

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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In this issue//M.E.B.A. is 148 Years Old//Dates Set for 2023 Cadet Internship Program//Senate Bill Would Weaken Cargo Preference//Low Ice on the Lakes, Winter Work Ongoing//Autonomous-Capable APALACHICOLA Delivered//More than 300 Mariners Still Stuck in Ukraine//Labor Honors Tom Donahue//4MF Disc Golf Tournament//

M.E.B.A. IS 148 YEARS STRONG TODAY

148 years ago today, the M.E.B.A.'s ten founding fathers met in Cleveland, Ohio to form a united front against the dangerous working conditions of the day.

Back then, all too frequent boiler explosions aboard steamboats, poor working conditions and measly paychecks spurred these trailblazers to unite for the protection of mariners. They joined forces to effect change – not because ship owners wanted it to happen – but because they realized that things wouldn't get better for mariners without the solidarity of a union to make it happen. The ten men represented Great Lakes associations, a river association and an ocean port. Over the course of a few days, they hammered out a cohesive Constitution for a national organization that protected and enhanced mariner interests.

M.E.B.A.'s 100th Anniversary booklet "Worthy of Our Heritage" called the formation of the union "a bold venture." "Not only was it the first group of maritime workers to organize nationally, but it was among the earliest crafts of the American wage earners to reach this stage of development. There were few precedents available for the guidance of marine engineers in that period; and in view of the depression conditions of 1874-1875, the seeming odds against its success were great."

Garrett Douw, from Buffalo, was elected as the first President of the National Marine Engineers' Association. The word "Beneficial" was added in 1883 to show the benevolent and fraternal character of the organization. Early on, the founding fathers organized their respective ports into locals and a charter was granted to each port by the National Association.

Legislation was the #1 focus for the newborn union. They battled for favorable legislation to certify and license waterborne engineers, secured U.S. officers – both deck and engine – aboard U.S.-flagships, helped repeal controversial seafarer fees, and raised the standard of living for all mariners. Those early struggles and many others paved the way for the worker protections and benefits we often take for granted today. Happy 148th birthday M.E.B.A! Let there be rejoicing.

DATES SET FOR 2023 CADET INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School has finalized dates for this summer's Licensed Cadet Internship program that helps young mariners get a head start on their shipping careers. The program will run from July 10 to July 28. Up to 80 cadets from various maritime academies across the country can attend.

The annual program helps mold the next generation of M.E.B.A. mariners and eases their way toward a shipping career with the Union, if they so choose. Among other things during their three weeks, program participants will take advantage of a series of training courses including Welding, Machine Shop, Diesel, High Voltage Safety, Electrical Systems, and MSC CONMAR that will help prepare these next-generation mariners.

Cadet Internship promotional tri-folds have been mailed out to the academies and the M.E.B.A. Union halls. Cadets can take part in the program without making a commitment to the Union, but while they attend, they will learn more about the excellent career opportunities that the M.E.B.A. presents. Please direct interested cadets in their Junior or Senior year to contact the CMES. Recent graduates are also encouraged to contact the School regarding this program.

SENATE BILL WOULD WEAKEN CARGO PREFERENCE

Two Senators are proposing legislation to “respond to the ongoing global food crisis” precipitated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but outline a misguided approach to do so.

The legislation forwarded by Senators Jim Risch (R-Idaho) and Chris Coons (D-Del.) intends to improve “the timeliness and expand the reach of U.S. international food assistance.” However, it would effectively waive the required use of U.S. ships and American mariners for at least 50% of food aid cargoes, in the name of cost savings. The “Securing Allies Food in Emergencies Act (SAFE Act)” essentially makes the compliance with cargo preference statutes “optional.”

Sen. Risch noted, “As the United States continues to provide humanitarian and military assistance to Ukraine, Congress must also help address food insecurity. The SAFE Act will expedite and expand the reach of international food assistance while also eliminating cargo preferences on food aid, helping us stretch our food aid dollars farther and ultimately saving millions of lives.”

While the legislation would bar procurements of food aid from China, the irony of the legislation is that it would further incentivize the utilization of Chinese vessels and mariners to deliver shipments under the U.S. Food for Peace Program.

USA Maritime, a coalition of maritime interests (including the M.E.B.A. and AMC), strongly opposes the legislation that would weaken U.S-flag shipping and take jobs away from American mariners. They have made it clear that that American taxpayer dollars should benefit American workers, “not flag of convenience operators who dodge taxes.”

LOW ICE ON THE GREAT LAKES; WINTER WORK ONGOING

As of mid-February, only 7 percent of the five freshwater Great Lakes was covered in ice, which is significantly below the 35-40 percent ice cover that is expected for this time of year, according to NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL).

Ice extent across the basin briefly jumped up to 21 percent in early February in response to a cold snap, but has been declining since. Maximum ice cover typically occurs between mid-February and early March. Air temperatures are the main factor affecting ice cover on the Great Lakes, and a warmer than average January contributed to the lack of ice. Although there is year-to-year variability in the ice cover of the lakes, NOAA research has found that in recent years ice cover is in a downward trend.

