Friday, April 12 – **Honolulu@1100**

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***M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.  
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline  
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.***

*The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and demonstrated track record of readiness, safety, and loyalty in answering America's call to action in times of both peace and war is unrivaled in the world. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). For publication and related inquiries (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*