

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

The Official Union Newsletter – "The Word to the Wise"

Number 13 – March 31, 2022



In this issue//Two Younger Ships Will Bring Down Overall RRF Age//MLL Ship to Be Renamed//ATC Reopener, R&F Participation & Input Requested//CG App to Anonymously Report Crime//Kansas Kellogg's Workers Get New Contract//Great Lakes Shipping is Underway//House Passes Coast Guard Bill//TTD Adds Another Affiliate//Senatorial Seaport Supporters Honored//Jesse Calhoun Day on Monday//

TWO YOUNGER SHIPS WILL BRING DOWN AGE OF RRF

The Maritime Administration (MarAd) will purchase two used car carriers that will help bring down the 46-year old average age of the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) fleet.

The two roll-on/roll-off sister ships, the 26 year old M/V HONOR and M/V FREEDOM, will join the fleet as CAPE ARUNDEL and CAPE CORTES, and will add more than 432,000 square feet of total sealift capacity and 316,000 square feet of military cargo capacity.

Both vessels carried military cargoes for many years and participated in the Maritime Security Program (MSP). The ships formerly sailed for American Roll-On Roll-Off Carrier (ARC) but were removed from the MSP when they came up against the program's 25 year-old age restriction.

Crowley served as the vessel acquisition manager for MarAd and will maintain and operate the two vessels once the ships receive modification and outfitting before they are deployed into the RRF, planned for this Fall. The vessels will replace two of the older RRF vessels recently removed from the fleet. The program currently features 41 vessels, down from 46 in 2020. Five RRF steamships were removed from the RRF in recent years following a DOD determination that they were no longer militarily useful to the program.

A Transportation Department spokesperson said, "This is a fairly common occurrence. For example, in 1993 we had 102 ships in the RRF, today there are 41. As to the vessel disposition, they will all eventually be relocated to one of MarAd's reserve fleet sites and later recycled."

The last five retired vessels include crane ships SS FLICKERTAIL STATE and SS GRAND CANYON, heavylift vessels SS CAPE MAY and SS CAPE MOHICAN and SS PETERSBURG, a tanker.

The Defense and Transportation Departments expect to continue efforts to bring down the average age of the RRF. "Most sealift ships in the government fleet are reaching the age where maintenance and repair costs are escalating and service-life extensions will not yield proportional increases in readiness," said U.S. Transportation Command official Ron Marselle.

MLL SHIP TO BE REDUBBED

Maersk Line, Ltd. announced that its vessel SAFMARINE MAFADI will undergo a name change – to MAERSK TENNESSEE.

The MAFADI was built in 2007 and joined MLL's U.S.-flag fleet in 2019 replacing the MAERSK MEMPHIS.

It is a 958-foot, 4,824 TEU container vessel propelled by a Wartsila Sulzer 8RT-Flex96C engine. The name change will be effective as of April 19.

ATC RE-OPENER, MEMBER INPUT & PARTICIPATION REQUESTED

Our Oakland Union hall officials will be notifying Alaska Tanker Company about M.E.B.A.'s intent to bargain. We need member feedback regarding agreement items that they feel need to be altered, removed or added. Members delivering input should rank their priorities of desired contract provisions.

Rank-and-file members who are permanent or rotary/relief engineers and who want to be part of the upcoming negotiations are asked to contact our Oakland officials. Please let them know your approximate dates of availability as talks could begin as soon as late May. Email Executive V.P. Claudia Cimini or Patrolman Max Alper with your feedback and availability at ccimini@mebaunion.org or malper@mebaunion.org

COAST GUARD HAS APP TO ANONYMOUSLY REPORT CRIME

The Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) has a mobile app, CGIS TIPS, that mariners can use to anonymously report a crime. It can be used to share information about assault, suicide, drugs, fraud, homicide, illegal trafficking and more. CGIS constantly monitors the tip line and has agents working 24 hours a day responding to reports of crime. You can even talk to an agent in real-time. It's also available at www.uscg.mil/cgis The app is linked up with several other federal agencies, including the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). You can upload photos and attachments and chat with a CGIS agent in real-time, which can be especially helpful in the event of a time-sensitive crime. You can also submit a tip through your computer.

You can download the CGIS TIPS app directly to your mobile device, from the iTunes App Store or Google Play store.

KANSAS CITY KELLOGG'S WORKERS GET BIG GAINS IN NEW CONTRACT

This week, Kansas City, Kansas Kellogg's workers represented by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), scored big wage gains and ratified a new agreement several months after fellow Kellogg's workers at four other locations persevered in their own contract battle. Last year, cereal plant workers in Battle Creek, Mich., Lancaster, PA., Omaha, Neb. and Memphis, Tenn. endured protracted and difficult negotiations and undertook a 2 ½ month strike before management finally offered a respectful contract.

The 570 Kansas workers that produce Cheez-It brand snack crackers ratified their new three-year agreement that secures 15.5 percent wage increases, with an additional \$500 bonus for workers in the third year.

They also won increases in pension benefits and shift differential pay, along with improved dental, voluntary life insurance, and vision benefits with no increase in premiums; and workers' low premiums have been secured for the life of the contract. Also improved are vacation scheduling, severance pay, show allowance, and a new plant starting progression rate that will see new hires earning full pay rate more quickly. New hires will also receive full health insurance benefits after 30 days of employment.

This week, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that there are 5 million more job openings (11.3 million as of February) than the number of unemployed people. Kellogg's workers and hardworking employees across the country have been relied on to keep companies afloat during the worst of the pandemic and corporate America must now understand and appreciate their value.