Recently, U.S. shipping companies operating exclusively on the Great Lakes transitioned from sailing to the annual process of repairing, maintaining and modernizing their fleet of lakers. Vessels ranging in length from over 1000-feet to smaller tug and barge combinations have taken to docks and ship repair facilities around the Great Lakes region. This year alone, U.S. Great Lakes shipping companies will invest over \$126 million in their vessels at shipyards and facilities across the Great Lakes. The work includes replacing steel plating, engine overhauls, navigation equipment updates, and painting. Some vessels will be completely pulled from the water in a dry dock to be inspected, cleaned, and repainted.

A little over a year ago, the M.E.B.A. reached an agreement with Interlake Steamship Co. to cover winter work with a collective bargaining agreement. M.E.B.A. members and applicants utilized by the company in that capacity receive good wages and benefits, as well as pension and medical paid on earned vacation days.

HIGHLY AUTOMATED APALACHICOLA DELIVERED TO MSC

Mobile, AL shipyard Austal USA has delivered the latest Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) vessel that will be operated by the Military Sealift Command with M.E.B.A. engineers onboard.

The USNS APALACHICOLA is the 13th EPF to join the MSC fleet and the largest Navy surface ship with autonomous capability. The vessel was constructed with a perception and autonomy control suite, as well as several automation enhancements to the machinery plant improving hull, mechanical, and electrical reliability while reducing the amount of personnel required for operations and maintenance at sea.

EPFs are shallow-draft, all-aluminum, commercial-based catamarans that are capable of intra-theater personnel and cargo transport, which provide combatant commanders high-speed sealift mobility. Spearhead-class EPFs have proven to be workhorse vessels and are deployed on high-profile missions around the world.

Combined with the already highly automated hull, mechanical & electrical systems installed on EPF class ships, the vessel was built with automated maintenance, health monitoring, and mission readiness to allow the APALACHICOLA the capability to potentially conduct up to 30 days of operations without human intervention. The vessel will be deployed in the Western Pacific in support of the U.S. 7th Fleet.

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Michael Gilday said full usage of the vessel's autonomous capabilities is not the immediate plan. "I think one step at a time," he said. "In terms of that ship, it has the capability...but we will integrate into fleet in a very deliberate manner. We won't have a n unmanned deployment right off the bat. We're going to want to make sure that we have it right before we move too fast – [both] operationally, and in terms of building more of them."

300+ MARINERS STILL STUCK IN UKRAINE

International shipping interests are calling attention to the plight of over 300 seafarers who are still stuck in Ukrainian ports a year after Russia's invasion of that country. Tomorrow (February 24) marks one year since the invasion and 331 mariners remain trapped aboard 62 ships in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. In a letter sent this week, the International Chamber of Shipping along with dozens of other signatories called upon the United Nations to urgently work on solutions to evacuate the remaining seafarers and ships.

The letter notes, "Our seafarers are the heart of our industry and cannot be forgotten. For 12 months now they have been caught up in a crisis far beyond their control. Simply doing their jobs cannot come at the expense of their lives...Action must be taken now."

LABOR HONORS TOM DONAHUE

Labor leader Tom Donahue died on Saturday at the age of 94 after a long and effective career fighting on behalf of working families. Born in New York City in 1928, his father was a deckhand on the Staten Island Ferries. Donahue began his career as a labor organizer in the 1950s. He worked for several unions over the years and was elected as the Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO in 1979, where he served until his retirement in 1995.

During his time in the AFL-CIO, Donahue played a critical role in some of the most important labor struggles of the era. He was a fierce advocate for collective bargaining and worked tirelessly to expand the rights of workers to organize and form unions. He also fought against the outsourcing of jobs to other countries and pushed for fair trade policies that protected American workers. Donahue was also a committed advocate for civil rights and social justice. He was involved in the civil rights movement in the 1960s and worked to build bridges between labor and other progressive movements. Donahue always pushed the labor movement to embrace innovation and change to keep propelling workers forward.

Throughout his career, Donahue was known for his intelligence, his strategic thinking, and his ability to bring people together. He was respected by both labor and business leaders for his honesty and integrity, and he was widely regarded as one of the most effective labor leaders of his generation.

In a statement AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond said, "Tom was an innovator, intellectual and a visionary labor leader who was ahead of his time. Long before the future of work and the impact of technology on workers became a robust policy debate, Donahue was creating a blueprint for unions that encouraged experimentation with new approaches and technology to expand worker organizing and increase the labor movement's influence. That blueprint served as a guide that still influences union innovation today. He was a brilliant strategist who had the keen insight to foreshadow challenges and opportunities workers would face well into the future, and our movement is much better for it today."

3rd ANNUAL CALHOON DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT ON APRIL 8

The M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF) will host its third annual Jesse Calhoon Memorial [Disc \(Frisbee\) Golf](#) Tournament on Saturday, April 8th 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. For further information, contact 4MF Chairman Bill Van Loo at (443) 676-6248 or bvanloo@bvlworks.org

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

Monday, March 6 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, March 7 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, March 8 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thurs. March 9 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, March 10 – **Honolulu@1100.**

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



*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. 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 Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.