"This contract is further evidence of the power of a union voice and collective bargaining. Across the country, working people are seeing historic benefits of union membership, like this new Kellogg's contract, and seeing the difference union membership can make in their own lives," said Stuart Appelbaum, RWDSU President

GREAT LAKES SHIPPING IS UNDERWAY

The opening of the Soo Locks on Friday signaled the start of the Great Lakes shipping season after more than 2 months of winter layup. The Lakes shipping season is fixed by federal regulation, though ice build-up can affect opening and closing dates. The offseason was busy for maintenance crews who continuously performed work on Soo Lock chambers.

Great Lakes trade had been hit hard by the pandemic but rebounded and made encouraging gains last year. Continued maintenance and infrastructure money will help shipping build on the gains, but continued COVID uncertainty, supply chain questions and the war in Ukraine are variables.

The Poe Lock was opened on Friday as well, after the winter season where maintenance crews performed a variety of critical lock tasks, including miter gate bottom girder structural repair and seal replacement and valve machinery repairs. The MacArthur Lock, south of the Poe, will remain closed until late-April.

This year, M.E.B.A.-contracted company Interlake Steamship is expected to debut the first US-flagged Great Lakes bulk carrier constructed in 36 years, the M/V MARK W. BARKER. The River-class, 639-foot, 28,000 DWT self-unloading bulk carrier is set to be christened sometime this summer and will enter service soon after.

HOUSE PASSES COAST GUARD BILL

The House of Representatives has approved the "Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act" named after the long-time Alaska legislator. The package authorizes funding to enhance Coast Guard operations and help the service replace and modernize its cutters, as well as shoreside and cyber infrastructure. It also includes major reforms to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment in the maritime industry.

Among many other items, the bill contains a provision requiring mariners serving on foreign-flagged vessels on the Outer Continental Shelf to be either U.S. citizens or citizens of the nation where the vessel is flagged. Current law requires that all vessels, rigs, platforms, or other offshore structures be manned by U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents, but the law has been exploited and a loophole

has allowed foreign companies to utilize low-wage foreign mariners for this work, allowing them to skirt U.S. taxes and labor laws.

It also authorizes funding for a desperately-needed Great Lakes icebreaker and includes a provision championed by Rep. Don Young to allow the Coast Guard to keep Russian vessels out of U.S. waters during the ongoing Ukraine crisis.

TTD ADDS IRON WORKERS AS 37th AFFILIATED UNION

The Transportation Trades Dept. (AFL-CIO) announced that it has picked up its 37th affiliated union within the TTD umbrella as it brings aboard the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Ironworkers. M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries. The Iron Workers union represents 130,000 workers across North America.

This is TTD's fourth new affiliate this year. TTD Secretary-Treasurer Shari Semelsberger said, "This rapid growth is reflective of the union wave sweeping the country, harnessing historic levels of unionizing and intersectional solidarity. We are stronger together."

SENATORIAL SEAPORT SUPPORTERS HONORED

At its legislative summit this week, the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) honored three lawmakers who have been tireless in their advocacy of advancing port operations across the country. The AAPA, which represents more than 140 seaports, doled out its Port Person of the Year award, which actually went to two people, Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) and Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA). AAPA noted the pair worked as lead drafters and negotiators of the ports and waterways and landside infrastructure sections of the recently-passed Infrastructure law. The duo were said to be relentless in favor of ports at a point that negotiations for the bill were headed in the wrong direction.

AAPA also handed out its first-ever President's Award for Legislative Leadership given to those who advocate for the seaports and maritime industries, but especially for long-term beneficial projects. The inaugural award was given to Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA). She has long been an advocate for port projects, but her work reforming the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) to make better use of the collected revenues, was the major factor in AAPA judges selecting her as the award recipient.

JESSE CALHOON TO BE HONORED ON MONDAY

M.E.B.A. Union halls will be closed on Monday, April 4 to honor longtime M.E.B.A. President Jesse Calhoon on the occasion of his birthday. The son of a fisherman, Jesse started out as a coal passer in Norfolk, VA at the age of 16. By 1943, he started work as fireman, then oiler and set sail in support of the allied effort to defeat Hitler. Following the war and his membership with the M.E.B.A., Calhoon ascended within the ranks. He started in Norfolk Local 11 as Business Manager (the precursor to Branch Agent), before becoming National M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer in 1959. In February 1963, when M.E.B.A. President Edwin Altman resigned to join the American Maritime Association, Calhoon was elected to fill the unexpired term. His service as M.E.B.A.'s top executive spanned six U.S. presidencies. Throughout Jesse's presidency, he used his political savvy coupled with shrewd negotiating to win unprecedented gains for members, and safeguard American maritime jobs at large. He vigorously fought for legislation to protect thousands of U.S. mariner jobs and helped ensure the continued viability of the U.S. maritime industry.

Among many other achievements under Calhoun's administration, the Union established the training school which bears his name, merged the deep-sea districts, Pacific Coast District and District 1 into a single all coast unit, and transformed M.E.B.A.'s pension plan into the best in the maritime industry. Born on April 4, 1923, Jesse made his final voyage on October 22, 2013 at the age of 90.

This is the first time M.E.B.A. has celebrated Jesse Calhoun Day as a holiday since it was created by member resolution in 2011.

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

Monday, April 4 – All Halls Closed (*Jesse Calhoun Day*)

Tuesday, April 5 – Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle-Fife@1300.

Wednesday, April 6 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; **Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, April 7 – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, April 8 – 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.